

Why we should measure: the case of the Egyptian Museum of Turin

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Abstract

Recent socio-cultural events, including the 2030 Agenda, the Covid-19 pandemic, and economic instability, have profoundly impacted global contexts and cultural supply chains. The museum sector is adapting by employing frameworks such as the UNESCO Culture/2030 Indicators and the Museum of Impact (MOI) to evaluate the impacts of cultural activities. The Egyptian Museum of Turin exemplifies leadership in non-financial reporting through several tools. Despite comprehensive reporting, there is a need for more detailed descriptions of its economic and social impacts. The proposed assessments aim to determine the museum's economic impact on Turin and the social impact of specific activities, such as the educational project 'Museo Egizio Andata e Ritorno' for primary schools. A new methodology for assessing social impact, utilising the CULTURE 2030 framework and Matarasso's indicators, is suggested to provide stakeholders with concrete data, thereby demonstrating the museum's impact on the community.

Keywords: Museum Sector, Social Impact, Cultural and Economic Value, Cultural Innovation

Introduction

In recent years, the museum sector has undergone a broad and radical transformation. On one hand, the importance of the intangible economy has grown, not only in terms of economic, financial, and commercial value but also in consumer perceptions and preferences. On the other hand, cultural actors (including museum institutions) are taking on increasingly participatory and less ritualistic characteristics. In accordance with significant international policies, such as the Faro Convention (2005) and the new definition established by ICOM (2022), the traditional core of museum activity has gradually expanded over time. This expansion has incorporated stimuli from the demand side, with a general trend towards combining heritage conservation with a range of services aimed at enhancing collections through educational activities, social participation projects, or urban regeneration. However, this opening of the museum to the outside world has highlighted several management issues, particularly concerning accountability and impact assessment.

Since the 1960s, there has been a recognized need to quantify the effects of public agendas on territories, gradually involving the cultural and creative sector as well (Bobbio, Pomatto, and Ravazzi, 2017). However, evaluation procedures within this specific domain need some premises:

- from an analytical point of view, there are still no standardized and uniform procedures for assessing the overall impact of the cultural sector. In the cases found in the literature (Myerscough, 1988; Matarasso, 1997; Holden, 2004), the authors either deal with specific compartments, whose metrics are not replicable on a large scale for other cultural sectors, or they highlight the difficult distinction between social and cultural impact, whose boundaries are rather blurred, especially in establishing a direct causal link between the actions undertaken by the institution and the social benefits obtained (Bollo, 2013);
- from a skills point of view, research in this area requires increasingly rigorous and integrated analytical approaches (difficult to frame within a training course) so that quantitative data, qualitative information, and narratives can be interpreted independently;
- from an economic point of view, to assess the extent of the economic, social, and cultural impact of a given initiative, such procedures require some replicability to compare the data obtained and build a more comprehensive scenario. Unfortunately, specific to the Italian case, in the absence of continuous economic resources, it is complicated to provide a complete examination of social and cultural outcomes.

Evaluating performance and effects represents a particularly complex and crucial phase in cultural planning. This process requires thorough knowledge of the context, its actors (including the stakeholders directly and indirectly involved), and the resources employed, as well as the use of specific indicators capable of translating the project's mechanisms and thus measuring the extent of the action and the results achieved.

It should be noted that although operations of this kind are currently rather few within the cultural context, the topic of impact evaluation is particularly discussed in academia, attracting a wide audience (Vanclay and Sloomweg, 2003; Guerzoni, 2017; Solima, 2022).

To understand the *ratio* behind its importance, consider the subject of the following article, namely the museum institution. In most cases, museums express a strong territorial rootedness with the context that hosts them, given that they were created to preserve and enhance the works present in the territory to which they belong. Their origin and the very formation of their collections are thus a tangible expression of the history and culture of the places where they are located.

The relationship between museums and the territories they belong to, and with the community living there, develops on multiple levels, the first of which is naturally the cultural one. Other levels of interaction relate to the economic and social spheres, with various spillovers related to the activities carried out and/or promoted by museums.

