

## **Snack Dialogues**

The Museo de América has a strong tradition of devising teaching and learning activities which support the development of intercultural skills in children. The Museum believes that on many occasions the attitudes and motivations of the children cause their parents to question their own beliefs.

### **Objectives**

Based on this conviction, the objectives set for the *Snack Dialogues* were:

- To develop a dialogue between teachers, parents and students from local schools with a high percentage of foreign pupils, based on a shared project;
- To test the potential of the Museum as a space for negotiation, by favouring the active participation of parents in the development of the Museum's educational offer;
- To promote dialogue and debate through themed itineraries emphasising the life experiences of visitors;
- To foster the relationship between schools, families and the Museum;
- To learn about the opinions of a specific target group regarding the actual ability of the Museum to promote intercultural dialogue.

### **Process**

Three local schools were involved (Isabel La Católica, Rufino Blanco, Nuestra Señora de la Paloma), all with a high percentage of children with parents born outside Spain.

After preliminary meetings with the schools, during which the objectives for the *Snack Dialogues* were set, the project was organised in three main phases.

The first one consisted in themed visits to the Museum for small groups of parents. A total of eight museum visits took place. The parents were provided with pencils and paper in order to write down their comments. They enjoyed the visit and were excited to share their thoughts and opinions with the rest of the group during the meeting that took place after the guided tour. They discussed the pieces they saw, and brainstormed about possible classroom activities the Museum could offer to their children. Parents were interested in a wide range of subjects related to the Museum's collections, including agriculture, basket-making, exploration and musical instruments.

In the subsequent phase, two proposals were selected and developed into fully-fledged educational workshops.

Finally, the two workshops were implemented in the three schools involved:

- Ecosystem workshop. Using natural resources, climate conditions and the environment as starting points of the workshop, the children built house models found in different areas of America such as rainforest, coastline or the Polar Regions. The importance of the environment in all the aspects of human life was emphasised, for example by creating characters with appropriate clothes and tools;
- Storytelling workshop. This workshop had music as its core, enriched with natural sounds of the rainforest. Younger children re-told an old tale or a myth.

In all of these activities the Museum cooperated closely with the school teachers, the Totumo Association (contact with schools, organisation and implementation of the

guided visits for parents) and the URPI Association (development of the educational activities and their implementation in the classroom).

### **Outcomes**

The Museo de América and its school partners worked in a completely new way in order to accomplish this project. Schools usually organise their own visits to get to know the Museum. On this occasion, however, the roles were reversed and it was the teachers who welcomed the Museum's proposals in their schools.

While the Museum's collections and display usually lend themselves to an exploration of distinct American cultures, the main focus of the *Snack Dialogues* project was on identifying themes which could be accessible to anyone, thereby promoting the active involvement of participants in interpretation processes, initiating dialogue between them and taking on board their personal perspectives and interests.

The *Snack Dialogues* were particularly successful in establishing bridges between parents, students, professors and the Museum.

On the other hand, a strategy to encourage families to go back to the Museum after the school activities took place was not devised, which makes it difficult to evaluate the actual impact of the project on all those involved.

### **Institutions**

Museo de América, Madrid

<http://museodeamerica.mcu.es/>

Asociación cultural URPI

Asociación cultural Totumo

### **Coordinators**

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### **Target groups**

Parents of children attending three local schools with a high percentage of foreign pupils