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Culture as a field of Possibilities: Museum as a means of Social Integration

Social exclusion is a term for lack of access to various social benefits to an individual or a social group. Such social benefits may include institutional sphere, such as education, healthcare, social services, as well as socio-economic benefits – employment, financial capability and purchasing power, but also the field of culture – accessibility and inclusion. Museums display aspirations for working with vulnerable groups, in order to reach out to new audience and encourage their social participation. Through numerous educational programs, creative workshops, interactive learning and communication through networking, a museum present itself with a challenge for progressive social engagement, which includes inviting socially vulnerable groups to participate and help them integrate into society.

Keywords: social exclusion, social integration, museum's social engagement, museum policy

Social groups outside social networks

Social exclusion is a topic which now, more frequently than ever, is discussed not only as a political or an economic issue, but also as a cultural one. It is expected from cultural institutions to enhance their activity in terms of social engagement, and to sensitize institutions for social problems. Unlike political, economic and financial incentives in that regard, which are more or less defined, the role of cultural institutions in programs of social inclusion is still relatively unclear, and as a result, insufficiently realized. Considering the complexity of cultural scene, this paper will focus on museums and their role and possible influence on positive social changes, accenting on the social inclusion. Let us look at the subject of social exclusion at the beginning.

The term social exclusion was developed in France, in the 1970s, to define individuals or social groups who had no institutional assistance or protection from the government, and who were socially indisposed and insecure. Even though the term is used in the present time as an imprecise synonym for the poor/poverty, its original purpose was to encompass in one word mentally and physically handicapped, disabled, and needy in material sense, various delinquents, marginalized groups and people with psychological disturbances.

Generally speaking, social exclusion could be viewed as a break up between an individual with his/her wider community, with a set of institutions and his/her social network... Social exclusion manifests in separating oneself from the economic, political and cultural sources, which constitute one as a member of a society (Walker, and Sandal, 1998:404-405). The excluded individuals are in most cases spontaneously (*vis major*) connected by institutions or organizations with similar people like themselves, who share similar living circumstances and conditions. It can be concluded that such groups of people share common lifestyles, with exclusion experience which often results in common behavior habits, such as homeless living in shelters, using social assistance money, eat in public kitchens, frequent similar group therapies provided by some organizations, share the similar life paths. To quote the sociologist Zoran Šućur:

> „Fridberg considers those *who are more than temporarily unable to earn for their living and take care of themselves as socially excluded...* In that regard, he considers as socially excluded some groups of minors who spend most of their time in the streets, criminals, drug addicts, homeless, mentally disturbed, people in personal crisis, early retired, long term social welfare beneficiaries, immigrant and refugee groups." (1995:226).

It is difficult for a socially excluded person to get social recognition when that same society had turned its back on such an individual. It is difficult to be accepted by the recognized resources of social and status mobilization. Many of the long term-marginalized people face problems because of the complexity of the social environment. Because of lack of agility by the social institutions, and inadequate network of social assistance, the excluded groups face issues which become more burdensome with time. Social (in) acceptance thus becomes a mark of all socially excluded groups. They are excluded because the society finds them unacceptable, and as such have difficulty accessing the segments of life they need in order to be socially mobilized and obtain an acceptable social status. Their re-socialization is a social opportunity which depends on all social levels and social sectors, not only economic and political, but also cultural, and ultimately civil, and the whole society.

Bhalla and Lapeyre quote categories or dimensions of social exclusion: difficult or impossible access to institutions and services such as education, health protection are labor market, and the whole participatory social scene which presents (broken) connections between an individual and the community. This brings us to a conclusion that social exclusion manifests itself inside *civil, socio-economic and political sectors*. These aspects of social exclusion manifest through lack of political engagement, weaker chances for participating in decision making processes, as well as unequal social

status (Sandell, 1998:406). Social exclusion thus presents an exemption from the civil rights system, considering that civil, socio-economic and political exclusion means no access to basic human rights.