Therefore, understanding and evaluating these spillovers can make a significant contribution to the spread of a "culture of value." The latter represents the role that cultural capital, in synergy with creativity and innovation, can play in the economic and social development of a community (Sacco, 2012). It is therefore clear that possessing data that can guide and implement strategies of this kind is crucial to respond to local needs and thus make the cultural sector more competitive.

The economic and social evaluation of the Fondazione Museo delle Antichità Egizie (Egyptian Antiquities Museum Foundation).

In just over a decade, the Egyptian Museum has established itself as an internationally renowned scientific research hub and one of Italy's leading tourist attractions. As outlined in previous annual and integrated reports, the Egyptian Museum pursues several goals. These include the systematic implementation of projects aimed at combating social exclusion, establishing new relationships to develop synergies at the territorial level, maintaining an ongoing commitment to research, and consolidating its identity beyond national borders. These objectives align with the recent reformulation of ICOM's definition of a museum.

The Egyptian Museum stands out in both national and international contexts. From the outset, the institution has developed a series of tools, including annual reports and impact evaluations, that provide

internal staff with detailed information to better understand the quality of its activities and identify opportunities for improvement. The work presented builds on an already mature accountability framework. The aim has been to expand it further by addressing the following questions:

- What is the effect of the Egyptian Museum's activities on the local economy of Turin, considering direct spending by visitors and the museum's own activities?
- What is the impact of the educational activity *Museo Egizio Andata e Ritorno*, a project now in its second year, in stimulating creative learning and mitigating school dropout?

Economic impact of the Museum

Economic impact is the most evident and sought-after manifestation of the instrumental value of cultural activities in a given territory. To assess the economic contribution of the Egyptian Museum to the local economy of Turin, Economic Impact Analysis (EIA) was employed. This approach allows for the identification of the effects of expenditure related to specific initiatives in an economic system of a given geographical area, calculated by applying multipliers to calculate the effects that it has on the local system in terms of final demand, employment or other economic dimensions. The injection of economic resources into an area generates three types of effects:

- direct effect: the impact resulting from the direct expenditure incurred by the museum and visitors in the reference territory that would not have occurred in the absence of the Museum;
- indirect effect: the impact resulting from the subsequent expenditure cycles by the enterprises that directly incur the expenditure of visitors and the Museum to cope with the increase in demand;
- induced effect: the impact resulting from the change in the income levels of the residents in the area under analysis.

In the case of the present analysis, it is possible to assess the direct impact of the Museum as an effect that the cultural institution can generate on the local economy, on jobs, on wages and on supply chain costs. The EIA approach is based on the idea that the economy is characterised by sectoral interdependencies, so that expenditure stimulated in one specific sector by one economic activity can generate potential increases in demand and employment in other sectors through successive cycles of trade. Here are presented the ways in which the steps followed to apply the methodology of EIA was applied in the present research.

To define the Museum's impact, it's essential to first clarify the subject of the investigation, that is the expenses taken into account and the territory of reference, in order to delimit the area in which the Museum's economic effects will be measured. The EIA methodology applied to museums include both the effects generated by the presence of non-resident visitors and the Museum's expenditures falling within the area taken into consideration. At the same time the Province of Turin was chosen as the area to analyse Museum impacts. The choice of this area is partially bound to the availability of multipliers suited to the structure of the local economy. Multipliers are typically developed using a snapshot of the economic system, which requires expensive statistical and census surveys. As a result, they are designed to describe the economic structure at a national or regional level and rarely capture the detailed economic systems of individual urban areas.

Furthermore, it is necessary to emphasise how the choice of the breadth of the territory derives from fundamental methodological requirements for rigorous impact analysis concerning a single cultural institution. As it was necessary to consider only the injection of new economic resources into the local system, the target territory was defined to allow a reasonable distinction between resident and non-resident visitors. Moreover, the optimal width of the reference area to study the impact stems from the need to consider local production chains to calculate indirect and induced effects. In general, the wider the extension of the area chosen to calculate the impact, the lower the expenses of non-resident visitors will be, but the wider the supply chains with which to calculate indirect and induced effects through multipliers. From this perspective, the selection of the Province of Turin as reference area for the impact study is deemed to offer a plausible and well-balanced perimeter.

