

**Inclusive Art Gallery Practices:** Exploring Collaborative Processes and Pedagogy in Outreach Community Programming

**Pratiques inclusives en galerie d'art:** exploration des processus concertés et de la pédagogie dans le cadre de programmes d'action communautaires

Natasha Reid | Concordia University

Currently, many museums and galleries are attempting to create more welcoming and meaningful experiences for individuals who tend to be reluctant to enter and participate in these institutions. Art galleries and museums are examining and experimenting with ways to connect diverse publics through socially inclusive community outreach programs. This paper provides a critical examination of one such program located in Montreal, Canada.

Plusieurs musées et galeries s'efforcent actuellement de proposer aux personnes qui hésitent à visiter et jouir de ces institutions des expériences plus accueillantes et plus concrètes. Galeries d'art et musées étudient et testent certaines façons de rejoindre divers auditoires dans le cadre de programmes d'action communautaire inclusifs. Cet article se veut une analyse critique d'un de ces programmes, mis en œuvre à Montréal, au Canada.

## Introduction

It has been suggested that approaches to museum education and policy parallel changes in the political philosophies dominating at any given point in history (Hein, 1998). Recently, society has been undergoing noticeable changes on many levels (King, 1998). Currently, in Western societies, at least, “building social capital and social networks is critical” (Holman Conwill & Marmion Roosa 2003, p.42). Governments have increasingly begun to contribute money to social inclusion measures in an effort to comply with these societal changes (Carrington, 1999). **As government-funded public institutions, art museums<sup>1</sup> are attempting to reflect these societal changes by becoming more socially connected and inclusive.** Helen Luckett (1985) outlines the momentousness and urgency for transformation:

If galleries are to survive far into the twenty-first-century and if they are to have any real significance for twenty-first-century people, then they have got to take a positive attitude to their public and to rethink their purpose (p. 140).

Furthermore, museum and galleries are becoming more aware of their moral responsibility to become promoters of social inclusion. Richard Sandell (1999) acknowledges that “museums and galleries of all kinds have both the potential to contribute towards the combating of social inequality and a responsibility to do so” (p. 3). He has stated that museums, along with all publicly funded organizations, have a “moral obligation to consider their potential to combat discrimination and disadvantage” (Sandell, 1999, p. 30).

In response to these societal changes and institutional revelations, museums are attempting to **better reflect society’s new needs through embarking on a process of restructuring and reorganizing** that includes the aim to increase their community involvement and to create stronger connections to diverse audiences. This is a departure from traditional practices of programming for an exclusive, scholarly elite. Janine Andrews and Anne Hayward (1994) have noted that “the cumulative effect of these changes is that museums are compelled to demonstrate their relevance to the communities they serve” (p. 62). In an effort to take greater care in reaching out to **diverse publics to fulfill their roles as truly public institutions, many museums are attempting** to make their institutions more attractive, welcoming, relevant, and meaningful to individuals who would not typically venture into museums, and may even feel intimidated to do so. This has led many museums to experiment with ways to connect to diverse publics on deeper levels through socially inclusive community outreach measures.

Sandell (2003) observed that the term *social inclusion* has been widely accepted and employed in the museum world. Over the past decade, a large number of publications have focused on the social responsibility of the museum, often referring to inclusive practices (Dodd & Sandell, 2001; Golding, 2010; Sandell, 2002, 2003; Silverman, 2010, to name a few). Sandell (2003) has pointed out that the term is often misunderstood. Many museums consider themselves to be socially inclusive institutions if they expend minimal efforts in this area. Sandell notes that the term was originally employed in the museum world to describe access or audience development. Social inclusion has become much more than sending brochures to non-initiated publics or offering discounts to certain groups of people. Although these are valued efforts that should continue, much more needs to be done. Sandell argues that the term is far more significant, multi-faceted, and complex, requiring a radical shift in the museums' purposes and goals, transforming their relationships with and roles within society.

Sandell (2002, 2003) encourages museums to contribute to social inclusion at the individual, community and societal levels. At the individual level, museums can improve "self-esteem, confidence and creativity" (Sandell 2003, p. 45). At the community level, museums can spark social regeneration, empowering communities to "take greater control over their lives and the development of the neighbourhoods in which they live" (p. 45). Finally, museums are able to incorporate inclusive practices and stimulate change at a societal level by representing diverse communities in their curatorial decisions, promoting open-mindedness and respect. Through consciously engaging in inclusive practices at all three levels in all sectors of the museum, museums can become socially inclusive institutions.

