

CHAIR REPORT – 2021-2022

This report is mostly based on the 2021 report until January 2022 to ICOM SAREC

Activities – symposiums and conferences

During 2021 the following events were held – these were either DEMHIST events or collaborations in which DEMHIST was a partner:

Annual Conference 2021

Historic House Museums for a Sustainable World: Challenges and Opportunities

The annual DEMHIST Conference for 2021 “Historic House Museums for a Sustainable World: Challenges and Opportunities” was held as an online event over 5 days, October 4-8 2021, in collaboration with Erfgoed Academie (Netherlands Heritage Academy), ICOM NL and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.

The DEMHIST General Assembly was held at the end of the conference. The General Assembly was attended by approximately 30 members (and two guests), representing 11 countries.

The aim of the conference was to strengthen knowledge exchange and cooperation within the museum and heritage field, and to strengthen cooperation in the field of sustainability at Historic House Museums.

Overall, house museums professionals are aware of the need for the implementation of more sustainable practices in general and in House Museums in particular. Although a number of museums are already taking green measures, thinking sustainably and thus contributing to the realisation of the United Nations' Sustainability Targets for a more sustainable 'green' future, for many it remains a theoretical goal alone. There is still a world to be won, and the House Museums want to do their bit. The aim of the conference was to raise awareness and give tools to House Museum professionals for sustainable best practice implementation on all levels.

An important question was: how can we, as historic house museums, translate ambitions into practice? How can we meet the challenges, starting with our historic buildings, which are often far from sustainable to begin with? How can we protect our valuable historic houses against climate change?

At the same time, however, we must ask ourselves how can we make use of our great potential as vectors for social and sustainable change? These and other questions were addressed at our DEMHIST 2021.

The meeting theme was divided in three sub themes:

- 1 Action: what can we do ourselves
- 2 Awareness: how to create awareness among our visitors
- 3 Resilience: how to become more resilient during and after crises

For a summary of the programme including general information, presentations, lectures, working sessions, online study visits and created outcome see:

<https://padlet.com/erfgoedacademie/home>

The daily programme is detailed below. In addition, there were daily informal online meetings at the online lunch cafe and a daily meet and greet.

Day 1, October 4

1. Opening by Yvonne Ploum (Netherlands), DEMHIST chair; Albert Garlandini (Italy), ICOM President; Astrid Janssen (Netherlands), Alderwoman Sustainability and Heritage, Municipality of Amersfoort; Diederik von Bönninghausen (Netherlands), chair ICOM Netherlands; Susan Lammers (Netherlands), general director Cultural Heritage of the Netherlands.
2. Performance and Music
3. Paper presentations 12

Day 2 October 5 Action

1. Daily catch-up for eastern hemisphere time zones
2. Online study visit Spakenburg (Netherlands)
3. Keynote Aishwarya Tipnis (India): Actions in Sustainability, Adopting a Sustainist Mindset
4. Expert sessions: 9 experts in two rounds shared their knowledge about the three subthemes

Day 3 October 6 Awareness

1. Daily catch-up for eastern hemisphere time zones
2. Online Study visit Iconic Houses: Rietveld Schröder House, House van Ravestein (Netherlands),
3. Poster presentations
4. Keynote Christopher Garthe (Germany): Creating Awareness for the Great Transformation
5. 6 Online field labs to the Groeneveld Castle (Netherlands)

Day 4 October 7 Resilience

1. Daily catch-up for eastern hemisphere time zones
2. Online study visit Mart van Schijndel House (Netherlands)
3. Keynote Sarah Sutton (USA): Resilience during and after Covid 19
4. 6 workshops with experts, two rounds

Day 5 October 8 Summation

1. Daily catch-up for eastern hemisphere time zones
2. Closing Ceremony
3. Closing movie
4. Collection results: moving forward / the week in words
5. General Assembly: members only

Outreach and promotion for the conference by email and our website was made in four languages – the three official ICOM languages of English, French, and Spanish as well as the addition of Portuguese in order to reach a wider audience, especially in category 3 and 4 countries.

Initially, the conference was organised in such a way that parts of the program would be duplicated to comfortably accommodate participants from all time zones. Because of the very limited registrations from the far eastern hemisphere, those duplicated programs were eliminated. Instead we inserted a “Daily catch-up for eastern hemisphere time zones” at the beginning of each day’s program.

The conference was attended by 65 participants from 27 countries. (16 ICOM category 1 countries; 5 cat. 2 countries; 5 cat. 3 countries, including Azerbaijan, Brazil, Guatemala, India and Jamaica); and 1 cat. 4 country (Haiti).