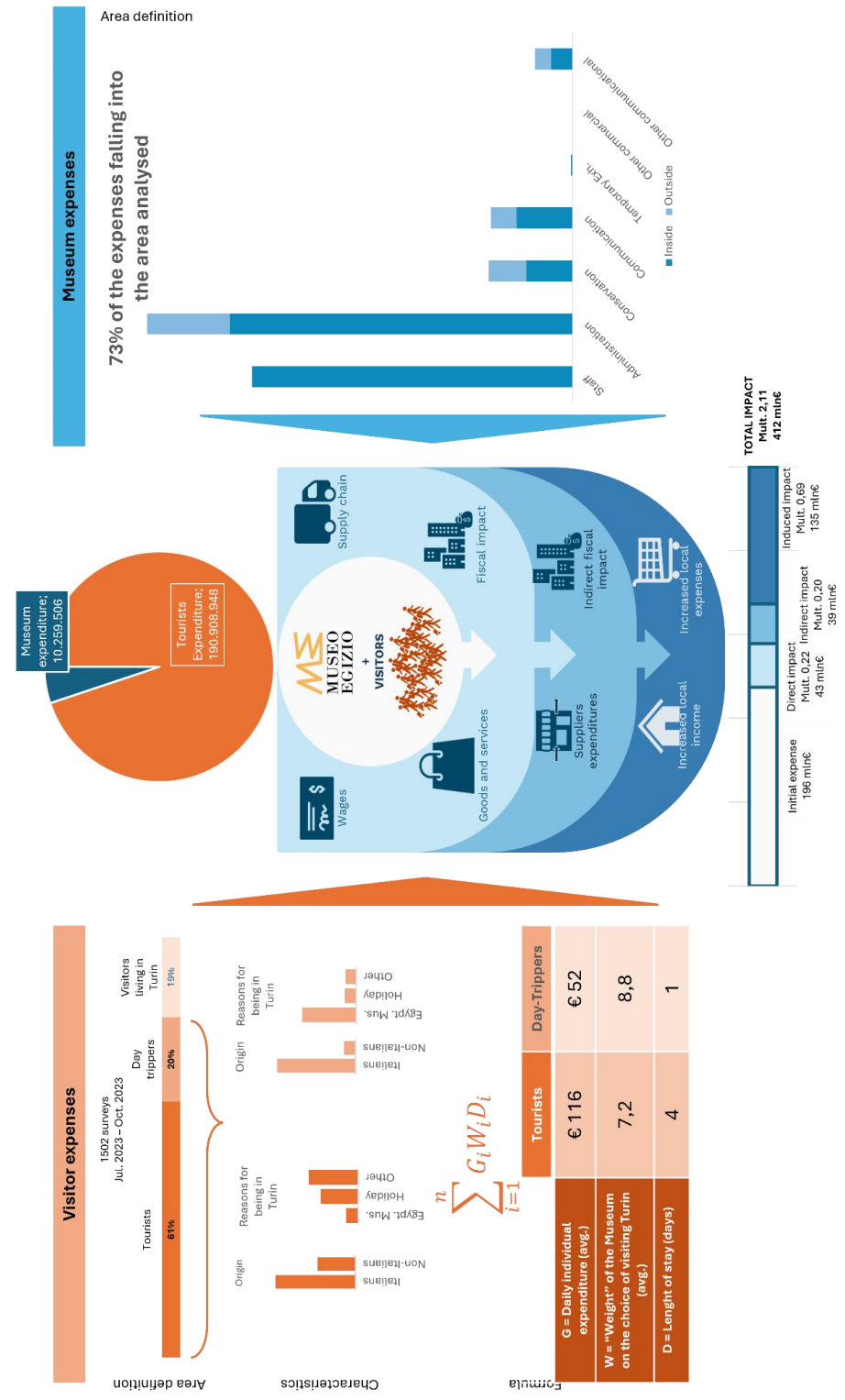
The definition of expenditure was calculated by considering the costs incurred by the Egyptian Museum in the territory and those of Museum visitors in the city. In the first case, data were provided directly by the institution with reference to the year 2022. As already pointed out, only items in the Museum's budget that concern purchases of goods and services from suppliers in the territory were considered. For the same reason some minor items were not included in the analysis, as they relate to expenses that are considered to have minimal repercussions on the reference territory (taxes, provisioning of funds, water and light supplies, etc.).

