



## COLLECTIONS 2030 & BEYOND

Activating heritage collections for  
sustainable development through  
cross-sector partnerships

### DAILY DIGEST – DAY 3 - COLLECTIONS AND PROSPERITY

Today, we examined the importance of heritage collections and collections-based organizations in contributing to the Prosperity dimension of sustainable development.

Our **keynote speaker** shared a message of hope for a future world where prosperity is defined and measured beyond GDP, and stressed the role collections can play in shaping that world. The world is currently going through geopolitical and geo-economic turbulence, and the progress towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals has been limited. While the SDGs are often measured as statistical gaps, behind those gaps there is a complex process of social and economic activity, and millions of people making daily decisions about their lives. Therefore, achieving sustainable development requires thinking about societal and environmental inequalities, and not just about economic growth. A conversation on this has started, fueled by lessons learned from the planet. The main implication of the 'beyond GDP' framework for cultural heritage is that while so far it has been measured through market value, moving forward, its intrinsic value should be highlighted.

Rethinking prosperity beyond numbers and revenues emerged in several of the talks we heard today. We can think about Indigenous People, and how they measure prosperity through relationships, cultural vitality, and collective strengths. But we can also look at the tourism sector, which in recent years has also been reflecting on what other indicators, beyond visitors' numbers, can be useful to define cultural institutions and heritage collections' contribution to prosperity for local communities. The answer lies in the inclusivity and accessibility of tourism.

Through the **lightning talks**, we virtually entered an exhibition at the Auckland Museum, that shows how heritage collections can support prosperity through empowered youth and reconnected elders, strengthened relationships, and a living connection to places. The message at the core is always the same: putting people at the center of collections. In Kenya and South Africa, young people and women were empowered to turn collections into living assets and to use them to drive change in their communities, but also as paths for employability in creative industry. Innovative partnerships between GLAMS (galleries, libraries, archives, museums) and cultural and creative industries are also key. They can take the shape of joint exhibitions, educational programs or storytelling, and can contribute to different Sustainable Development Goals such as SDGs 4, 8 and 11. As the findings of a global survey told us, creative professionals see GLAMS as places for inspiration, imagination, creativity, education and inclusive dialogue.



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Moving to the **panel session**, we learned that cultural heritage and collections contribute to prosperity first of all by creating a dialogue and a space of discussion and inter-connection with the community. But also, by going through a shift in their role, from simply attracting visitors, to contributing to innovation, strengthening of social capital, while continuing to be trusted institutions for citizens.

Lastly, partnership remains the most effective strategy through which collection-based organizations can contribute to prosperity. And what we heard from our panelist is that these partnerships can span across GLAMS, the education and research sectors, the monitoring and evaluation sector, local governments, civil society organizations, private sector, corporate institutions and banks. Singapore National Library partnership with the Autism resource center is a remarkable and innovative example of how libraries can create employment for persons with specific needs, while serving the community.