

Changing Museums Together?  
The Role of Staff Participation in Strategic Processes  
at the Jewish Museum Berlin

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**ABSTRACT**

**DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

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## 1 Introduction

During my internship at the Jewish Museum Berlin I had the task to facilitate the process of creating a new Mission and Vision statement for the museum together with the Program Director. The process was designed in a way that allowed different staff from Directors to Trainees to participate. In a series of workshops staff from across the museum came together to discuss their ideas and visions for the future of the museum. I remember the wave of excitement that this process created amongst staff. People were engaged and eagerly participated in the workshops. Sometimes I got emails adding aspects that people forgot to mention in our session but found important to be included. Colleagues that couldn't make the group session asked me for separate sessions to have their view recorded, because they knew that the new Mission/Vision statements would be based on their input. Many ideas were born in this process and to me it felt like we were all changing the museum together. I loved the energy and the spirit of optimism of that process and it was one of the most gratifying experiences of my time at the Jewish Museum Berlin.

I continue to be fascinated by that process, because to me it felt very simple what we did. We facilitated a couple of workshops to bring staff together and collect ideas. I was asking myself how such a simple thing like asking people to participate could create such a movement of energy? What was it that energized staff so much? And why, if it was really that simple, is that not done more often?

This is why I decided to explore the role of staff participation in strategic change processes as the subject of my thesis. Based on the participatory Mission/Vision process at the Jewish Museum Berlin, I am going to conduct qualitative expert interviews with members of management about how they perceived staff participation within the Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning process at the Jewish Museum Berlin.

My aim is to create a case study of an ongoing change process and create insight into what it means to try to implement staff participation in practice. The Jewish Museum Berlin as a case study will hopefully allow me to draw conclusions about change and the role staff participation, as well as institutional readiness for both change and participatory ways of working.

While this study is based on the participatory Mission/Vision process, it is not an evaluation of either the Mission/Vision or the Strategic Planning process. The aim of the research is to collect data about perceptions as a basis for further research into the topic of staff participation in strategic processes. While this study includes a summary on theoretical discussions about staff participation in strategic change processes, it is rooted in practice.

I hope for the thesis to create relevant outcomes and recommendations for the Jewish Museum Berlin to help decide how to proceed with staff participation. I think this will be also relevant for museum directors, managers or staff interested in change, as well as students of museum studies to see what it means to implement in practice what we talk about in school.

Before I am going to elaborate on the research questions and methodology of this research, I want to review the current theoretical discussion on the topic of staff participation and offer a detailed case study description of the Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning processes at the Jewish Museum Berlin. After a short discussion of my role as a researcher, I am going to present and discuss the findings of this study and offer recommendations for further research based on the findings.

## 1.1 Literature Review

The topic of staff participation is relevant within discourses on change management, strategic planning and leadership, both within the museum field and general management literature. The focus of this review will be on what has been discussed in museum literature, but also positions from general management theory will be included. But first, I want to quickly introduce definitions of participation and staff.

### 1.1.1 Definitions of “Staff” and “Participation”

Participation is a widely-discussed topic within the museum field. While the discourse is focussed on how museums can become more participatory in their programs and for their visitors, the topic of staff participation in internal processes is widely overlooked. Despite the lack of institutional perspectives on participation, the review of literature on visitor participation lends important insights on the terminology used here:<sup>1</sup> Following the discussions on the topic it becomes clear that participation is never one and the same thing. There are many different definitions and grades of participation. For the purpose of this thesis I want to refer to one of the most widely known models: The four modes of participation by Nina Simon, who was amongst the first to widely introduce the topic of participation to the museum field.<sup>2</sup> According to Simon, a successful participatory process enables everyone to make a meaningful contribution, regardless of status, experience and knowledge.<sup>3</sup> She identifies four different modes of participation, depending on how much control museums are willing to let go of. She differentiates between *contributory*, *collaborative*, *co-creative* and *hosted* participation that are described as follows:<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A very thorough overview of the historic and current discourses on participatory practices and analysis of the state of participatory practices with a special focus on the German museum field can be found in Anja Piontek, *Museum und Partizipation: Theorie und Praxis kooperativer Ausstellungsprojekte und Beteiligungsangebote*. Bielefeld: Transkript Verlag, 2017, 95-151. Piontek points out that participation is an intensely discussed popular buzzword within the museum sector and discusses several different models for participation (p. 155-182).