With regard to visitor expenditure in the target area, information was collected through the Museum's audience survey on a sample of 1502 valid adult interviews. The survey was conducted over the period July 2023 - October 2023, with questions identifying origin, reasons for visit, length of stay, spending patterns of visitors in the Turin area and much more information about their characteristics. Data thus obtained made it possible to verify the consistency of the sample with the Museum's visitor population (907,364 in 2022). As suggested by several experts, for a correct estimation of total visitor expenditures activated by the Museum, only the visitors coming from outside the reference area were considered. This is due to the fact that very often residents' expenditures, although attributable to their visit to the museum (e.g. for transport to the museum, shopping or restaurants), do not represent economic resources injected into the local area and have, at most, replaced purchases of goods and services that would have been made at other times in the local area anyway.

The definition of the initial direct expenditure in the reference area does not only depend on the choice of including visitors who are residents or from other areas. It is in fact necessary to consider only those expenditures that are directly attributable to the intention to visit the museum. If those who visit an area spend the same amount regardless of their visit to the Museum, the flow of economic resources injected should not be attributed to the Museum's ability to activate demand for services. In order to correctly quantify the direct expenditure of tourists and excursionists in the Turin area and directly attributable to the Museum the Essential Motivation approach was adopted: within the questionnaire visitors were asked to state on a scale from 1 to 10 the influence of the Egyptian Museum in their choice to visit the city of Turin. This evaluation was then used as a weight to calculate the actual percentage of visitors' expenditure, excluding all those economic flows not directly derived from the presence of the Egyptian Museum.

The final step in defining the initial expenditure of non-resident visitors to the museum involved including a question in the questionnaire about the average daily per capita costs incurred during their stay.

Once the initial expenditure was obtained, multipliers were applied to calculate the economic impact of the cultural institution. In general, multipliers are used to measure the overall effect of an initial expenditure on the total economy in a given area. One of the ways to calculate multipliers is to use Input-Output tables that describe the structure of sectoral interrelationships existing in a given economy. To determine the expenditure multipliers, they were calculated from the Input-Output tables produced by Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), adapted to focus better on the economy of the region and for the calculation of the employment impact generated.



Innovative aspects and criticisms of EIA as applied to the Egyptian Museum

As widely highlighted above, Economic Impact Assessment as applied in this research is frequently found in numerous studies assessing the role of cultural institutions comparable to the Egyptian Museum in playing a decisive role in local economic flows. Indeed, the flexibility of this method makes it ductile in application and rich in results. Despite its wide diffusion, however, the proposed research on the economic impact of the Egyptian Museum presents many innovative and interesting elements, both for the economic development of the territory and for the research concerning the role of cultural

institutions for the economic development of territories. An innovative aspect stems from the Egyptian Museum's extensive reporting and accountability efforts. As the first Italian example of private participation in managing public cultural heritage, the Fondazione Museo delle Antichità Egizie (Egyptian Antiquities Museum Foundation) has demonstrated significant growth over the years. Its hybrid public/private nature enhances efficiency and effectiveness, fosters strong connections with the local community, and allows for autonomous decision-making regarding budget and activities. Over the past 20 years, the Egyptian Museum has established itself as an international centre for scientific and archaeological research, a socio-economic pillar for the region, and one of the nation's primary tourist attractions. The increasing variety and complexity of the Foundation's activities necessitate translating its diverse values into concrete economic terms and continually measuring progress to verify goal achievement, support institutional accountability, and enhance transparency with stakeholders and the community. This research highlights the substantial growth of the Museum and its pivotal role in the local cultural landscape, making it a key player both locally and beyond.

