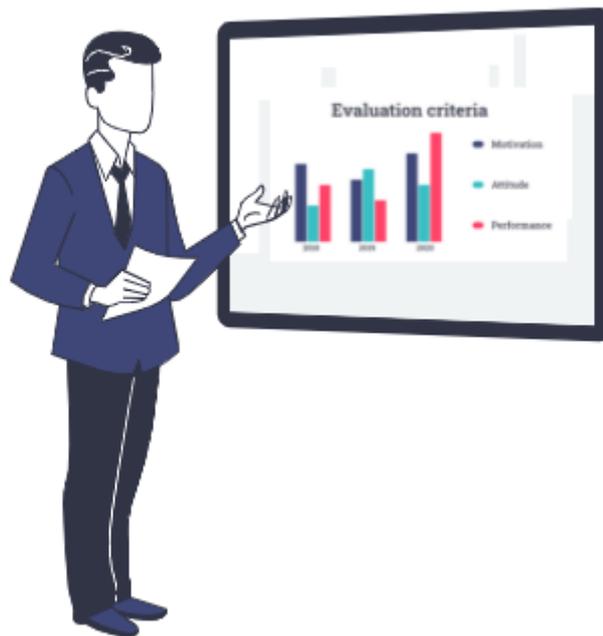


MAS

Museum Affinity Spaces (MAS): Re-imagining Museum-School Partnerships for the 21st century through a Multiliteracies Lens



Final Project Report
Deliverable D3

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The project would not have been possible without the contribution and participation of different stakeholders, including educational authorities, museums, schools, and their staff, in particular museum educators and schoolteachers, and above all, the students.

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Project summary

The "Museum Affinity Spaces (MAS): Re-imagining Museum-School Partnerships for the 21st century through a Multiliteracies Lens" (POST-DOC/0916/0248), is a co-funded EU investigation aiming to facilitate the prospect of inclusive, museum-driven, multiliteracy learning across Europe. This will be succeeded through establishing the Infrastructure (support mechanism, Open Source software, tools and services) required for formal and informal learning institutions, to design, implement and evaluate dynamic and sustainable museum-school synergies. There is specific focus on the development of the MAS project to accommodate for culturally and linguistically diverse students' needs. It is anticipated that museum staff, teachers and students, will deepen their knowledge of digital cultural heritage and expand their repertoires of multiliteracy practices, through engagement in the project, while also become motivated to engage in museum learning, whether physically or online in the future.

Taking into consideration the unique characteristics of the contemporary 21st century environment, a theory-based pedagogical framework, the Museum Affinity Multiliteracies Practice (MAMP) guides the design-based research of the MAS project. The MAMP relies on a creative overlap between the theory of the New London Group and Cope and Kalantzis for a pedagogy of multiliteracies, the theory of disruptive innovation proposed by Christensen, flow theory by Csikszentmihalyi and the theory of affinity spaces proposed by Gee. Based on the aforementioned Pedagogical Framework, the objectives of the MAS project are to develop:

- MAS-Portal. A strategic partnership search tool, which will allow the creation of profiles by formal and informal learning institutions and individuals;
- MAS-Cabinet. A virtual museum interactive environment, which will be the 3D software featuring the virtual environment created according to the pedagogical framework;
- MAS-Archive. Access to resource packs, tutorials and webinars on how to deliver successful museum-school partnerships through pedagogical scenarios based on the MMP framework;

- MAS-Hub. Network support mechanism for dialogue, communication and collaboration amongst members of the MAS virtual community.

The implementation of the proposed project is expected to have long-term value and benefit at a local and regional level in a timely manner, given the current economic and social conditions in the European Union with the increasing flow of immigrants and refugees, adhering to museums as learning institutions that can foster cultural participation and inclusion for social change, is imperative. Research-wise, the project will be of value to the scientific community, as it will bridge the gap of empirically reporting the stages, including evaluation and impact of museum-school partnerships and thus contribute to an area in the literature that is currently limited. The project has also practical implications for the professional development of educators and could guide them in teaching culturally relevant topics across the curriculum, as well as implementing multiliteracies pedagogy to enhance their students' multiliteracy practices. The Pedagogical framework, could also inform future designers' and instructors' decisions on developing virtual museums.

The expectation through presenting this project, is that it will hopefully inspire and guide future research, theory and practice, at a time of a re-evaluation of museums and their purpose, as evident by the ICOM debate on a new museum definition. My presentation will perhaps provide food for thought for attendees at the Europeana Conference, to re-imagine inclusive museum-school/university synergies, found at the intersection of literacy pedagogy, design thinking, and technology enhanced learning, in the context of a globalised society.

Overview of project objectives

The MAS project is an empirically based, pedagogically-driven research initiative entailing plans for a platform of museums/galleries and learning institutions such as schools and universities to connect to form partnerships in order to enrich classroom experience and overcome limitations related to physically attending a museum and other outdoor activities. The overall aim of the MAS project is to grant students with opportunities to gain experience of museums and cultural heritage beyond national

boundaries and enhance their literacy repertoires by adhering to a theoretical framework incorporating understandings of technology-enhanced museum learning as a multiliteracy practice.

