Section A

Institution: University of St Andrews

Unit of Assessment: UoA 32: Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory

Title of case study: Redefining Community Museums in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean

Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 - 31 December 2020

Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:

Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Karen Brown Jamie Allan Brown	Senior Lecturer Project Youth Worker and Administrator	01 July 2013 – present 16 September 2016 – present

Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016 - 31 December 2020

Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No

Section B

1. Summary of the impact

Karen Brown's research project *EU-LAC Museums* has brought together eight partners from across Scotland, Portugal, Spain, Peru, Chile, Costa Rica and Barbados, together with ICOM (the International Council of Museums). The group have jointly established an intercultural agenda and corresponding set of collaborative working practices to forge research-led promotion of community museums across Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean (EU-LAC). Their findings have resulted in **international policy changes to the definition of community museums**. Research has fed directly back into ICOM's values and strategic planning through a new Resolution of 2019, changing how community museums are understood at a global level in a way that emphasises their uniquely social impact. The European Commission has highlighted the project's innovative nature, showcasing it as a model of best practice for intercultural exchange in an invited Policy Round Table for UNESCO and EC agencies.

The policy input achieved by *EU-LAC Museums* has been pursued through three key areas:
1) **Heritage preservation and dissemination**
2) **Local community development and empowerment**
3) **Curriculum change in Caribbean Higher Education**

Through these strands, the project has reached community museum professionals and their audiences in 154 countries with 108,365 people engaging via in-person workshops, a youth exchange programme and innovative Open Access dissemination tools. New understandings of community museums as social enterprises, well-positioned to preserve cultural heritage in the face of significant global challenges, have fed into curriculum change and museum practices across Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe.

2. Underpinning Research

Community museums constitute important tools for local development and community empowerment but remain under-researched and under-represented internationally. K. Brown has led a novel, transnational research agenda to establish the relevance of community museums, particularly in developing countries where maintaining equilibrium, well-being, and community resilience is an urgent necessity in the face of global imbalances and rapid change. To this end, K. Brown has worked to bring academic traditions in museum studies from Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe together into critical dialogue, challenging conventional wisdom about what constitutes a museum, and setting a new agenda for 21st century museums that prioritises their social roles through intercultural dialogue and practice-based research.

Research began with a 2015-16 Royal Society of Edinburgh project uniting European and Latin American perspectives on community museums to address museums and social sustainability in Scotland and Costa Rica (**R1**). This developed into the major research project *EU-LAC Museums* (September 2016 - January 2021), funded by the European Commission Horizon 2020 programme and coordinated by K. Brown. *EU-LAC Museums* united five universities, two national museums and the International Council of Museums (ICOM) to investigate and promote community museums across Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The research generated through *EU-LAC Museums* has established that community museums:

(a) are driven by the needs of their local communities
(b) give significance to often-neglected aspects of community heritage such as everyday objects, 'intangible' (non-physical or 'living') traditions and skills, and local environment and landscape
(c) act as 'social tools' by encouraging community governance, cohesion, and the formation and preservation of identity. As such, they are essential for fostering peaceful, resilient and sustainable societies.

This revised definition of community museums was generated by strengthening dialogues between museum workers in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, which led to publications led by K. Brown elaborating how each national and local context conceives of 'heritage preservation', 'community', 'identity', and 'collective memory', in order to build local resilience to the threats of globalisation, natural disasters and unethical development (**R2** and **R3**).

Through this enhanced understanding, it became clear that community museums play a key role in driving heritage preservation and social development (**R4**). This was demonstrated through an examination of whether tourism threatened or promoted community museums in Costa Rica and Scotland (**R1**), and a study of indigenous craft promotion in Costa Rica (**R5**). The latter underscored the value of community museums for sustainable local development, especially in the contexts of indigenous and ethnic minority communities (also **R3** and **R6**).

The research has established the importance and benefits of innovative methodologies for cross-cultural working, notably a bi-regional *EU-LAC Museums Youth Exchange Programme* led by J. Brown and K. Brown, and participatory, community-based techniques for recording and sharing Open Access Intangible Cultural Heritage at risk (**R5**). An Open Access 'how to' guide, co-edited by K. Brown with two project advisors, communicates the potential of community museums to current and future community museum professionals (**R6**). Together, peer-reviewed publications and innovative methodological models have informed subsequent research-led policy recommendations, which underscore greater understanding of the importance of intercultural dialogue and cooperation between regions, notably between Europe and LAC.