Furthermore, the study confirmed the significance of tourist flows in the area, whose expenditure constitutes the vast majority of the total expenditure used in the final calculation. The growth of Turin as a cultural tourism hub can benefit even more from the presence of the Egyptian Museum. This suggests an even greater intangible impact of the Museum that cannot be quantified through the Economic Impact Analysis (EIA) as presented in the research.

An intriguing aspect of the analysis is the perspective used to interpret the Museum's impact on the region: the calculated impact should not be understood as a direct product of its presence, but rather as a flow of economic resources that would not exist without the Egyptian Museum's influence. This viewpoint provides a compelling demonstration for the project's financiers, offering concrete feedback on the effect of their contributions. Additionally, it effectively showcases the capacity of culture to drive economic development in the city's fabric.

However, the study also presents some critical issues. Firstly, for its completion a small amount of information derived from the questionnaires was used. A longer survey period and a more complete and targeted way of collecting data would have been much more enriching for final results. In order to compensate for the shortcomings in the survey, an extensive process of comparison with other analyses of the visitors of the Egyptian Museum and with other studies carried out in the Turin area was necessary to assess the effectiveness of this research in describing the museum's public. However, this practice is still decidedly infrequent in Italy and often proposed by big museums with a decisive economic role for the territory. Consequently, direct comparisons with other museums were not possible. Instead, comparisons were made with impact studies of temporary events of enormous relevance for Turin like the Eurovision Song Contest 2022 and the ATP Finals 2022, from which a substantial consistency in the characteristics of tourists coming from outside the area of the province of Turin emerged, confirming the effectiveness of the methodology of this research.

At the same time, the information derived from the questionnaires required a heavy reworking phase due to the calculations to identify the initial expenditure, particularly with regard to the impact due to tourists and walkers. Special attention must therefore be paid to these two elements when applying the same method in other contexts.

Social impact of the Museum

The second part of the impact assessment conducted considers the social dimension of the effects generated by the cultural institution at the local level.

In this article, social impact is defined as the result of a deliberate intervention by an organization with the objective of causing a positive effect on social well-being (Feor, Clarke and Dougherty 2023).

For the identification of this impact, an innovative methodology was developed *ad hoc*, built from a careful study of the literature on measuring the effects of cultural organizations on society (Matarasso, 1997; Holden, 2004; Bollo, 2013). The social impact evaluation activity focused on a specific educational project for elementary school. The Egyptian Museum represents a "must" for northern Italian schools field trips, as Egyptian civilization is one of the most present topics in school curricula and most intriguing for pupils. At the same time, the Museum's educational offer have been greatly enriched to meet the growing demand, but above all to ensure high standards of educational communication and teaching. In fact, the fundamental rationale of the Museum's action in this area has

always been to make the schools' visit to the museum not just a simple school field trip but a learning experience aimed at consolidating the museum as a dynamic and proactive supportive environment for schools.

With these premises, the *Museo Egizio Andata e Ritorno (Egyptian Museum: Round Trip, A/R)* project was initiated. In addition to enhancing educational effectiveness and improving the organisation of school trips, the project aims to strengthen the link between the Museum and the surrounding area by involving schools from disadvantaged areas in the province of Turin. These institutions often face challenges in organising school trips due to their greater distance from the city and have limited funds for extracurricular activities.

The initiative consists of three sessions: an introductory online lesson, a guided tour of the museum, and a concluding online lesson. The project also includes the internal coordination and management of travel and scheduling of the three sessions, handled directly by the administrative offices of the Egyptian Museum. The initiative involved 136 classes in 2022 and 100 in 2023, totaling over 3,400 pupils. Beyond the numerical results, the evaluation focused on social impact. A specific model was developed to assess the findings and provide evidence for funders and other stakeholders. This decision was based on the variety of interests, actors and activities associated with the A/R initiative. Understanding the motivations behind participants' involvement is crucial to obtain a clear and comprehensive picture of the impacts generated.