The term 'social exclusion', used for socially excluded individuals, is referred to through terminology of *being outside network*, by the United Nations Development Program. This means that certain social groups are excluded from full social participation. The poor, uneducated, and those who lack opportunity for continuous study, isolated from social interaction, without access to decision making bodies – the socially excluded ones are socially powerless. Furthermore, as they are not *attached* to the source of social apparatus, they cannot benefit from its contents or conduct activities which are available and in reality *accessible* only to those attached to the matrix. So the term *being outside network* is justified when it comes to defining social changes which are brought on by the global networking, as a result of the omnipresence of the information technology age and a networking society (Castells, 2000).

At the conference „Human dignity and social exclusion", organized by the Council of Europe in Helsinki[1] in 1998, social exclusion was defined as a burning issue, on both European and global level. Trying to research the causes and the extent of social exclusion and poverty, a distinctive terminology has been used for material poverty, as it does not necessarily imply social exclusion. Social exclusion, however, does not reflect in financial shortcoming only, that is, consumer inactivity. It is far more drastic, it is about complete absence from the social network. The accent was put on the so called social triangle – the government, the labor market and the non government civil sector. Their lack of cooperation and communication in relation to an individual who is struck by social exclusion is overwhelming; it is a liability on a necessary social integration. Without proper stakeholder involvement no long term improvement is possible. Especially as such exclusion is not one-dimensional, that is, only material. In Croatian national report for 2006 there is a warning and a call for action: „Without a proper intervention by the government, the civil sector and the international community, the population facing a risk of permanent poverty, social isolation and cultural deprivation (UNDP, 2005:5). Social exclusion is thus defined within a relation between an individual person and the community. The so called boomerang effect relation. It should be stressed that poverty[2] as such can be defined as an economic category, while social exclusion manifests itself in many sectors (no access or desire for education, insecure residential status, few and scarce social relations, unemployment, political disempowerment and similar), and as such requires a complex combination of social solutions (Šućur, 2006, 239). As the social inclusion is a part of a

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[1] See more in the Helsinki Report „Human dignity and social exclusion „on http://hrcak.srce.hr/file/47152.

[2] It should be stressed that opinions are divided on understanding the term of poverty and exclusion. Some consider them to be synonyms or consider exclusion as a sub type of poverty, while poverty can be viewed as a characteristic of exclusion. However, unlike poverty, exclusion is often considered as a multiple issue (Šućur, 2006, 239).

widespread social policy, so the status of socially excluded[3] people is not one-dimensional and requires a flexible approach by all stakeholders, which acknowledges a difficult condition of being deprived. Besides obvious financial disability, and no social contacts outside their deprived groups; stigmatizing and discriminatory social practice also contribute to such (self) perception, that is, subjective incapability which often objectively manifests itself. Inside social dynamics of economic, technological, political and cultural movements, any relevant changes are possible only via total integration of actions and programs within all spheres of society, but also through individual actions. By acknowledging their co-relation, we should consider their specifics in order to understand their mode of functioning. When some marginalized groups are viewed comparatively it is possible to see which characteristics are common for all of them and which vary from group to group. Not all homeless people are identical in terms of behavior and personal situation, although their livelihoods have much in common. There is a context of a deprived group (such as the homeless) and each member of such group individually. It is similar with the sphere of culture: „Culture is at the same time a product of an individual and of a group. It indicates indirectly that we, people live together, cohabit, and that is how it should be (Flego, 2007:156).