3. References to the research

Research outputs R1-R5 have been published in well-established peer-reviewed journals. R6 has been peer-reviewed by members of the *EU-LAC Museums* project Advisory Board in advance of passing review by the EC Expert Evaluators.

R1 Brown, K. (2017). "Paradigm or predator? Eco- and community museums in Scotland and Costa Rica." *ICOFOM Study Series*, 45, 23–36. (DOI: 10.4000/iss.293).
R2 Brown, K., (Guest Ed.) (2019), "Museums and Local Development", *Museum International* special issue. ICOM-Routledge. Including: "An Introduction to museums, sustainability and well-being", by Karen Brown (DOI: 10.1080/13500775.2019.1702257).
R3 Brown, K and Repetto, L., (2019), "Museums as tools for sustainable community development: Four archaeological museums in northern Peru", in Brown, K. (Guest Ed.) (2019) (DOI: 10.1080/13500775.2019.1702258).
R4 Brown, K., and Mairesse, F. (2018), "The definition of the museum through its social role", *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 61 (4), 525-539 (DOI: 10.1111/cura.12276).
R5 Brown, K., Brown, J., Muñoz Brenes, T. and Soto Chaves, A. (2018), "Community crafts and culture: empowering indigenous communities", in R. Amoeda, S. et. al. (eds), *HERITAGE 2018*, vol. 1, 677-687. http://hdl.handle.net/10023/14478.
R6 Brown, K., Davis, P., & Raposo, L., eds. (2019), *On Community and Sustainable Museums*. Lisbon: National Museum of Archaeology (ISBN: 978-972-9257-29-2). (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2646479).

4. Details of the impact

"*Museums are going through the most serious crisis in their history. In these times of uncertainty and raising inequalities, museums are more relevant than ever. Cooperation, mutual understanding, respect of diversity, exchange of ideas and experiences are needed. That's why ICOM was founded and what it stands for […] And that is what EULAC Museums has promoted with such admirable competence and enthusiasm.*" (ICOM President, 4/12/2020) (**S1, p. 3**).

Led by K. Brown, *EU-LAC Museums* has built bridges between community museums, the academy, and the world of museum policy across Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean (EU-LAC) through its publications, reports and practice. Research-led promotion of community museums has resulted in **policy changes to the definition of community museums within international bodies** with global reach. These changes place new significance on community museums' crucial social roles. In 2018, the European Commission (EC) celebrated *EU-LAC Museums* as a 'Success Story' for strengthening links with Latin America through museums. The EC also organised an invited Policy Round Table held in Brussels on 29 April 2019, which resulted in a 23-page Report and Recommendations. The EC Research Programme Officer reported in September 2020 that "*the [EU-LAC] project is being followed closely by staff of the EC DG DEVCO [Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development] as a model of cultural cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean*" (**S2, p.4**). In 2019, *EU-LAC Museums* research findings led directly to the formulation of one of the five new ICOM (International Council of Museums) Resolutions that will determine ICOM's actions and missions over the next three years. Entitled 'Museums, Communities, Sustainability' (achieving votes of 389 "yes", 35 "no", 21 "abstain", and 116 "no vote"), the Resolution was adopted at the 34th General Assembly of ICOM held in Kyoto, Japan (7 September 2019) (**S3, p.10**). In the words of the Presidents of the regional alliances of ICOM-Europe and ICOM-LAC, the Resolution "*marks a moment of change within ICOM and its understanding of the value of community museums for society*" (**S4, p.4**). ICOM has subsequently funded a new project entitled 'Museums, Community Action and Decolonisation' (March 2020-December 2022), led by the President of ICOFOM (International Committee for Museology), with the themes of Decolonising the Curriculum in Museum and Heritage Studies and Climate Action coordinated by K. Brown and the President of the Museums Association of the Caribbean.

Due to the international nature of the subject matter and key scholarship, K. Brown has been the overall research lead and coordinator, collaborating with Principal Investigators (PIs) in the 7 partner countries (Costa Rica, Peru, Barbados, Chile, Portugal, Spain and France), who have reported outcomes (**S5, pp. 5-88**). Together, partners have built a research-led framework to **redefine community museums at the policy level** through interrelated initiatives in three core areas:

1) Heritage preservation and dissemination
2) Local community development and empowerment (September 2016-March 2020)
3) Curriculum change in Caribbean Higher Education (November 2016-ongoing).