Workshop: On the way to a new Museum Definition, March 17, 2021

In this online (Zoom platform) workshop Lauran Bonilla-Merchav (Costa Rica), co-chair ICOM Define presented the Define process to our members, detailing the “why” and the “how” of the process to develop a new museum definition. Members discussed important questions in small breakout groups and shared the outcome in a plenary discussion. As the DEMHIST board, our aim was to involve our members in the process and encourage them to take part in the survey. 35 Members from 17 countries attended the webinar.

In addition to this workshop, DEMHIST developed and distributed a survey via the SurveyMonkey platform, to invite direct, individual input towards DEMHIST’s contribution to the process. The survey consisted of 41 questions, in English, French and Spanish. In addition, as part of our efforts to strengthen collaboration with and receive feedback from members in Portuguese speaking countries, the survey was translated in Portuguese as well. We received 87 responses, which were cross referenced and combined in the DEMHIST submission of 16 keywords/concepts with descriptions.

Webinar: When Private Homes Become Museums: Transforming the Sursock Palace after the Beirut Blast on 19 March 2021.

DEMHIST chair Yvonne Ploum was one of the speakers in the webinar that was organized by ALIPH (International Alliance for the protection of heritage in conflicted areas) representing ICOM-DEMHIST on the panel of internationally recognized speakers in the field.

Activities: DEMHIST National Groups

Italy

DEMHIST Italy was able to organise three online meetings, two hours each, on 8 April, 22 April, 6 May, on the theme "**Museum houses in times of pandemics, reflections and projects: what to change and what to leave**". Each meeting touched a different theme: 1) new audiences 2) new ways of communicating 3) good practices of sustainability in the collections and in the enhancement of the staff. All conferences were recorded and are available on the ICOM Italia website by typing "Commissione Case Museo Icom Italia".

Work on the e-book for the 2019 meeting "Hygiene and Bathrooms in the House-Museums of the Twentieth Century: Objects, Spaces, Practices" has been completed.

Brazil

On May 5 2021, a meeting was held with representatives of Brazilian House Museums and Historic Houses in order to raise awareness of DEMHIST, its mission, and its main activities. The meeting was facilitated by Ana Cristina Carvalho, DEMHIST member, member of the Consulting Board of ICOM Brazil, and former councillor and vice-chair of the DEMHIST board; and by António Ponte, current vice-chair of the DEMHIST board. Brazil has a significant number of museum institutions of this type and it is important to increase the number of participations in DEMHIST and its activities.

It was mentioned that one of the difficulties is linguistic and another is the need for greater access to content produced by DEMHIST.

On November 4 2021, **XV Brazilian Meeting of Palaces, Houses-Museums and Historic Houses** was held. The event was supported by the Government of the State of São Paulo, through the Artistic Collection of the State. During this meeting, António Ponte, DEMHIST vice chair, presented a paper on Houses-Museum and Sustainability titled "Houses-Museum and Sustainability - The SDGs in Culture and Cultural Heritage".

Portugal

Outreach meetings

As part of the process of attracting new members and broadening DEMHIST's spectrum of influence with regard to promoting and disseminating house-museums in the context of general museology, the Portuguese national group has been promoting a set of

initiatives that aim to inform members of Portuguese-speaking countries of DEMHIST's mission, role, and objectives.

In this context, we held meetings with Brazil and with museum professionals in Mozambique with the goal of supporting the revitalization of museum units in Africa, where the difficulties experienced are still very great.

In addition to the meeting with Brazil mentioned above, The Portuguese group, in partnership with ICOM Portugal, promoted a series of meetings held on September 20, 2021 and December 13, 2021 aimed at establishing a partnership and support from DEMHIST and ICOM Portugal for ICOM Mozambique in order to create new foundations and structures for museological work in that country. At the same time, this could be the basis for the beginning of a more structured support to other Portuguese-speaking African countries.

Research

In 2021, DEMHIST started a partnership with Fondazione Adolfo Pini for a new grant programme. This first year being a pilot, the grant programme - if successful - will continue annually and be subject to competitive applications, and include a grant of 3,000 euro to conduct research on a predefined research topic. The funds for this grant are provided by the Fondazione Pini, and administered by DEMHIST. For 2021 the research focused on BEST PRACTICES in HOUSE MUSEUMS implemented during and following the COVID-19 pandemic. DEMHIST will seek to publish the resulting research report. This project is managed by DEMHIST board member Dalia Gallico. The researcher is Angelica Piras, a graduate student at the University of Bologna who is carrying out research for her thesis through an ICOM Italia internship. The work done so far has essentially involved the mapping of the house museums and the creation of the questionnaire. Regarding the mapping, this started from the lists of members already involved in DEMHIST and continued with the search of existing regional house museum maps or Google maps. Because of internal issues at Fondazione Pini, the research was suspended and ultimately the project cancelled.