We can be a part of some cultural group, but at the same time we personalize our cultural heritage, as we tie it to our identity and lifestyle, influenced by a variety of things. Culture is a context where choices, actions and lifestyles are exchanged, mixed and understood. Therefore, it is important to respect cultural experiences of others, regardless of whether or not we share them or understand them. Some people can belong to the same cultural background, but due to different lifestyles, do not intermingle as they do not mutually *recognize* themselves. Museums should recognize the importance of the intercultural and inter-group dialogue; promote cooperation and a policy of equality of all cultural contributions, by all groups. In that light, cooperation between a socio-cultural group and an individual life approach should be established. According to Ms An Laishun, Executive Director of International Museum of friendship in Beijing: „Museums provide a structured platform for a cultural interaction, which makes them ideal ambassadors of inter cultural platforms of communication"(2009-2010: 4).

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[3] According to the social exclusion research from 2006.done by the United Nations Development Program, 11.5% of Croatians can be considered as a socially excluded group. It means that every tenth person faces difficulties in finding employment; 13% percent of them using some form of social welfare, where Croatian Employment Service is the main provider, with short term financial assistance, and 35% long term unemployed; as well as limited chances in terms of basic human rights. That percentage is almost double when it comes to self perception in terms of social exclusion (20%). The research covered 'three inclusive methods': a quality lifestyle poll on 8.534 people, grading the social service providers, and focus groups discussions with 20 various social groups facing social exclusion participating. Focus groups included persons with mental and physical disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, long term unemployed, homeless**,** returnees, single parents, children without parents, victims of domestic violence, the Roma minority, sexual minorities, elderly, people with lower level of education and youths (UNDP, 2006:7).

The authors such as Sandell, Woodham, Weil, Silverman and O'Neill stress the importance of cultural possibilities, especially those of museums, in the social integration processes, suggesting multiple dimensions of social exclusion. The problems of the socially excluded are thus more complicated, but the possibilities of the institutions and their services can be also more significant. Therefore the role of culture, that is, the role of a museum, must not be overlooked in the process of social inclusion. Otherwise the gap created by the social exclusion can become deeper. In the following text we shall introduce options of a museum as a cultural sector and its role in the program of social inclusion, and social engagement in general.

Social engagement by the museum

„Museums are non-profit, long lasting institutions serving the society, its development, and are open for public. They collect, preserve, research, communicate and exhibit their fundus in order to provide material for studying, research and enjoyment to people"[4], explains a recent definition, endorsed in 2007 in Vienna at a General conference of ICOM. Although it relates to the older[5] definition of a museum, it widens its role by adding its possible new museum functions. This explains the increased necessity for museums capable of running the market race, which are able to recognize the rapid changes generated by globalization[6], information age, and (hyper) modernization, and adopt their programs to them. Their training and learning programs, however, need to be adjusted and developed according to the needs of the community which shares the same territory and culture as the museum. These programs should meet the needs in the community, especially of its marginalized and excluded members. Otherwise, they serve only to those who are culturally included members[7].

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[4] Definition endorsed on 24 August 2007 in Vienna by the ICOM (International Council of Museums). See more at http://icom.museum/statutes.html, 2010.

[5] According to the traditional definition formulated in 1951, a museum is an 'institution whose work is dedicated to public interest, and whose task is to keep, study and advance „artistic, historical, scientific and technological collections, botanical and zoological gardens and aquariums". Public libraries and public archives with continuous exhibitions will be considered museums"(See more at: http://icom.museum/hist_def_eng.html, 2010.).

[6] Globalization of cultural institutions indicates a global: „physical widening of social relations of the stakeholders in the field of art, on the more intense interactions provided by the electronic media networking and growing cultural interpenetration in the sphere of art in the form of increased inclusion and mobility of stakeholders and products, as well as globalization processes in the infrastructural department". (See more in the text by Ulf Wuggenig, *Northwest and the rest of the world. International contemporary art*, in the chapter **Cultural globalization** at http://www.zarez.hr/198/z_esej.htm, 2010).

[7] As stated by Homadovski, the museum tries to „integrate activities of the scientific community, production sector, organizational management and other cultural aspects of community, serving at the same time the democratic society"(2009:394). We should keep in mind, however that socially excluded people also isolate culturally. Being outside the active community, economic sector and so on, culture remains out of their path. Needs of a democratic society should be questioned in relation to the social disempowerment, to avoid a win-lose situation.