The table below lists the analytical models considered or excluded, indicating their use (as a methodology or a set of indicators) and the mode of measurement (qualitative or quantitative). After a thorough review of the literature, the most suitable methodologies for social impact assessment were selected, and the analysis model was defined. This procedure is summarised in the following image (orange frames indicate the chosen methodologies; pink frames indicate the discarded ones):

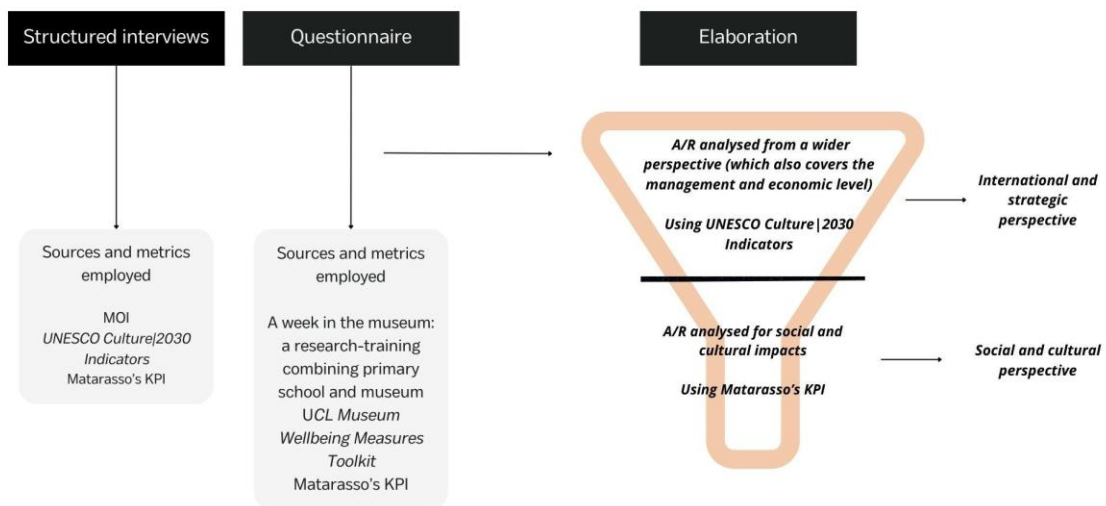
METHODOLOGIES AND INSTRUMENTS	MODEL		MEASUREMENT	
	INDICATORS	SOCIAL IMPACT METHODOLOGY	QUALITATIVE	QUANTITATIVE
MATARASSO	X		X	
SROI		X	X	
GENERIC SOCIAL OUTCOMES	X		X	X
UCL MUSEUM WELLBEING MEASURES TOOLKIT	X		X	
MOI – MUSEUMS OF IMPACT	X			X
UNESCO THEMATIC INDICATORS FOR CULTURE	X		X	
GUIDELINES D.M. 23 LUGLIO 2019		X		X
LEM PROJECT	X		X	

There were two methods of surveying the social impacts generated by the project: structured interviews with key stakeholders of the Egyptian Museum A/R and a questionnaire distributed to schools participating in the first two editions.

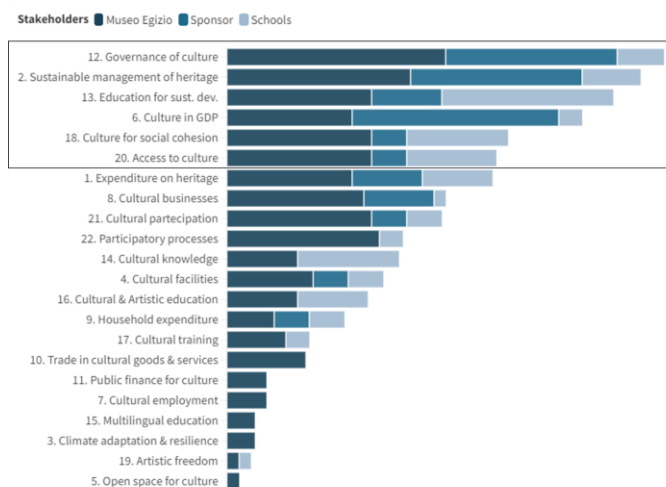
The interviews were designed based on a preliminary study of the project stakeholders to accurately represent their experiences and tailor the interview questions to align with the survey objectives. The interview questions were structured using the kit MOI (Museums of Impact), which focuses on the internal dynamics of museums and the relationships the institution develops to achieve its impact goals. To ensure the relevance of each question, they were aligned with UNESCO's Thematic Indicators for Culture to assess the museum's social activity within the context of international sustainable development, and with Matarasso's indicators, which are comprehensive and suitable for analysing the various social implications of the Egyptian Museum A/R project.