What issues should be addressed and which publics should be targeted when planning socially inclusive practices in museums are questions that cross the minds of many museum educators and other museum professionals. The Canadian government has outlined:

Government efforts in the outcome area of a diverse society that promotes linguistic duality and social inclusion include the promotion of bilingualism, social justice, the social engagement of Canadians, the celebration of Canada's diversity and multicultural heritage, and the elimination of racism and discrimination. (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2010).

Thus, in the eyes of the Canadian government, socially inclusive practices promote diversity, reflecting the multicultural make-up of the country. What are effective ways to develop and implement socially inclusive practices focused on such diversity in art galleries?

Margaret Mackechnie, Assistant Director of Social Services in the Nottingham City Council, has stated that “it is through examples of specific projects that colleagues within the social sector can begin to understand the potential of museums, and, in time, that will filter through the organization” (Dodd & Sandell, 2001, p. 117). This article, then, provides a critical examination of an example of an attempted socially inclusive program at La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The program aimed to stimulate social inclusion at the individual, community, and societal levels through engaging with a community group that represents the multicultural fabric of Canadian society.

### **Gallery Profile**

La Centrale is a non-profit gallery and artist-run center grounded in feminist principles. This centre was founded in 1973 by a group of women artists, with the intention of enabling contemporary art created by women to be more accessible to the public and to establish a venue for women artists to discuss the challenges associated with being a woman in the contemporary art world (La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse [LCGP], 2004, p. 3). During their struggles to acquire exhibition opportunities amidst the heavily male-dominated art world, these women founded an alternative gallery space run by women artists. The mandate of La Centrale has evolved over the years. In 2007, the mandate was revised to acknowledge and support underrepresented artists from a variety of backgrounds, including male artists who fit into this category. La Centrale’s current mandate states that its goal is to engage a “broad spectrum of underrepresented artists and their initiatives within established art institutions” (LCGP, 2007a, para. 1). Thus, La Centrale’s newest mandate reflects today’s broader goals for social inclusivity.

La Centrale promotes critical inquiry through providing a platform for discourses surrounding art, feminism, gender theory, intercultural, and multidisciplinary interests. In order to ensure that this platform is founded on relevancy and inclusivity, La Centrale “attempts to represent the interests of its constantly changing community” and to “establish a dialogue with various cultures and art communities” (Regroupement des Centres d’Artistes Autogérés du Québec [RCAAQ], 2002, p. 82). According to the RCAAQ (2002), La Centrale has been working to achieve this through encouraging collaborations between artists and communities, professional exchanges and partnerships with organizations.

In an effort to further this dialogue between the gallery and its community and to encourage greater inclusivity, at the beginning of 2006, La Centrale decided to develop the *Comité Quartier* (Neighbourhood Committee) program, which is a program that aims to encourage community groups consisting of uninitiated contemporary gallery publics to engage in workshops at La Centrale that promote positive, welcoming, non-elitist encounters between these groups and

contemporary art, artists and art spaces. From the initial conception of this program, La Centrale felt that it was important to promote collaborative practices in the creation of these programs to support their efforts to advocate inclusivity.

The research project, outlined in this article, was conducted during the early stages of this program's development to inquire into the level of inclusivity being promoted in this program and to develop recommendations for this gallery and other art spaces attempting to instill inclusive practices through community educational programming. The intention of the inquiry was to inform art gallery and art museum outreach educational programming policy development.