Museums can and should sensitize to the social needs in their community by transforming architecturally, by adopting their programs, performances and similar. As a cultural medium it has a considerable potential in terms of initiating social changes in the context of social exclusion. A new idea is generated of museums as places of various social contacts and an example of an active dialogue between society and culture. Therefore, culture should not be isolated or elitist. In that case it is formulated as a closed institution, devoid of willingness to change, incapable of active participation and contributing to the social changes. The culture and the museum as such have a significant potential. Museum participating in social life in their community can transform it into a dynamic scene, play a role in creating cultural-social inclusion, contribute to social participation and provide incentives for a long term policy of socially sensible cultural institutions. „A shaped cultural destination becomes a place for social contacts and a generator of wider city development "(Homadovski, 2009:394 just as an economically productive zone can change a social landscape of a city, so does the cultural scene in terms of changing the environment of its act.

According to the ICOM ethics code, museums are in charge of preservation and promotion of natural and cultural heritage that is, managing natural and cultural heritage. All of these aspects have a social component and their purpose is social well being and cultural cultivation. Museums and local communities need to communicate, so that the museums can present the heritage collections in their natural and cultural context[8]. It is important for the museum contents to reach out to all social groups, especially to marginalized and socially isolated ones. Adjusting to interests of all social groups and their (in) capabilities is a light motif of the museum work. In that regard, persons with special needs should not be neglected and discredited at the start. For example, museums should have access for the disabled; adjust exhibitions to their abilities, while the guided tours should be in accordance with special requirements of some visitors.

Intercultural and inter-group communication is also a dialogue of all classes of society, and the museum as such should not in its intermediation chose a favorite and an (already) privileged group, when it already opens its assets and reaches out to the marginalized social groups who do not always fit into the social harmony order. „Museums will persist on maintaining social harmony by preserving, documenting and presenting material and oral (immaterial) heritage by way of stimulating a dialogue"[9] says Tereza Scheiner, because museums belong to the civil sector, and present an example of an organization which not only stores human heritage, but also promote the importance and value of a man, his work's potential and his achievements (2009-2010:5).

However, museums should be spaces of social interaction which will not aim at social harmony exclusively. Social conformism should not be privileged against diversity, regardless of how disturbing such diversity may be. Social harmony can be viewed as an

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[8] See more in ICOM's ethical code for museums or at http://icom.museum/ethics.html 2010.

[9] See also http://icom.museum/pdf/E_news2009/p5_2009-2.pdf

aspiration to maintain balance between various social aspects; economic – political – cultural – social. Balancing the spheres of power is actually an invitation for cooperation among social stakeholders present in separate and differently perceived spheres of social apparatus: „dialogue, tolerance, co-habitation and development, based on pluralism, diversity, competition and creativity. Such motto holds a key of working together by accepting diversity. "(Scheiner , 2009-2010:5).

 However, harmony is often perceived in a context of political opportunism and conformism. But synergy between a museum and a present vision of social harmony does not necessarily imply bowing before dominant politics, more so if that politics discriminate or marginalize certain social groups or their ideas. A situation where museums become objects of manipulation by political powers is problematic, as they become mediums of ideological manipulation under disguise of harmony.

„If museums are civic spaces which mirror the good, the bad and the inconvenient social aspects, and spaces for interpretation, reflection and negotiation, as well as sources of information on actions, resources, artifacts, etc., which concern *social harmony*, than museums also have a social task", according to Amarsewar Galla (2009-2010:3). Museums should be ready to take risks and experiment with new ideas and strive towards new audiences. Widening horizons means escaping the danger of slipping into one-dimension.