An early collection of essays and case studies on participation in museums which also focusses on the German speaking museum field can be found in Susanne Gesser, Martin Handschin, Angela Janelli and Sibylle Lichtensteiger, ed., *Das partizipative Museum: Zwischen Teilhabe und User generated Content. Neue Anforderungen an kulturhistorische Ausstellungen*. Bielefeld: Transkript, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> In her seminal work “The Participatory Museum”, as well as in her new book “The Art of Relevance” she champions reasons, strategies and case studies about how museums can embrace participatory practices and offers reflections on her own work at Museum of Art and History Santa Cruz. Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum*. Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0, 2010 and Nina Simon, *The Art of Relevance*. Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Simon, Nina. “Foreword” In Janes, Robert R. *Museums and the Paradox of Change. A Case Study in Urgent Adaptation*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, XV-XVIII. New York: Routledge, 2013, XVI.

<sup>4</sup> Simon 2010, 190-191.

	Contributory	Collaborative	Co-Creative	Hosted
What kind of commitment does your institution have to community engagement?	We're committed to helping our visitors and members feel like participants with the institution.	We're committed to deep partnerships with some target communities.	We're committed to supporting the needs of target communities whose goals align with the institutional mission.	We're committed to inviting community members to feel comfortable using the institution for their own purposes.
How much control do you want over the participatory process and product?	A lot - we want participants to follow our rules of engagement and give us what we request.	Staff will control the process, but participants' actions will steer the direction and content of the final product.	Some, but participants' goals and preferred working styles are just as important as those of the staff.	Not much - as long as participants follow our rules, they can produce what they want.
How do you see the institution's relationship with participants during the project?	The institution requests content and the participants supply it, subject to institutional rules.	The institution sets the project concept and plan, and then staff members work closely with participants to make it happen.	The institution gives participants the tools to lead the project and then supports their activities and helps them move forward successfully.	The institution gives the participants rules and resources and then lets the participants do their own thing.
Who do you want to participate and what kind of commitment will you seek from participants?	We want to engage as many visitors as possible, engaging them briefly in the context of a museum or online visit.	We expect some people will opt in casually, but most will come with the explicit intention to participate.	We seek participants who are intentionally engaged and are dedicated to seeing the project all the way through.	We'd like to empower people who are ready to manage and implement their project on their own.

	Contributory	Collaborative	Co-Creative	Hosted
How much staff time will you commit to managing the project and working with participants?	We can manage it lightly, the way we'd maintain an interactive exhibit. But we ideally want to set it up and let it run.	We will manage the process, but we're going to set the rules of engagement based on our goals and capacity.	We will give much time as it takes to make sure participants are able to accomplish their goals.	As little as possible - we want to set it up and let it run on its own.
What kinds of skills do you want participants to gain from their activities during the project?	Creation of content, collection of data, or sharing of personal expression. Use of technological tools to support content creation and sharing.	Everything supported by contributory projects, plus the ability to analyze, curate, design, and deliver completed products.	Everything supported by collaborative projects, plus project conceptualization, goal-setting, and evaluation skills.	None that the institution will specifically impart, except perhaps around program promotion and audience engagement.
What goals do you have for how non-participating visitors will perceive the project?	The project will help visitors see themselves as potential participants and see the institution as interested in their active involvement.	The project will help visitors see the institution as a place dedicated to supporting and connecting with community.	The project will help visitors see the institution as a community-driven place. It will also bring in new audiences connected to the participants.	The project will attract new audiences who might not see the institution as a comfortable or appealing place for them.

**Fig. 1: Nina Simon - Modes of Participation**

While designed to describe visitor participation, I would argue that Nina Simon's modes of participation, especially in regard to the question "How do you see the institution's relationship with participants during the project?" can also be applied to internal staff participation in strategic processes.

Simon only briefly addresses the aspect of participatory change processes. While she sees it as the most effective approach in the long-run, she would not apply it herself because of the immense strain it puts on everybody involved. She argues that it would be easier to just enforce changes without discussion, even if the change is not liked, because people

prefer certainty of unpleasantness to uncertainty. A participatory process would be far more strenuous than an enforced process.<sup>5</sup>

Like “participation”, “staff” is also a very ambivalent term. Within the literature used in this thesis “staff” generally describes every member of staff that is not the Director or a member of the Board.<sup>6</sup> In this way, staff includes all levels of Senior Management, Middle Management and Non-Managerial staff and it depends on the specific case to determine to whom the term refers to. In this thesis, I am using the term “broad staff participation” to imply that all levels of hierarchy are included.

