



All inclusive! Museums as places for ALL children

12th Hands On! Conference
October 22 – 26, 2019, Frankfurt Young Museum, Germany

About the conference

Hands On! is an international network of museum professionals. Our aim is to make all museums and science centers meaningful places for children, to professionalize the (children's) museum field and to share our expertise. Every two years, we organize an international conference at which we explore the latest developments in the field of children's education in museums, children's museums and science centers. We aim to learn from and be inspired by keynote speakers, workshops and exclusive museum visits. Don't miss this chance to meet participants from over 30 nations and exchange ideas with professionals and experts from all over the world!

The 12th biennial international Hands On! Conference is hosted by the Frankfurt Young Museum. First opened in 1972 as the in-house children's museum of the Historical Museum, it is home to a unique pedagogical collection. In 2018, the Young Museum received a total make-over, including new exhibition spaces, workshop areas and authentic historical play areas. Programs revolve around regional historical and cultural topics and encourage independent thinking and autonomous learning in a hands-on environment.

The conference will focus on museums' roles as places of social inclusion. We would like to discuss how to cater to specific needs of diverse audiences, and take a closer look at how children's museums use collections to impart knowledge on cultural heritage. Last but not least, we would like to explore new educational formats, especially digital learning as a tool for cultural education.



Focus topics

Diverse audience(s) and social inclusion

Today's museum audiences are highly diverse: intergenerational, transcultural, from a variety of social backgrounds, with (or without) various forms of handicaps. The museum is a place of social inclusion: As keepers of cultural heritage, we are responsible for providing cultural education for everybody! Yet diverse types of audiences require educational programs designed to fit their specific needs: grandchildren and grandparents or families and younger children require different educational formats than teenagers or young adults. Handicaps and special needs should be respected and met as well as transcultural experiences or biographies. How can we develop exhibitions and programs for everyone? How can we design accessible exhibitions and museums? How can we be "all-inclusive"?

Collection-based cultural education

As museums, we exhibit and care for artifacts and objects of historical or cultural significance. Using these collections, cultural education aims to help audiences gain access to material as well as non-material culture. How do museums and children's museums succeed in using objects to render cultural heritage more tangible for children? What topics do children's museums work with, and how? How can object-based exhibitions designed for general museum audiences become more attractive for families and children?



New formats of cultural education: digital learning and beyond

Every day, museum professionals meet the challenge to design and develop new culture education formats for a diverse audience. Following the digital turn, digital learning, gamification and changed expectations of our audiences have shaped and transformed our field of work. How can digital learning be used as a tool to design exhibitions and educational programs for children? How can well-known forms of education, maybe from different fields of interest, be modified and adapted to fit new needs? We would like to discuss new, avant-garde creative formats and methods of cultural education.