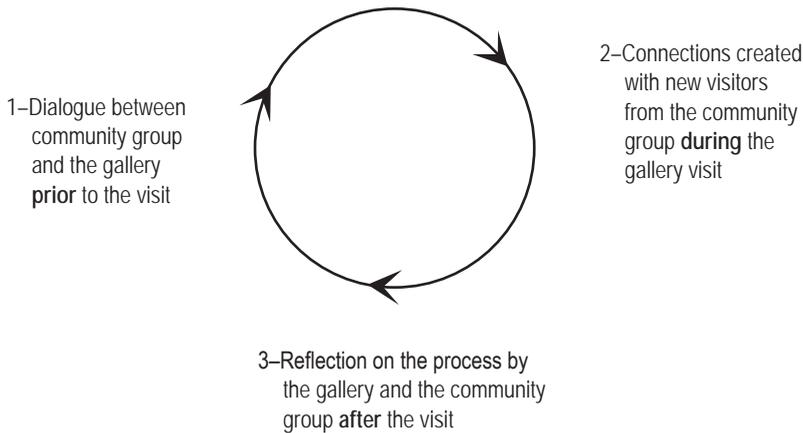
### **Community Group Profile**

The Immigrant Worker's Centre of Montreal [IWC] was the first community group to which La Centrale reached out. The reasons why La Centrale chose to develop a relationship with this group were twofold: IWC is comprised of individuals from a wide variety of cultural groups that make up Canadian society; and, IWC shares many of the same values as La Centrale, making for an ideal basis for collaborative ventures.

The Immigrant Workers Centre of Montreal was founded in 2000 by a group of Filipino-Canadian "union and former union organizers and their activist and academic allies" (IWC, 2011, para. 3). The centre was created to offer a safe environment outside of the workplace where immigrant workers from any cultural background could discuss their individual situations. The IWC provides counseling on rights, popular education, and political campaigns. This organization asserts that "labour education is a priority, targeting organizations in the community and increasing workers' skills and analyses" (IWC, 2011, p. 5). The IWC's primary aim continues to be to defend the rights of immigrants in their places of work and to advocate "dignity, respect and justice" (IWC, 2011, p. 1), paralleling the principles La Centrale advocates in their practices within the art world.

Skills for Change is the IWC's primary educational program. This program works towards teaching individuals basic computer literacy, in order to assist them in learning more about labour rights, workers' rights, and social policy education, as well as to help them find work or succeed in their current jobs. The participants come from very diverse cultural backgrounds, yet share a common desire to learn about workers' rights and computer skills. The curriculum also creates a connection between the struggles of immigrant workers and other social and economic struggles, with the intention of building alliances.

Figure 1. The Framework for Active Inclusion



It seemed fitting for La Centrale to reach out to this socially inclusive and active community centre and to create an alliance with the primary educational program they offer—Skills for Change. La Centrale aimed to conscientiously reach out to this group in an inclusive manner. As the outreach art educator and co-creator of the *Comité Quartier* program, I felt it was essential to develop a framework for inclusive engagement prior to working with this group, in order to maximize the potential for success, the nature of which I will now briefly discuss.

### Developing a Framework for Socially Inclusive Practices

Community groups often aim to foster empowerment, ownership, and inclusivity through incorporating their members into decision-making processes. To align with these same objectives in developing and implementing inclusive gallery programming for community groups of uninitiated publics, it would seem appropriate to include their voices in each stage of the gallery experience. At the conception point of this project, I proposed a framework that promoted socially inclusive, collaborative, and dialogue-based programming, which was intended to assist galleries in creating effective and positive programming with community groups. Because the series of steps proposed are grounded upon inclusive and active practices, I titled this template “Framework for Active Inclusion” (see Figure 1). The initial form of this framework contained three steps that focused on ways to actively and conscientiously include community groups in gallery programming.

In the first stage of the framework, the gallery engages in a dialogue with the community group prior to the group experiencing a visit at the gallery. This dialoging process includes the gallery education staff and the community group facilitator participating in a meeting prior to the workshop. The facilitator is able to pass the desires and needs of the community group on to the gallery during a dialoguing process where s/he acts as a representative for the community group. The goals of the community group and the goals of the gallery are communicated during the dialogue. Links between these goals are extrapolated, pinpointing a joint vision. From there, both groups collaboratively work towards creating a workshop plan that fulfills these linked goals.

The second stage in the Framework for Active Inclusion focuses on implementation of the workshop. This workshop evolves out of the initial dialogue that discovers a joint vision through the common goals between the two collaborating groups. In this way both collaborators benefit from the workshop, fulfilling MacGregor's (1993) definition for collaborative undertakings—that is, an endeavor in which each of two or more groups obtain benefits from a project. In this framework, the workshop connects the content to the specific needs and desires of the community group, as revealed in the first step of the process. Through observing that their ideas, their needs, their desires, and complimentary learning experiences are being incorporated in the gallery workshop, the community group will have a greater chance of feeling included in the gallery and thus valued. This will increase the possibility for fulfilling Sandell's plea for the promotion of the community group's participation in decision-making processes, and potentially encouraging participants to become active, empowered members in establishing how they should be included in society (Sandell, 2002).