Contrary to political demagogy, museums should grow into a critical arena of heterogeneous ideas, impulses and incentives, without imposed homogeneousness on politically incorrect occurrences. Playfulness, (self)irony, dynamic up-to-datedness, zest and ability to shock and stun, and disgust with a purpose of (self/social) questioning, as well as intellectual teasing and challenging, are all desirable elements for permanent exhibits and theme displays. By playing role of critics of current social issues, museums should be social commentaries. Through adjustment and embracing of various trends and styles, museums display readiness for a flexible work, imposed by progressive global currents. Museums are not a static storage rooms or graveyards of some dead culture, but springs of fresh and dynamically presented thought.

Museums as factors of social inclusion

In discussing community development, some authors point to „structural, relational and cultural characteristics of a certain community" whose development „regenerates structures of a human community and creates new possibilities of organizing social life." (Škrabalo, Miočić-Lisnjak, Papa, 2006:64). How does a museum potential in social (re)organizing reflect?
It is important to look at social inclusion in relation to culture and cultural inclusion (and museums playing role in it) as mediators of social inclusion. As quoted by Šućur, authors such as Paugam and Maclouf distinguish the terms inclusion from the term

integration,[10] as it covers an extensive area of social policy. Social inclusion follows the line of social changes, especially on the labor market, whose fluctuations modify traditional perception of employment, and as such is a part of a wider transformation policy which acknowledges many stakeholders on the social scene, and not just government orchestrated actions (Šućur, 1995:228).

But autonomy does not exclude co-operation, on the contrary, it enhances it. Partnership is particularly effective when applied on government institutions and civil co-operation when the necessary synergy is created, and a unified approach to social exclusion is applied. The key is in the organized social co-operation, and as it covers „lack of cultural, practical and institutional conditions for mobilizing skills in the context of acknowledgment and social interaction" (Young, 2005:72), so it is necessary to integrate every social aspect in the social inclusion policy. Culture should not be an exception. By combining different social contributions and spheres a more efficient network between a community, institutions and socially excluded groups is created.

Another important role of a museum is that of a mediator. By enabling meetings and interactions of various groups and their cultures, museums get a concrete opportunity to materialize their archetype purpose, become a *human institution*. Institutions should not be isolated from the community, and the community should co-operate with its members, using institutional dialogue and support. Museum is an inter mediator between urban and rural, traditional and virtual, and, it should be added, between included and excluded social groups – those outside the social network. Tereza Scheiner provides a report on rapid social changes in the modern world. Raising ethnic identifications take place in fluid and hybrid collisions of the local and the global, increasing one's need to network with social groups, that is, and museums with their communities. Interaction is multiple, includes national and privately run museums, civil organizations, volunteers, experts from various fields. Cooperation and partnership against exclusion! (2009-2010:5).

The cooperation is inevitable in the highly fragmented markets as well, and Silverman and O'Neill support the idea of opening a museum of with a complexity of contents, offer and design, generated by the 21st century. That said, many museums have maintained a simplified and somewhat old fashioned mode of operating, and the authors warn of such pattern as being rigid and catatonic, concluding that this is due to a fear of change rather than dedication to the tradition. Finally, such approach can stand in the way of developing a museum's potential. Traditional perception of social and cultural roles of a museum should shift to a more interactive and dynamic one. The same goes for museum visitors; they use museum for studying, entertainment, a

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[10] Šućur lists several approaches to the subject of inclusion and integration. „For S. Paugam, inclusion is a "form of regulating social bonds and a response to a noticed threat to social cohesion" (Silver, 1994:534). P. Maclouf, on the other side, tries to separate integration from inclusion. "In a normal sense, inclusion consists of an integration of an individual or a group into a wider social environment. It is distinctive from integration, a lasting process through which an individual or a group reintegrates into a society in order to create a new unit" (Maclouf, 1991:2). It is important to say that inclusion covers various sectors of social policy: from politics to employment, professional advancement, social welfare residence living, to urbanism and immigration"(1995:228).

new experience, contacts, socialization – as well as some fun club or a shopping mall. Interactive offer changes the public perception of a museum, which transforms its position in a society, and society' expectations towards it as a consequence. The possibilities are numerous, and the demands more sophisticated – the times are challenging! More museums express a desire to work with other organizations, NGOs and communities which leads to new role playing, opportunities and social functions of a museum which transform and dispose of their old static version of working and their position in the community (compare Silverman and O'Neill: 2004).