1. Heritage Preservation and Dissemination

Heritage preservation and dissemination activities undertaken by *EU-LAC Museums* have increased understanding of the role of community action for preservation of local traditions and culture in Europe and developing countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The 125 workshops held between September 2016 and July 2020 have focused on the importance of intangible or 'living' heritage, particularly among communities in remote locations, and management in environmental crisis (**S5, pp. 95-97**). They have reached 31 museum sites involving approximately 27,897 total participants, including museum professionals, local communities and the wider public, from Scotland, Peru, Portugal, Costa Rica, Spain, Japan,

Guatemala, Barbados (**S5, pp. 95-97**). In Peru, 4,000 people (students, museum staff, school teachers, university staff, local authorities, artisans, museum board members, and citizens) participated in around 15 workshops (**S5, p. 93**). Research outcomes were showcased at exhibition fairs attended by 8,000 people, and documented by TV Perú's show Museos Puertas Abiertas (approximately 300,000 viewers) (**S5, p. 47**). One of the effects of these project-led workshops was an enhanced understanding of heritage preservation. This is testified by the Peruvian PI: "*the communities for their sides have been benefitted through a reinforcement of their cultural identity and heritage. They have received tools that allow their economic development potential. At an institutional level, the expertise has been improved regarding the management of heritage resources, integration of the cultural component in public management*" (**S5, p. 48**). These activities have also resulted in the Spanish PI leading the creation of two new museums in the region of Valencia (east coast of Spain) based on *EU-LAC Museums* models, where there had been none prior to the project. In the words of the local authorities, "*The Territory Museum of the Moorish Garden of our town [Cortes de Pallas] will allow us to improve our tourist offer. The garden* [...] *is a heritage to all and can be interpreted thanks to the initiative of the University of Valencia in the context of the EU-LAC Museums project. The visits made by the project director, Dr Karen Brown and her team [January 2017], and later by the head of EU-LAC MUSEUMS in Peru, our esteemed Luis Repetto [May 2019], were an impetus to this project*" (March 2020) (**S6, p. 9**).

The *EU-LAC Museums* team have created Open Access (OA) resources in order to disseminate heritage preservation among community museums facing social and environmental challenges. These OA resources have increased communication between community museum workers and audiences. The main resource is a multi-lingual project web portal featuring the first bi-regional OA database of 101 community museums; 35 at-risk Intangible Heritage practices; a dedicated YouTube channel ('Museos Comunitarios') featuring 63 video case-studies across Europe and LAC; and a new documentary on community museum women leaders in Scotland, Costa Rica and Chile (**S7, pp. 4-5**). The web portal also hosts an OA 56-page bibliography on 'Ecomuseums, Community-Based Museology, Heritage Management & Sustainable Tourism', the book *On Community and Sustainable Museums* (2019) (downloaded 2,199 times in 2019 and 2,064 times in 2020), and a project survey "What is a community museum in your region?", launched in March 2018 in Antigua Guatemala by ICOM President (attaining 369 responses from 201 countries, including 70.15% participants from areas outside EU-LAC, thus showing the relevance of community museums for other parts of the world) (**S5, p. 90**). User engagement with these OA project resources records 2,580,339 hits since 2 September 2016, and 593 hours of watch time. *EU-LAC Museums* Facebook page Likes represent 31.1% of ICOM's entire Facebook international reach. Project resources, research and events are also promoted via ICOM's own website, which is a resource for its 44,686 members in 138 countries and the general public (**S7, pp. 6-10**). More recently, and responding directly to COVID-19 and other environmental and political challenges faced by project partners between 2016-2020, *EU-LAC Museums* organised a webinar series, 'Community-based Museums in Times of Crisis' (12 June 2020, 29 June 2020 and 10 July 2020), which involved 21 invited speakers and reached approximately 905 people from 35 countries via Zoom and Facebook (**S7, p. 11**). This global online engagement shows how the OA dissemination developed by *EU-LAC Museums* has empowered communities and museum professionals to narrate their own stories and address challenges facing the preservation of their heritage and cultural identity.