### 1.1.2 Staff Participation in Change Management and Strategic Planning Processes

Similar to the topic of participation, the topic of change is also being frequently discussed within the museum field. Due to the many changes in our society, technological changes, economic shifts, climate change, political movements and social tensions, museums are increasingly trying to find ways to adapt to stay relevant institutions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are many discussions about which changes museums should initiate to achieve that. However, rarely does this discussion focus on how to actually do it and what it means to try to implement changes. There are not many publications on change management in museums and there is a lack of discussion and in depth case studies about the process of change management in the museum field.<sup>7</sup> Despite the fact, that staff participation is seen as a crucial element of successful change processes both in general change management literature and especially within the museum field, there is even less discussion about that aspect. Before presenting the state of discussion on staff participation within the museum field, I want to introduce the basic principles on staff participation within the field of general change management literature.

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<sup>5</sup> Simon 2013, XVI-XVII.

<sup>6</sup> It is also worth noting that because the role of museum boards in museums in the U.S. or the United Kingdom might differ from the role of boards in German museums.

<sup>7</sup> The scarcity of literature on the topic of change management in museums and the need for more in-depths case studies is frequently addressed within the few publications that do focus on it (see refercne #####) and most recently by Nina Simon. Talking about her new change initiative “OF/BY/FOR ALL” a global change network striving to foster participatory practices in museums worldwide, she says that museums have a pretty good idea of WHAT and WHY, but that there is not enough talk about the HOW to change. She argues that change would be achieved much quicker if there were more detailed descriptions of processes. Nina Simon, “What’s Stopping us from Building More Inclusive Nonprofits?” *Museum 2.0* (blog), posted February 5<sup>th</sup> 2019. <http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2019/02/whats-stopping-us-from-building-more.html>.

One of the leading experts on change management is American economist John Kotter, whose work is also widely known and referred to within the literature on change in the museum field. In his seminal article “Leading Change. Why transformation efforts fail” from 1995, and his later books “Leading Change” and “The Heart of Change” Kotter introduces an eight-step model for successful change efforts that has been derived from analysis of processes in real life organizations. Staff participation plays a crucial part in it.<sup>8</sup> Kotter stresses the importance of staff participation, because according to his research one leader is not enough to achieve lasting change.<sup>9</sup> This is why one of the first steps in a change process has to be to install a strong guiding coalition of staff to lead the change effort. Key criteria for the right composition are: position power (enough of the main leaders), expertise (should reflect the diversity of positions), credibility (select staff with good reputation who are trusted by colleagues) and to have enough leadership (instead of management) on the coalition to drive the change.<sup>10</sup> The size of this coalition is relative to the size of the organization. According to Kotter change usually starts with 2-3 people, the guiding coalition can consist of 6 people in smaller organisations and up to 40-50 people in large organizations.<sup>11</sup> The task of the guiding coalition is to develop a vision for the change and ensure staff engagement. In a later step, Kotter advises to recruit staff change agents to support the guiding coalition in driving the change. Kotter equally stresses the importance of leadership and communication for a successful change effort. He claims that it is important for top leadership to support and champion the change effort, because it is impossible to achieve major organisational change without the active support from the top. He specifically mentions that leaving out the head of an organization from participating in a change effort because they are unsupportive is detrimental to its success.<sup>12</sup> According to Kotter, communication is crucial for creating staff engagement in the change process. He explains that in successful change processes, executives use every available communication channel to broadcast the vision of the change and incorporate it

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<sup>8</sup> John P. Kotter, “Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail”, In *Museum Management and Marketing*, edited by Richard Sandell and Robert R. Janes, 20-29. Oxon/New York: Routledge, 2007 (reprint from *Harvard Business Review* Vol 73 No. 3 (March-April 1995): 59-67).  
and John P. Kotter, *The Heart of Change: Real-Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002 and John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Kotter 2007, 21-23.

<sup>10</sup> Kotter 2012, 59.

<sup>11</sup> Kotter 2012, 61.

<sup>12</sup> Kotter 2002, 60.