The MAS project essentially promotes museum-school collaboration in Europe through the use of technology-enhanced learning such as support, tools and services for schools to utilize in order to implement their curriculum. The intention is to offer opportunities for free and continuing online professional development for educators and museum staff. In particular, the intention is for schoolteachers and museum educators and other museum staff as well students to be able to use a virtual platform themselves and in collaboration with other parties from around Cyprus and the world, either through synchronous or asynchronous learning to develop learning activities deriving from museums. There is specific focus on the development of the MAS project to accommodate for culturally and linguistically diverse students' needs. It is anticipated that students will deepen their knowledge of cultural heritage through participation in the partnership, while also become motivated to engage in museum learning, whether physically or online in the future.

The project proposes an interdisciplinary approach towards the close network collaboration of museums and institutions/schools mentioned above through creating an infrastructure (the MAS Portal) which features a strategic partnership finder to retrieve partners based on the topic of interest and other characteristics. The MAS Portal also features a forum allowing to share and discuss the experience as well as provide mutual support; it does so by creating online museum and school hub spots. These online museum hub spots can be used by schools, universities, institutions, instructors and students and lifelong learners to extend typical learning activities with technology-enhanced museum learning tours and collaborative partnerships, through multiliteracies-based learning. The project thus offers a platform for staff (teachers, museum educators, librarians, etc.) and students to communicate, collaborate, develop projects, share and feel and be part of a museum learning community in Europe. In addition, the project will ensure that collaboration between parties proceeds efficiently by supporting their actions through:

- Access to a structured online learning space named "Museum Cabinet" for displaying exhibits based on a well-defined framework
- Access to resource packs, tutorials and webinars on how to deliver successful museum-school partnerships for developing lesson plans based on the MMP framework
- Access to monthly webinars
- Support from the Consortium for development, communication and collaboration on museum-related topics

To support the aforementioned pedagogical and methodological aspects of the project, the project will be based on the Museum Multiliteracies Practice (MMP) framework (Savva, 2016a), an alternative approach to museum learning practice derived from the combination of multiliteracies pedagogy of the New London Group, the Learning by Design Model adapted from Cope and Kalantzis and Schwartz's museum based pedagogy. The latter allows educators to improve their instructional practices and get their students, especially those who are culturally and linguistically diverse, motivated in different topics through engagement in technology-enhanced museum learning. Overall, the long-term objective of MAS is to make 21st century partnerships between museums and learning institutions more efficient and productive and let the educational community and students share and learn through a technology-enhanced virtual museum learning trusted platform.

The above area of focus of the project lies within the objectives of the Programme and the specific call since it will provide with opportunities for a Postdoctoral Cypriot researcher to be actively engaged in a new research endeavor within her area of expertise, which is also rather unexplored at an international level. By funding this project and implementing the innovative theoretical framework and theories proposed during her PhD, it will contribute towards making Cyprus a long-term and stable workplace, avoiding the need to seek employment abroad.

Added value and exploitation of results

The implementation of the proposed project is expected to have long-term value and benefit at a local and regional level, as emergent online learning tools and e-learning methods are now more than ever profoundly 'popular tools', in a post-digital world, especially after the coronavirus outbreak. The education and cultural sectors have been tremendously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the social, educational and economic crises, demand digitally mediated ways to respond to increasing challenges. Given the current socio-economic and cultural conditions in the European Union and beyond, alongside the increasing flow of immigrants and refugees, adhering to museums as learning institutions that can nurture cultural participation and inclusion is imperative. Our belief is that the development of inclusive and sustainable museum-school synergies through online, museum multiliteracies learning, is more relevant and meaningful than ever. The MAS project is timely and its value through the digital infrastructure and the Pedagogical Framework developed and implemented, are immense towards preparing all students, including culturally and linguistically diverse, for a post-COVID, post-digital era.

As a result of the Project:

- One New job positions (as Full Time Equivalent) was created (Young Researcher)
- There is consideration for a spinoff to take place and seek funding through Horizon Europe
- There was collaboration with different stakeholders abroad, but these are mainly in the form of discussions for future projects.
- The Digital Infrastructure developed, with the online platform and its products and services, such as the MAS Cabinet, a desktop application, the MAS Portal for search, and the MAS Hub with a dedicated teacher and student space, are all developed, prototyped, tested and validated using the design-based research approach.

The dissemination of the project involved participation of the key personnel who pursued the dissemination activities. The final event is described in Deliverable 31, MAS user communities support framework and guidelines. The **dissemination** strategy described in Deliverable 6, aimed at:

- Raising the awareness of the social and educational role (and of the potential museum-school activities) that the museums have in engaging culturally and linguistically diverse students;
- Developing a new theory-based framework for 21st century museum learning practice with regards to museum-school synergies
- Informing about the project's impact and outputs;
- Engage other museums, as well as other cultural and social institutions and schools in this sort of partnerships as a means to further widen the network of collaborating museums and the benefits for a larger education and student audience;
- Clarify the methodology used in order to implement and to evaluate the pilot projects through a focused research agenda;
- Extending the impact of the project beyond its lifetime through the partners' networks and on-going programmes of training, professional development and partnerships.