The final stage of the Framework for Active Inclusion is a reflective process that examines the execution of the first and second steps, in an effort to inform future projects. This stage is of utmost importance in action research and project assessment. Once the workshop has occurred, the museum educator embarks on a second dialoguing process with the community group facilitator to examine the outcomes of the experience and to determine whether or not the community group's and the gallery's goals for the workshop were fulfilled. Likewise, the gallery educator reflects on the experience through a written reflection in order to outline how closely each organization came to achieving their goals during the project. From these results, the gallery has the opportunity to examine what works and what needs improvement. Also, the gallery has the opportunity to identify ways to improve. The diagram for the Framework for Active Inclusion is circular to highlight the cyclical nature of the method, as the final reflective step informs future encounters with community groups.

The three stages of the Framework for Active Inclusion aim to integrate the community group into the processes involved in community outreach programming, aspiring to cater to the interests, needs, goals, and desires of the community group, while fulfilling the gallery's goals for such programming. To determine how effective the framework is in enabling galleries to successfully formulate socially inclusive programming with local community groups, and ways to improve this template, I tested the framework when implementing a collaborative project between the Immigrant Workers Centre and La Centrale in 2007.

### **Implementing a Collaborative Outreach Program**

To implement the initial stage of the Framework for Active Inclusion, I conducted a focus-group meeting. This focus group was comprised of three participants: the facilitator for the Skills for Change Program; the programming assistant at La Centrale; and myself, as the outreach gallery educator at La Centrale. I compiled a set of topic areas that assisted the focus group in discovering their collective vision for outreach educational programming for the specific community group. The main areas examined the mandates of each organization and their goals for this project. These topic areas acted as catalysts and as guides in the process of an open dialogue, lacking a rigid structure. This format was chosen in order to provide a relaxed and unthreatening atmosphere. It was the community group facilitator's first encounter with the environment of La Centrale and her first face-to-face meeting with the programming assistant and me. Thus, I wanted to ensure that she felt a sense of comfort, rather than experiencing anxiety often associated with an interview. This focus-group meeting was intended to be a dialogue where the representatives from both organizations could share their personal experiences, opinions and goals—a 'getting to know you' session as well as an opportunity to formulate the workshop details. The discussion took place at the gallery, since part of the purpose of this initial encounter was to introduce the community group facilitator to the gallery environment in order to be able to relay that information to her community group members before partaking in the art gallery visit.

The Skills for Change program facilitator explained that it was important to explore computer skills that could assist the community group members in acquiring and maintaining work, as well as skills that may help them in gaining knowledge about their rights as workers, during the workshop at La Centrale. The programmer at La Centrale outlined that the main goal of the *Comité Quartier* program is to providing non-elitist, inclusive, and dialogue-based encounters with contemporary art to community groups consisting of members that may not otherwise enter contemporary gallery spaces. She also maintained that although La Centrale is aiming to adapt the workshop to the needs of the Skills for Change Program, the exploration of contemporary art still needed to be a primary component of the workshop.

Based on the information gathered during the focus groups meeting, it was determined that the *Orientité* exhibit (May 18 to June 10, 2007), which was soon to be mounted, would be an ideal exhibit to work with for this collaboration. This exhibit centered on issues surrounding the adoption of Asian—particularly Korean—children in Western countries. The main issues explored were identity, displacement, cultural heritage, and how art can be utilized to explore these areas. The three artists—Adel Kim Gouillon, Jane Jin Kaisen and Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine—originated from Korea and are Korean in appearance, but were adopted at very young ages in European countries. Thus, their “upbringing does not reflect their said culture” (LCGP 2007b, p. 2). These artists create art in order to attempt “to recall and reconstruct a ‘whitened’ and erased identity” (LCGP, 2007b, para. 2). The three artists utilize their personal creativity in defining their developing identities. The exhibition was a result of a collaborative effort between the three artists. It consisted of photographs of the artists as adults, holding their adoption numbers, and the embassies and agencies connected to their adoptions. Other photographs taken of the artists in Montreal were also exhibited.