Museum can fight the social exclusion by working closely with non government organizations and institutions which deal with similar topics. We shall illustrate some of the British examples, out of many, which are a result of a long term social policy development and social inclusion implementation. Richard Sandal (1998) gives an example of the *Gallery of Justice in* Nottingham, which cooperates with numerous organizations and agencies which fight youth delinquency. The Museum serves as a place where young people reflect on their behavior and actions, and consequences, which contributes to positive changes in the society in terms of turbulent social contexts. The Museum of London organizes various activities for the young, the long term unemployed and criminal convicts, within its three year program supported by the National lottery, mainly aimed at the population of East London[11].

The British example is an example of a relationship between a museum and the community, and its approach towards the policy of inclusion. It is interesting for us primarily because it is founded on a **well structured policy** coordinated by the *Department for culture*, *media and sport* of the British government since July 1997, when it was established. In cooperation with the Department for education they had started a partnership program between educational and museum sectors. Museums play a significant role in the school curriculum, while teachers and students express their satisfaction with field visits to museums, finding them useful for broadening their knowledge. The evaluations of the field visits show what benefits they get from these visits, especially in the community cohesion area, social inclusion, besides being an asset to the school program. The feedback also shows that museum staff learns from these visits and gets to polish their skills. A study has shown that museums participating successfully in such programs have improved their working methods through the integration *program for museums and schools*[12]. Teaching segment of the museum work has been polished through contacts with teachers, students and in meeting their needs. Among the students were also groups with special needs – disabled and students facing social exclusion. Comparing Croatian situation to the British, it needs to be said that there is no developed museum policy in Croatia. As a consequence, the public is not familiar with cultural policy of social inclusion; neither do respective ministries nor their local offices conduct researches and evaluations based on which public policies of social inclusion should be developed.

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[11] See http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/English/Learning/Community/Inclusion/

[12] See more at: http://www.le.ac.uk/ms/research/Reports/IIL.pdf. 2010.

Still, it cannot be concluded that there are no promising examples. Programs conducted in the museums are primarily result of the personal initiatives of individual curators and museum educators rather than implementing of a well designed user policy. Such example is the project Motel Ježevo (2002-2003) by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, in which artists worked on the subject of asylum seekers,13 or the more recent example of the Croatian School Museum in Zagreb, which organized the Museum on Wheels project with the Roma children in Zagreb, Bjelovar, Podturen and Držimurac, as part of the 15th educational game of the Croatian museum association, called the Wheel 2010.

Cooperation with non government sector as a key player in developing a program for socially excluded came as a result of individual contacts of some museums with organizations of civil sector. The Ethnographical Museum in Zagreb, together with the Center for Volunteering Zagreb tries to sensitize the wider public to start volunteering by starting the campaign *volunteering colors of solidarity*, encourages civil activism in various organizations and institutions. During 2009/2010 the focus was on the homeless. Through the program *Culture against exclusion*, Ethnographical Museum and Center for Volunteering Zagreb promoted the importance of including homeless in cultural programs and thus contributed to the better life quality of homeless people14. The program at the EM included a tour of the permanent exhibit and the tour of the "Let's go for a coffee!" exhibit, as well as an interactive workshop on the subject of their visit to the museum.

It should be kept in mind that including various categories of users and community members is not a recent issue. Museum practice in the world knows new, innovative ways of new models of museums. There are so called *neighborhood* museums, the third wave museums. These museums put in practice the idea of social sensitization and engage in their community problems. In order to stop traditional, elitist museum heritage, they have reconstructed the existing model and created their own...