The **exploitation** strategy focused on:

- Promoting and raising the awareness about the project development and outputs/results;
- Providing with ideas for theory-based museum learning practice through developing instructional material (Pedagogical scenarios and lesson plans were developed)
- Transferring the results to policy-makers and relevant authorities in order to achieve support and secure sustainable development and implementation to a more systematic scale;
- Convincing other end-users to apply/to adopt the results.
- A series of contributions in leading international peer-reviewed journals, reviews aimed at the scientific community. A number of publications and presentations of

the work produced in MAS project, were delivered online or face-to-face in international conferences.

Based on the above strategies, different dissemination channels were realized for the MAS project:

- Website: A public project website feature the portal for creating the museum and school profiles and the strategic partnership search, as well all other elements of the MAS Infrastructure. The development of the public website will be designed following the EU Project Websites – Best Practice Guidelines (March 2010). This way, the website was visually attractive and informative.
- Logo, brochure and other promotional material: The project logo and branding were developed and distributed widely throughout the project lifecycle were applicable, in presentations, leaflet, website, etc. A brochure was produced incorporating the main objectives and expected results of the project. It was used as a way to brand project activities and was distributed during relevant events, and direct mail as required.
- Newsletters, networks and mailing lists: General dissemination involved press release, newsletters and circulation of project outputs across affiliated networks.
- Publications
 - a) Articles / Press releases: News of the project were disseminated regularly. News releases were issued to appropriate media outlets; articles published in appropriate venues and journals. The publicity and media coverage at local, regional and European levels was also envisaged mainly through dissemination in social media groups.
 - b) Scientific publications of research: All publications produced were peer-reviewed, since this project is empirically based and thus state of the art developed by the project needs to be in the public domain and peer reviewed.
 - c) Organisation of Events: A series of webinars were held in order to draft a best practice manual (Deliverable 36) for developing museum school partnerships starting from the working document compiled through task. The manual is a tool for decision support and communication to stakeholders. The Best Practice Guide

was finalized in communication with workshop participants and external reviewers, who were editorial board members in relevant fields.

Handbook of theoretical framework

d) Project outcomes presentation in Seminars or other meetings International and sector conferences, meetings, etc. were pursued to communicate the results of the project to the maximum number of persons.

e) A handbook of the final evaluation/overview of the project was developed in two languages (Greek and English). To generate this specific dissemination material, a compilation of all knowledge generated from the project was pursued. The Handbook was presented during the final closing symposium of the project.

Video production: There was provision to produce a video, offering an overview of the MAS project during its implementation including educators and students' work. This was not feasible after all, as the final implementation stage when it was scheduled to produce the video, coincided with the outbreak of the pandemic and the lockdown imposed in schools and museums, resulted in little access to resources and fieldwork.



200

Practitioners

70

Primary students

Preliminary Phase

Observations, interviews and surveys
Visionary workshops



251

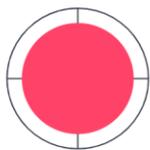
Participants

12

Countries

Prototyping Phase

Development of tools
Professional development
Fieldwork and implementation



MAS Implementation Phase



49

Educators

School teachers
Museum educators



202

Students

Primary and Secondary Education / CLDs



32

Institutions

Primary schools
Secondary schools Small, medium and large scale museums

Figure 1. Participation in MAS project.

Users' visitation in MAS platform

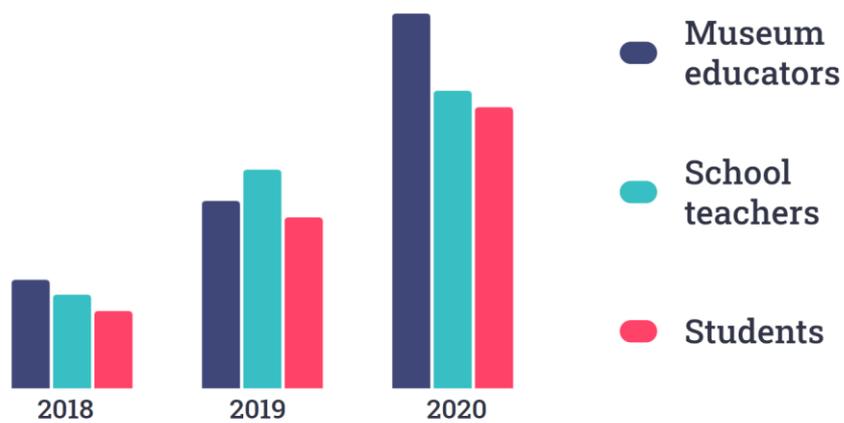


Figure 2. Visitation in MAS.