2. Local Community Development and Empowerment
Alongside the heritage preservation workshops, a *Youth Exchange Programme* (September 2016 – August 2018), led by J. Brown and K. Brown, has shown how community museums can help foster cultural participation between generations through a focused case study between Scotland and Costa Rica. The *Youth Exchange* reached 72 young people from Costa Rica, Portugal and Scotland, as well as seven community museums (**S5, pp. 95-97; S8, pp. 46-49**). Participants from remote and marginalised communities joined 42 workshops led by 25 volunteers, including community elders. The programme empowered the 23 teenagers who engaged in the physical exchange between regions to contribute to their communities and give value to their cultural identity and distinctive heritage, including at-risk languages, through intergenerational workshops and a blog. As a Scottish community leader proclaimed: "*It was like*

being thrown a rope, unsure if we should catch it... But we are so glad we caught it" (**S8, p. 4: 00:38m:45s - 00:39m:17s**). Speaking on behalf of the Costa Rican participants, one indigenous teenager reported: "*Our culture was left aside and we stopped practising it, we try to avoid it and we are sometimes ashamed by it. […] This project has allowed us to rescue all these things that were unknown to us.*" (**S8, p. 59** and **p. 71**). In evaluation sessions on the Youth Exchange, all the youth unanimously provided positive reflections on the exchange and its impact on their lives and connection to their culture (**S8, pp. 12-39**). As a result of this exchange, one Scottish teenager has pursued a career in the cultural sector. In his own words: "*The opportunities presented to me by the EU-LAC Museums Project such as being asked to present at the University of West Indies in 2018, have allowed me to build a comprehensive CV allowing me to apply and be accepted for positions such as my seasonal job at Visit Scotland where I've been able to put my gained knowledge of sustainable tourism and my new found global outlook to use. I have also become much more proud of my island background and am now passionate about sharing and protecting my island heritage and culture, particularly traditional art, leading to me to begin studying an MA in History of Art at the University of Edinburgh in September 2019*" (**S8, pp. 40-42**). Through exchanges between young people in Scotland and Costa Rica, the programme highlighted concerns around preserving cultural practices, identity formation and retention, and the efficacies of intergenerational transmission of knowledge for preserving community roots. It led to an ongoing collaboration between the University of St Andrews and Costa Rica community museums, coordinated by K. Brown and J. Brown, called '[Community Crafts and Cultures](#)' (2017-19; 2020-21). Describing the heritage projects led by St Andrews, an indigenous community elder stated: "*thank you so much for this opportunity […] the young people and children are immersed and feeling what I do for our culture and the roots will grow, and they won't fall back and this [community museum] won't die*" (**S8, p. 59**).

3. Curriculum Change in Caribbean Higher Education

The *EU-LAC Museums* project deliverables and policy recommendations have led to specific changes in Caribbean museum education, notably the inclusion of an assessed part of the mandatory University of the West Indies' (The UWI) regional *Caribbean Civilization* course, taken by over 2,000 first-year students in 2016-17, on the topic of Community Museums. This curriculum change, which was, in the words of the UWI Dean of Arts, "*birthed out of the EU-LAC Museums Project*" (**S9, p.4**), was inspired by a session held during the *EU-LAC Museums* Kick Off meeting (Lisbon, Portugal, November 2016) on 'What is a Community Museum?'. After this meeting, the UWI Dean led an international committee to set up the first campus Museum Studies programme in the Anglophone Caribbean (**S9, p.6**).

Through these three central strands of **Heritage Preservation and Dissemination**, **Local Community Development and Empowerment** and **Curriculum Change in Caribbean Higher Education**, the *EU-LAC Museums* project has shifted understandings of the key social roles played by community museums at the level of **international museums policy,** changing how they will be approached by both museum staff and their support organisations in the future.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1 Letter from ICOM President (2020-present); 4 December 2020

S2 Letter from the European Commission, 11 September 2020.

S3 ICOM Resolution on *"Museums, Community and Sustainability"*, 9 September 2019.

S4 Letter from the Presidents of ICOM-Europe and ICOM-LAC, 11 December 2019.

S5 Principal Investigators' Outcomes Evaluation, 2 September 2020, 'What is a Community Museum?' Survey, 14 September 2020, Email from Peru Principal Investigator, 11 September 2020 and Workshops, 11 September 2020.

S6 Quote Mayor, Cortes de Pallas, Spain *EU-LAC* Results Booklet, 11 September 2020.

S7 Web Portal and Database, 5 September 2020, Social Media Statistics, 7 September 2020 and Webinar, 17 July 2020.

S8 *EU-LAC Museums* Youth Exchange, 14 September 2020.

S9 Letter, UWI Dean St Augustine, Faculty of Humanities and Education, 1 September 2020.