> „With curators we have any interested individuals participate in the program creation (even to a point in the research part), the same individuals volunteer on other museum duties, the building in itself is just the focal point of the museum actions, which spread outside the museum walls. Instead of exclusive orijentation on elitist interpretation of the territory, they try to show life in its banal conotations, but all the more realistic ones. Set up to be a mirror of the community, it wants to buil its reputation and relevance by giving its users an opportunity to recognize themselves in it. By spreading its many *antenas*, found and protected (old industrial hulls, schools, mills, etc.), it covers the whole teritory. Objects are considered as museum artefacts even when they belong to living but recognised and registered ambiences. Such museums prove, by many examples in practice, their deep committment to participate in life, what is more, in the issues of their community, where they exist (or for which they exist). They call them battle museums, museums of development, and so on, stressing their integration in the every day life" (Šola, 1989).

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[13] See more at: http://artefact.mi2.hr/_a01/lang_hr/a01_about_hr.htm

[14] See more at: http://www.vcz.hr/info-pult/mdv-2009/

Museum is one of the factors of the so called **cultural intervention**, a group of various activities in which many social groups take part, presenting their ideas. Cultural contents which are offered are being shaped according to the needs of the community. This way only one particular group can be targeted as a special social *milieu*, or it can be a wider social group, such as the Osijek *Days of Peace and Culture* which promote human rights and tolerance, while the *Theater of the suppressed*[15] aims at disclosing the oppressive social practices. Various social phenomena are here addressed in a creative and non orthodox was, through a medium of culture. (Škrabalo, 2006:83).

Some other Croatian examples show a tendency of including community in the museum activities, such as The Neighborhood Museum „created as a direct result of a need for research and understanding identity of local communities within social-urban uniqueness of the New Zagreb neighborhoods (...) Lack of self consciousness and lack of the feeling of belonging manifests itself through bonding with certain behavioral habits, which are 'imported', and have no connections with inherited local culture. The lack of cultural subjects (cultural institution, museum or something similar), which would encourage communication of the people in the neighborhood and active participation in researching history and the present of the community, often results in apathy and indifference by the citizens towards their own environment, and ultimately a stagnation of development at all levels and spheres. "(http://www.kontraakcija.hr/hr/muzej-kvarta).

Furthermore, the *Museum of street art* tries to fight the prejudice which puts the street art and vandalism in the same basket, in order to promote freedom of creative expression and enlighten the citizens to care for their living environment and promote dialogue between the artist and the city.

> „By opening a dialogue ART – CITY – PEOPLE through the project Museum of street Art (MUU) – a positive atmosphere is created with a win-win situation: Artists, because they need to create. The city, because it is seen as a creative, developing place, full of life (which is very important for any city). People, who get to see in their neighborhood the recent works of modern art, which positively affects their livelihoods and brings a positive change"[16].

The culture should not be perceived as something unconstructive, something for the chosen few[17], outside real life and without true contact with social realty. If approached dynamically, culture is a fertile soil for creativity which can enlighten and contrib-

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[15] The founder of the idea is Brazilian director and political activist Augusto Boal (1931. -2009)

[16] See more at: http://www.muu.com.hr/, 2010.

[17] Just like any other institution, museums contribute to institutional inclusion considering that they have several mechanisms which provoke exclusion, and to a point do not adjust their services to all society members. What is offered to some is inaccessible to *others*. Museums often neglect the value of the alternative and the opposition as opposed to the dominating values, as Ames remarked. They often only present one side of the story or a chosen version, while adopting to it through its working models and the ticket sales, (selective) promotion, and similar. In the museum we can distinguish a powerful majority picture and neglected minority picture, which is why that cultural institution perpetuates social, economic and civil exclusion (Sandell, 1998:408).

ute to solutions of social problems. A museum can be an ideal place for art classics, but also for a contemporary expression of performing and conceptual art by emerging artists who can also inspire audiences. Cultural potential has a social character.