This exhibit was chosen for the collaboration between the Immigrant Workers Centre and La Centrale for three reasons: for its inherent collaborative nature; for its connection to issues dealt with at the Immigrant Workers Centre, including identity, displacement, and cultural heritage; and for the photographic medium employed, since this medium has the potential to be explored digitally through the use of computers, connecting to the Skills for Change program's goal to improve participants' computer skills for the workforce.

We decided to focus on contemporary digital photography and cultural identity in the workshop. This was to be explored through discussion-based interactions with the *Orientité* exhibit and a hands-on component, where participants would have the opportunity to work with digital photography technology and associated computer work.

The workshop occurred in May 2007 and was facilitated by La Centrale's programming assistant, the Skill for Change's educator, the artists from the *Orientité* exhibit, and myself—the gallery outreach educator. Four members of the Skills for Change group arrived at the gallery in the morning with their educator. None of these participants had ever been in a gallery space before, and all of them appeared to be slightly uncomfortable upon entering, despite our efforts to be as welcoming and comforting as possible. Chairs were set up for each participant and facilitator, and were arranged in a circular format. The programming assistant officially welcomed the group, introduced herself, and each of the other facilitators followed in kind. The Skills for Change members were then encouraged to introduce themselves. The artists, Adel Kim Gouillon, Jane Jin Kaisen and Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine, discussed their work and

posed questions to the group with my assistance. These questions aimed to draw connections between the Skills for Change members' experiences and those of the participating artists.

The programmer and I discussed the basic tenants of current photographic practices being explored in the contemporary art world. We then demonstrated the basic processes involved in working with digital photography. Participants had been asked to bring an object from their country of origin to the gallery. The intention of this exercise was to enable participants to work with this symbol of their past in their photographic explorations, which would be taken in the Montreal landscape. This would enable their past and present locations to symbolically interact and to be captured visually through digital photography. Only one participant brought an artifact—a wall hanging featuring images from Trinidad and Tobago. This participant worked with his artifact, while the others explored developing compositions that could symbolize their experiences. Once all participants had composed a number of images, we moved over to La Centrale's computers to demonstrate how to upload photographs. Each participant had a chance to upload their images, a new experience for all of them. During the previous week, the Skills for Change participants were taught how to create an email account. Using these email accounts, participants were then taught by La Centrale's programmer and me how to attach these photographs to an email message, providing them with a useful skill that is often needed in the workforce.

After completing the computer-oriented portion of the workshop, all participants were invited to join together in La Centrale's garden for a lunch prepared by La Centrale's staff and the Skills for Change educator. In this idyllic urban setting, we reflected on the workshop and shared stories about travelling and integrating oneself into a new culture.

Soon after the event, I developed a written reflection on these processes. Following this, the Skills for Change facilitator and I engaged in a dialogue in which we reflected on the workshop. The dialogue was guided by a set of open-ended questions that I developed and sent to the educator in advance. These questions facilitated an exploration into our opinions regarding the initial dialoguing process, the workshop, and the final reflective process. The collaborative and inclusive nature of the processes were analysed by both parties during this dialogue and suggestions for improvement were explored.

### **Determining Evaluation Procedures for Inclusive Programming**

Following Sandell's (2003) call for museums to examine the level of inclusivity enacted in so-called socially inclusive programming, I analyzed the collected data from this project to determine how successful the implementation of this framework was in creating a socially

inclusive relationship between the participating community group and gallery. As the designer of this research, it was challenging to analyze the socially inclusive nature of the project. I needed to develop a set of criteria to analyze levels of social inclusivity. To determine these factors for success in achieving social inclusivity, I turned to literature focused on collaboration between organizations, since discussions on social inclusivity and the combating of social inequality in museums often include references to collaboration and related terminology. Sandell (2003) has stated that effective inclusion work is based upon implementing democratic and collaborative practices. Discussions focused on collaborations between organizations often refer to programming *with* rather than *for*. They promote equalized power distribution, aim for high levels of respect and equality, and emphasize the importance of offering comfortable experiences for participants (Adams & Sibille, 2005; Eisler, 2002; Hochtritt, Lane & Bell Price, 2004; Wenger, 1998; Woloshyn, Chalmers & Bosacki, 2005). Thus, I developed a set of criteria based on these notions to determine the efficacy of the inclusive nature of this program. The two main categories were: the distribution of power in the decision-making process and the perceived comfort levels of the participants.