Publications

The digital e-book proceedings from the symposium “Hygiene and Bathrooms in the House-Museums of the Twentieth Century: Objects, Spaces, Practices,” held on March 15, 2019 and supported by the Commission of ICOM Italia, in partnership with Fondazione Adolfo Pini and FAI (The National Trust for Italy) and hosted in Milano at Villa Necchi, Campiglio, Milan were [published and posted](#) on the DEMHIST website. The proceedings are in Italian and include articles from 18 contributors.

Online communication

Website

We have expanded, and have plans to continue expanding, material available through our website. Our conference provided the platform to develop an online body of knowledge about museums and sustainability. For the conference we created a temporary dedicated website and during the conference itself and in the months since

all information was available through the conference Padlet. The conference introduced many members to various online platforms for the first time, and they were able to experience new innovative technologies that create greater interactive online activity.

Social Media

We have undertaken concerted efforts to seek the accounts of and to “follow” both individual and institutional DEMHIST members on Twitter, in the anticipation that they will follow us back. Additionally, both on Facebook and on Twitter we have become more active by more “liking” and reposting or more retweeting relevant posts and tweets.

Twitter: Our account gained 88 new followers during 2021, with a spike in October around our conference with 29 new followers. We followed about 50-55 accounts (institutional members) during the year. We created two lists, and a new direct message group. We also helped the ICOM official account with a document of social media recommendations and started to publish #followfriday tweets to engage our institutional members community.

Facebook: Over the year, our account grew from 1073 to 1387 followers. The account was used extensively for promoting our webinars and the conference, and the direct messenger is a useful tool for communicating with followers. Our “Sunday Houses” series dedicated to DEMHIST member house museums continued through the first part of the year.

For our 2021 conference we executed a digital marketing strategy with the objective of directing a targeted audience to the event website. The target audience was further segmented into different ad groups with varying degrees of specificity.

Audience targeting was based on: 1) Keywords, 2) Pages followed, 3) Country, 4) Language.

Marketing messages targeting these audiences were deployed and advertised on Twitter and Facebook from September 20th to October 5th.

The results of the campaign include:

- 341,000 people reached
- 430,000 impressions
- 25,836 clicks to the event website

Membership

Number of Members in 2021

2021 Individual Members: 460

2021 Institutional Members: 135

Total: 595

Number of Members in 2020

2020 Individual Members: 466

2020 Institutional Members: 123

Total: 589

Number of represented countries NUMBER: 69

Increase/Decrease of Membership in % (and number)::

Individual Members: 1.29% (6) decrease

Institutional Members: 9.76% (12) increase

Total: 1.02 % (6) increase

Particular emphasis was placed on outreach to students and young members from students category 3 and 4 countries in the conference promotion. We hope to see an increase in membership during 2022 and 2023 as a result of this.

During 2022 the following events were held – these were either DEMHIST events or collaborations in which DEMHIST was a partner

2022 “On the way to Prague” Webinars

We organised three webinars in the runup to Prague:

March 14

"On our way to Prague" discussed the topics of our paper sessions (Power of Museums and Risk Management and Resilience in House Museums) with the aim of increasing paper submissions. (ca. 47 participants)

April 22

Demhist Brown café: an informal meet and greet, in addition, following the success of the informal meet and greet sessions during our 2021 conference, and in response to the post-conference survey which indicated an interest in this. By organising this our members were able to get to know each other before they arrived in Prague. (ca. 17 participants)

June 21

‘On our way to Prague’ focussed on the conference itself, the offsite meetings and houses museums in and around Prague. (ca. 33 participants)

2022 26th ICOM Triennial: The Power of Museums (Prague)

August 20 – August 26

DEMhist had two paper sessions during the conference: one about the conference theme of The Power of Museums, and the second as a follow up of our 2021 conference on Sustainability with a 2022 focus on the subjects of Disaster Risk Management and Resilience. DEMHIST was part of a joint session in collaboration with DRMC, ICMS, ICOM-CC and ICOM-JAPAN. The topic of the session was: Resilience of Historic House Museums and their Collections to Risks Posed by Climate Change, environmental

disasters, and conflict zones. These sessions were very well attended (standing room only), and were all hybrid, with both physical and virtual presenters and participants. During the conference DEMHIST chair Yvonne Ploum was elected as Spokesperson for the International Committees of ICOM (term 2022-2025)

Board Activities

The Demhist Board continued to do much of its work through its 5 working groups: Grants, Communications, Outreach, Conference and Governance. Focus through 2022 for the Conference, Communications, and Grants groups was on preparation for the Triennial Conference with each group preparing programming and material in coordination with our members and the ICOM Prague organising committee. The Governance working group concentrated on preparing the suggested amendments to the Demhist statutes that will come up for vote at the 2022 GA. The chair attended several meetings of the Advisory Council.