The questionnaire aimed to gather the views of the participating students, leveraging teachers' ability to interpret the reactions and feelings of their classes. Additionally, it was crucial to compare the responses

of the direct users of the project (the schools) with the perceived impacts from other stakeholders. The questionnaire included an initial section to collect basic biographical information (e.g., the name of the institution, the dates of the start and end of the activity), followed by approximately 30 questions related to the reasons for class participation in the project, the perception of the Museum's actions, and the cultural context of the school (e.g., presence of museums in the local area, past participation in similar initiatives) and the students (e.g., participation in extracurricular courses, any previous visits to the Museum). Most questions were associated with UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators and Matarasso's indicators to maintain logical consistency between the two data collection methods.



The interviews revealed several key findings: It appears that the project objectives were successfully met, largely due to the Egyptian Museum's ongoing internal improvement efforts and productive collaboration with participating schools. Furthermore, the project has had a direct impact on the socio-cultural behaviours of stakeholders, evidenced by tangible outcomes such as increased investment in training by both school teachers and the museum, as well as the swift dissemination of project results through word of mouth within schools in the region.

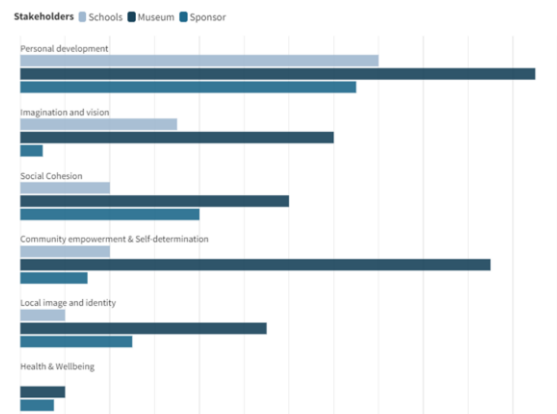


Regarding the effectiveness of the project's educational processes from an educational standpoint, the focus on objective 13, particularly evident in responses from schools, aligns with the consistent high quality of educational initiatives offered by the Egyptian Museum. Additionally, indicators 18 and 20 highlight the widespread recognition of the project's social impact, with excellent results observed across all involved parties.

The absence of targets specifically related to cultural engagement (e.g., targets 14, 16, and 17), coupled with limited presence regarding specific

aspects of the experience, can be attributed to the prevalent perception, particularly among schools in the initial years of the project, favouring a more 'traditional' educational visit to the Museum. However, it is reasonable to speculate that the replicability and scalability of the Egyptian Museum's approach could positively influence school organisation and student learning quality, facilitating the evolution of traditional school-museum relationships.

Relative to Matarasso's indicators, it is evident that the "Person Development" area received the most mentions, especially from Museum staff, as it reflects aspects closely related to the organisation and visit goals, including personal development and individual learning, which are fundamental elements of the learning process defined by the Museum. Secondly, some of the indicators mentioned by staff relate to the area of "Community empowerment and self-determination." This makes it possible to assess the Museum's networking with the local area, encouraging the exchange of information and the development of students' critical spirit, and offering opportunities for involvement that go beyond traditional school teaching. For schools, on the other hand, the "Imagination and Vision" area proves to be quite impactful, meaning that for teachers the project represents a highly effective form of cross-curricular teaching in promoting creativity and enhancing the educational experience, going beyond the traditional teaching approach and making the visit to the Egyptian Museum more engaging. For the sponsor, on the other hand, A/R's significant contribution lies in the area of "Social Cohesion," as the Museum is recognized for having developed, through this project, a place of aggregation and cultural cooperation capable of fostering a sense of belonging and community participation. In conclusion, the pillars little mentioned are those that tended not to find significant feedback during the interviews and thus were 'excluded' almost automatically from the analysis, as in the case of the pillar "Health and well-being."