There were obvious limitations with me being the primary evaluator of the program, since I was so involved with its conception and implementation. However, I believe that I gave a rather honest critique of the program as opposed to providing undeserved praise. Furthermore, I discussed my evaluation of the program with La Centrale's programmer in an informal capacity, she verified my observations and interpretations. Additionally, rather than relying solely on my own perceptions of efficacy in these categories, I examined both the community group facilitator's observations and judgments and my own. Our evaluation of the distribution of power in the decision-making processes and the level of comfort of the participants will be examined in the following section.

### **Inclusive Nature of the Project**

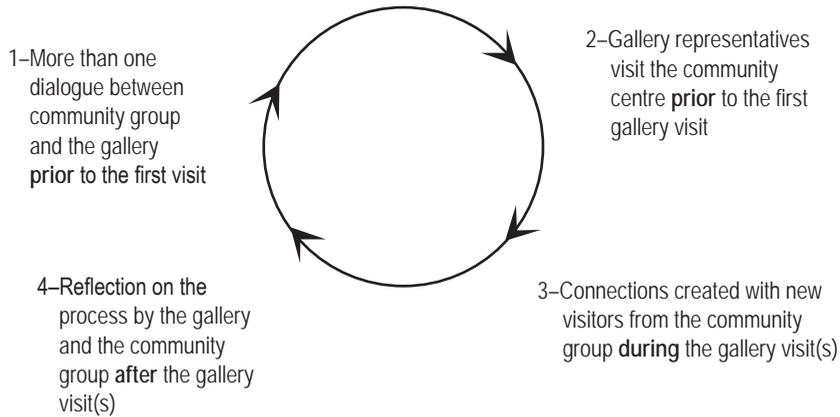
The Skills for Change facilitator felt that the power distribution between herself and the other two collaborators was equal during the initial dialoguing process. She felt that her group's primary goal to obtain skills that could empower the participants and increase their chances of finding employment, while providing them with a forum of different perspectives from individuals dealing with similar issues was accomplished in this project. However, she believed there to be a discrepancy in the distribution of power between herself and her community group. She felt that her group members could have been offered a greater voice in the project's creation. This may have led to an even greater connection to the labour issues explored in the Skills for Change program and the workshop at La Centrale.

La Centrale's main goal for the project was accomplished, which was to engage a new public in a dialogic encounter with contemporary art in a contemporary art space. However, La Centrale was aiming to do this in a non-elitist, welcoming, and democratic manner. My written reflection revealed that I, as a representative for La Centrale, felt that the distribution of power was unequal during the initial dialogue. My perception was that La Centrale presented a project idea to the Immigrant Workers Centre, which did not enable the Immigrant Workers Centre to actively contribute to the idea's growth, thus suggesting that the idea was somewhat imposed on the group, though the idea was directly connected to their needs and interests. This imposition was primarily due to the fact that since we approached the community group with an invitation to participate in a workshop in our contemporary art space, they expected that we would provide them with a project idea. Furthermore, we only engaged in one planning session due to the tight schedule of the Skills for Change program, which did not provide enough time for a collaborative forum for creation to develop.

Both of the organizations noted an initial discomfort experienced by the participants during the workshop. Despite our attempts to greet the members in a welcoming way, they were obviously uncertain about their place in this novel space. They were presented with a sea of new faces in a world of contemporary art, to which they did not initially feel connected. Upon entering the space, the group members seemed to keep to themselves and did not appear to feel at ease to explore the space on their own. They were slow to engage in the dialogue at the beginning of the event. La Centrale's representatives and the Skills for Change educator observed that the participants felt a greater sense of comfort over the course of the workshop. They showed signs of being much more at home in front of the computers during the hands-on portion of the workshop. The community group participants quite obviously felt most comfortable during the final portion of the event, where they shared their stories with the gallery members, the Skills for Change educator, and the artists over food in La Centrale's garden space.

Each of the above mentioned areas for determining the success of inclusive nature of the project were deemed successful in varying levels by both of the collaborating organizations. Therefore, the project can be considered to have been successful in achieving its primary goals. However, there were clearly areas of improvement that were called for during the reflective processes: 1) An increased link between the workshop and the goals of the community group; 2) A heightened balance of power during the planning stage of the project; and 3) An increase in the visitors' comfort levels. The following section will outline suggested alterations for the proposed Framework for Active Inclusion that will address these issues.