It leads to a conclusion that museums are inter mediators of the society and as such need to progressively develop their socio-moderating potential. Lucia Astudillo[18] asks for interdisciplinary and multi cultural approach, and the most important, if you ask us, the inclusiveness which museums need to accentuate and develop, and create their own methods of contributing to positive social changes, and an (individual) life quality. Museums can help their communities develop significantly, the author remarks. It is their starting point for forming their role in society, locally and globally, as they encourage multi cultural and inter -group dialogue.

Museums, therefore, have a potential to answer to the needs of a wide spectrum, demanded by the networking society. Permanent learning and expertise of the museum staff is an unavoidable aspect of *museum modernization*. However, a museum engaged in a society is a relatively new term for certain institutions, even within a more developed context, such as the British, and not all have adjusted to the new roles and needs, not to mention developing own programs of social engagements. Nothing happens by itself, or overnight. O'Neill and Silverman point to a need of constant *museum learning* and *learning in museum*, by sides, the staff and the visitors. Learning and adjusting to the new working methods is a prerequisite of successful museum functioning. More so as the eager experimenting brings a museum closer to the new audience (Silverman, O'Neill: 2004). Such approach may sometimes be risky, but it is welcome during creation of a modern and dynamic image of the museum.

Long term development perspective in the pipeline suggests a large social potential of museums, including Croatian museum sector, and positive results can be expected if museums keep an open mind to new ideas and new modules of functioning. It is a chance for cooperation between national and regional museums, the state and government sectors (ministries, institutions, departments) as well as the stakeholders who need to be socially included. An obstacle to such dialogue is a non articulated national policy which museums face. In practice such policy diminishes the potential of a museum and forms its public perception. Creativity must top the lack of financial means, a standard problem facing cultural sectors.

Conclusion

Problems of social exclusion require a multiple perspective approach and multi dimensional solutions which would coordinate all sources and spheres of marginalization. It is very important to focus on a concrete social group, its demands and needs. Programs and incentives to change are primarily based on enabling a better access to

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[18] See more at:,http://icom.museum/doc/IMD/HARMONYINMUSEUMS_Lucia_Astudillo.pdf

certain services which affect social chances of the excluded groups. That process requires social restructuring, a more sensitized institutions and their openness to work with people with special needs.

Social exclusion manifests itself as an absence of an individual or a social group from distribution of institutional (education, health care, social services), socio-economic (employment, financial availability and purchasing power), as well as cultural goods. Thus, they are short of not only economic and social capital, but also their share of cultural capital. In that context, a term cultural isolation should be added to the terms social (in) justice and social exclusion.

 On the other side, culture is like glue between an individual, a group and a community, and the many dimensions of social exclusion also concern the cultural segment of a society. Culture is a possibility which can be directed towards inclusion on a larger scale of the marginalized and isolated groups in order to initiate their social participation, together with economic, civil and political sectors. Museum, as a cultural factor, is in a position to culturally intervene in a society. Cultural engagement may positively respond to some complex issues of social sub-groups which are on the edge of exclusion.

Museums display aspirations for working with vulnerable groups, as they want to reach to new audiences, to encourage and support their social participation. More institutions are established with a purpose not only to produce exhibitions and provide preservation of cultural heritage, but also to accentuate the social engagement program. By constantly learning and accepting new ideas, museums enable themselves to channel their potential and provide their part in combating the social exclusion. Through numerous educational programs, creative and interactive workshops, and networking, a museum holds a challenge for a progressive social engagement which shall include in its work socially sensitive persons and help them integrate in the community.

Partnership between a museum and a community promotes social cooperation, enhances dialogue and creates dynamic approach to social issues. It is up to the museums to recognize their own interests, polish their working skills and articulate their social role. Every museum institution can, by means of specialized study projects and reforms, become a catalyst of positive social changes.

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