Innovative elements and weaknesses of the model

The developed model effectively captured the complexity and breadth of the social impact of the Egyptian Museum A/R project. It demonstrated the effectiveness of creating a custom evaluation tool tailored to the project's specific characteristics and drawing from key international studies. However, despite yielding positive results, the application of the model revealed some weaknesses both during its testing on the Egyptian Museum A/R project and as a standalone model.

One of the most ambiguous features of the social impact assessment process demonstrated is its innovative nature. The study of a solution specifically tailored for this research has allowed for a thorough analysis of the essential characteristics of the project and the social impact to be measured. These include the more synergistic organisation of educational activities between schools and museums, the internalisation of logistics to optimise institutional energies, and the fundamental objective of reducing the educational gap in communities further from the capital and with fewer similar opportunities. At the same time, however, a model built on the characteristics of the Egyptian Museum has enabled the inclusion of a broader vision of social impact, encompassing the museum's long-term macro-development goals, its past and recent history, and what it signifies today for the city of Turin. Furthermore, the process of constructing the evaluation model has been enriched by an exhaustive array of sources, previous studies, and models applied in other contexts. This allows for a comprehensive and consolidated theory to capture a wide variety of social impacts of museum projects, as well as other cultural entities involving different publics or stakeholders than those involved in the present study.

When applying the model to the Egyptian Museum A/R project alone, a critical issue arose, necessitating a careful distinction between impacts stemming from the initiative and those resulting from the Museum's broader societal contributions.

Given the Egyptian Museum's significance, its multifaceted endeavours, and the numerous projects aimed at fostering territorial development, isolating the effects of a single project proved challenging. This challenge underscores a fundamental weakness of the model: the interpretation of results, which is crucial for presenting identified social impacts.

Interpreting results requires a deep understanding of the context under analysis, including the theoretical framework, analysis objectives, roles of involved actors, and other pertinent factors. Such thorough

investigation is essential for delineating the scope of analysis and pinpointing the specific social impacts generated.

Moreover, active and participatory involvement of project stakeholders is essential. While this was largely achieved in our research, it cannot be assumed, especially in projects involving diverse stakeholders. Direct dialogue with stakeholders is necessary to fully grasp their perceptions of impact, although this process must be handled with care. Results obtained from stakeholder consultations, such as interviews and questionnaires, require meticulous interpretation to discern genuine social impacts and filter out irrelevant data.

A further criticism of the model is its lack of application in other contexts. Without comparative studies, it's impossible to gauge how the model performs in different scenarios or to enrich the analysis with varied outcomes. Repeating the model's implementation in diverse contexts will undoubtedly enhance its strengths, address its weaknesses, refine its configuration, and improve its effectiveness in measuring social impacts.

Conclusion

Through the following method, we tried to highlight on one hand the complexity and the interpretative effort behind an operation of this kind; on the other hand, how the synergy between qualitative and quantitative data is essential if the subject of analysis is a cultural actor.

While economic impact assessments are more prevalent in the international academic and operational landscape, it's important to note that the returns from culture are not solely direct. Indirect returns, though challenging to measure without replication and scaling, can foster a broader and more generative cultural vision. Such a vision emphasises processes and languages that promote participation, inclusion, and well-being.

As noted by Walter Santagata (2014), cultural heritage and related enterprises should serve as responses to a demand for quality. Through the dissemination of intellectual content, they contribute to fostering an interactive society and shaping an ideal social environment conducive to living and communicating effectively. This perspective views culture not merely as aesthetic or recreational, but as a vital element for developing a social policy geared towards innovation and enhancing individual and collective well-being. Understanding our current position and charting a course for future development is crucial for institutions at large, and particularly for cultural institutions. It enables us to navigate towards a future horizon that is both promising and transformative.

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