Figure 2. The Revised Framework for Active Inclusion



### Recommended Alterations for the Framework for Active Inclusion

In order to fulfill the above mentioned areas of improvement, I suggest two main alterations to be incorporated into the Framework for Active Inclusion: 1) To develop a more ongoing relationship between the museum and the community group; and 2) To incorporate a pre-visit session where gallery representatives visit the community group members at the community centre prior to the group's first trip to the gallery.

Kinshasha Holman Conwill and Alexandra Marmion Roosa (2003) have noted that collaborative ventures between museums and community groups require time to develop a strong relationship: "Like other types of relationships, museum–community partnerships must be nurtured" (p. 45). They call for an ongoing dialogue to occur between the museum and the community group. The Excellence and Equity report from the American Association of Museums also makes a plea for "ongoing collaborative efforts" (AAM, 1991, p. 19) between museums and their communities. Likewise, David Gray and Allan Chadwick (2001) note that "sustained contact between partners is essential when developing collaborative partnerships" (p. 438). This can be done through incorporating a greater number of planning sessions between the gallery and the community group and through facilitating multiple visits to the gallery when possible. With greater time given to the planning stages and with more visits to the gallery,

power barriers between organizations would have a greater opportunity to be broken down via the development of a stronger, longer-lasting relationship. With more equality in power, a greater opportunity for common links between the gallery and the community group that could be explored in workshops could be revealed. Furthermore, with a more on-going relationship, community group facilitators would have opportunities to consult with community group members between planning sessions, and would be able to better incorporate the members' ideas into the conception of workshops, bringing more equality between the community group facilitators and their members.

By implementing one or more pre-visit sessions at the community centre conducted by gallery representatives, the community group could become acquainted with the ideas to be presented at the gallery and be introduced to individuals that would be present at the gallery during the workshop. Thus, this process would provide a means for creating a relationship between the gallery and the community group participants prior to the visit, theoretically increasing the comfort of the community group participants during the workshop experience. During this session, the community group would be introduced to material connected to the future gallery visit. Prabhy (1982) says "[pre-visit activities] minimize the disruption often felt by students when their daily routine is altered, they introduce students to the concepts to be covered in the workshop, and they prepare the students for the museum educator's presence and approach" (p. 34).

This pre-visit session would enable the gallery to become acquainted with the community group through asking the participants about their needs, desires and opinions regarding the project. This would provide an opportunity for the gallery to understand the group from the perspective of the participants and to incorporate their ideas and requirements into the workshop, further enabling power to be distributed more equally. The relationship developed and understanding achieved during a pre-visit session would increase the comfort levels of participants and could thus increase participation, learning and enjoyment during the workshop.

Therefore, as a result of the findings discovered in this project, the Framework for Active Inclusion has been altered to incorporate these two propositions (fig. 2). The framework now includes multiple planning sessions, and a pre-visit session conducted by gallery representatives at the community centre.

## Conclusions

Museums and galleries are increasingly aware of the need to transition into more socially inclusive institutions. Many have turned to community outreach programming to fulfill this goal. It is important that these institutions reflect upon their definitions of social inclusivity and how they can effectively achieve this given their individual infrastructures. The project outlined in this paper provided La Centrale with an opportunity to reflect upon our goals for our outreach program and how best to achieve these goals. The resulting framework that grew out of this project presents a series of steps designed to assist art galleries and community groups in collaboratively developing, implementing, and reflecting upon programming. In this framework, there is an attempt to evenly distribute power between the two participating institutions through democratic, collaborative practices focused on relationship development. With this, the gallery becomes a partner in learning with community groups rather than a dominating force aiming to empower 'less fortunate' citizens through offering knowledge. Rather, this framework helps art galleries and community groups find ways to construct knowledge and grow *together*.

This research suggests that one of the vital components in successfully implementing socially inclusive practices is developing a consistent process of active reflection, where programs are examined for their inclusive properties, refinements are made, and more effective practices are implemented. As social inclusion has become an abundantly used term in a variety of art institutions, and in society in general, it is imperative that we critically reflect on just how inclusive our practices are, and how we can improve our programs to better reflect our intentions and the intentions of our participants.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> In this paper, the term museum will be referring to art museums, art galleries, and artist-run centres.