

Wiebke Rössig, Uwe Moldrzyk, Museum für Naturkunde Berlin

Practice of Dialogue, Participation and Open Science at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin

Virtual Tour and discussion about the findings of experimenting with format of dialogue-oriented science communication and participatory projects.

Idea, practical relevance and societal impact

In the beginning of 2019, the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin created an area for experimenting with the practice of participation, dialogue and open science communication in the museum round walk. The design and conceptualization built on a co-design process with members from all departments of our institution as well as visitors and external partners. Together, the requirements and challenges of participation and dialogue between research/collection and the public were defined and draft sketches of an experimental space for these purposes were drawn. From these sketches, the Experimental Field was developed.

The presentation will introduce the space, its design implications, conceptual thoughts and programming as well as the first results of the evaluation of programs, giving insight into the evaluation, which evaluates all formats in the form of a quantitative survey and selectively backed up with qualitative interviews.

One special focus of the area is to implement participation and dialogue that have an impact back into the institution. Participation is defined as a process of fair sharing in which all interaction partners benefit equally [e.g. Piontek, 2017 and Rössig and Jahn, 2019]. So how can we create conditions in which scientists also benefit from interaction and not only share their knowledge? We develop our programming according to the needs and interests both of the colleagues working in research, collections, libraries, archives and exhibitions and the external interest groups we want to target. On this basis we try to produce an outcome from our programs that have an effect both on the institution and individual employees AND the external participants.

The goals of the area for dialogue and participation is to 1) create direct encounters 2) collect different perspectives, 3) create a space for exchange and 4) develop new practices of science communication.

We develop new procedures in a targeted manner, adapted functioning formats, document our experience, pass on experience in order to intensify the dialogue with society, and enrich research. In general, there is a great openness to different topics and formats. External partners can also use the area after a coordination process. We have so far worked together with research groups, societal actors like the Fridays for Future Movement, artists and scientific institutions presenting their work.

The underlying conviction is that dialogue and exchange between science and society not only serve to break down barriers but that science itself also benefits from the different perspectives. The outside perspectives "in discussions and debates [...] will directly inform issues of science policy and governance. Museums thus become places where citizens can both increase their scientific competence and participate in discussions that affect society" [Bandelli and Konjin, 2015, p. 132] and, as we believe, science and research.

What are the prerequisites for initiating a mutually fruitful dialogue and what preparation and support does this require? Which groups are particularly drawn by which topics and formats? And how can we organize the feedback into our institution? Our evaluation results give first insights into these questions.

Format of the presentation

Starting with a virtual tour around the area, giving a voice to designers, users and visitors, the Lead of that area will give an insight into the concept and idea behind it, introduce the programming and discuss first results of the evaluation and the implications drawn from that for further development.

Literatur

Bandelli, A. and E. Konjin (2015). "Public Participation and Scientific Citizenship in the Science Museum in London: Visitors' Perceptions of the Museum as a Broker" *Visitor Studies*: 18(2): 131-149.

Piontek, A. (2018). "Museum und Partizipation. Theorie und Praxis kooperativer Ausstellungsprojekte und Beteiligungsangebote". Bielefeld. transcript.

Rössig, W. and Jahn, L. (2019). "Participation in a Research Museum: Opportunities and Challenges". *Spokes Magazine* 51.