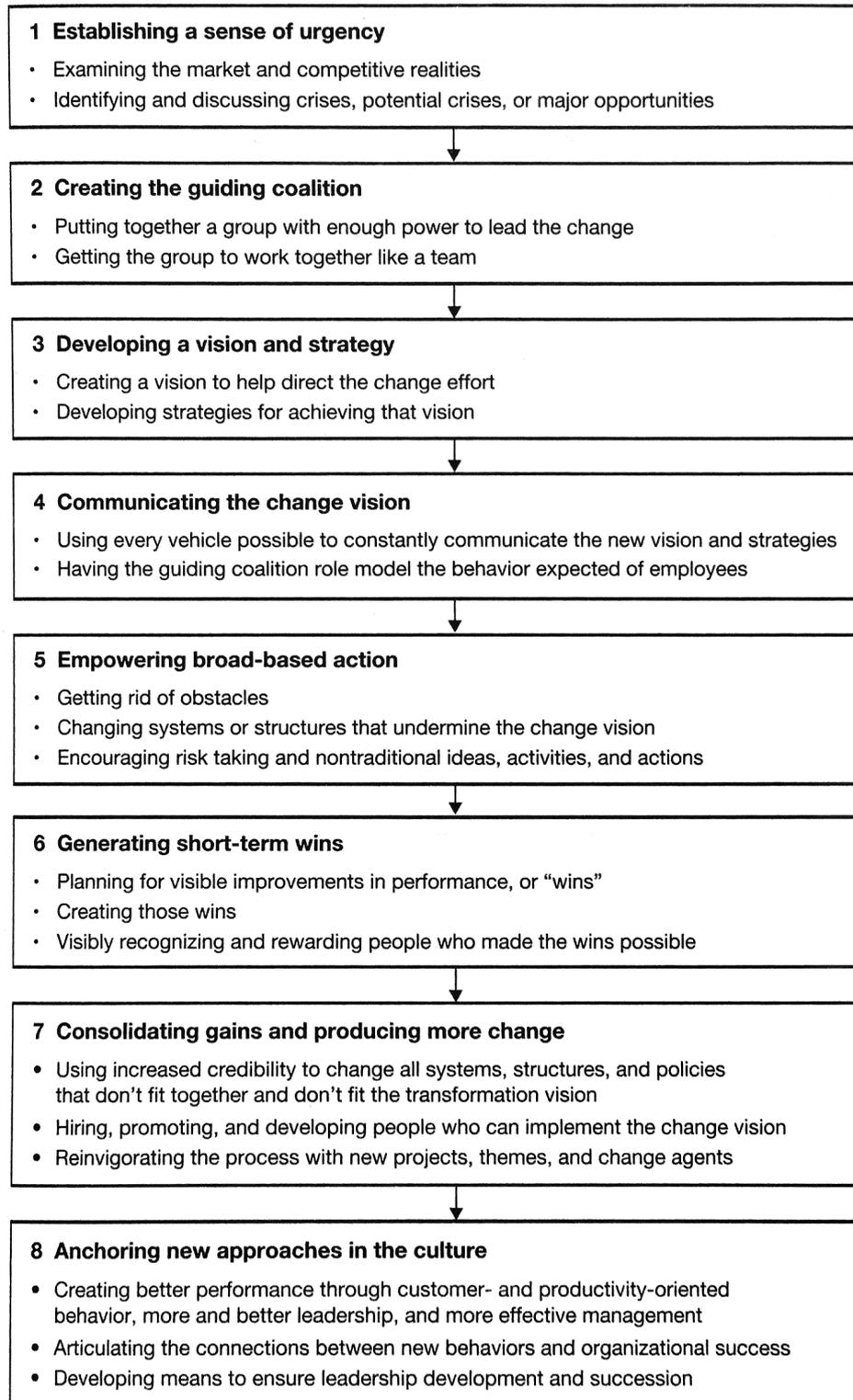
into their actions. According to him it is detrimental to the change effort if leaders don't practice what they preach, because communication through action is very powerful.<sup>13</sup> Kotter's approach to change remains relevant today and is widely referred to, also within museum literature. The format of the guiding coalition is one of the most commonly used basic tools to ensure staff participation and can also be found within change process in the museum field. Kotter does not focus on broad staff participation in the creation of the vision for the change. In his account, change is steered by a leader at the top aided by a guiding coalition of senior managers. However, he does stress the importance to facilitate staff engagement in the implementation of change and staff as multipliers and change agents in later stages. The importance for top-leadership to embrace and lead the change, the emphasis of constant and transparent communication in words and deeds and the creation of urgency for the change mentioned by Kotter are also important concepts within the discussion of staff participation in this thesis.

Darren Peacock, who published on change within the museum field, is critical of the traditional approach to change as "something to manage". He argues that this focus on control and manipulation is typical for the traditional and in his opinion outdated approach to management, the so called "scientific management", that is still prevalent in general management discourse.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Kotter 2007, 25-26.

<sup>14</sup> Darren Peacock, "No heroes: revisiting the museum leadership crisis." In Janes, Robert R. *Museums and the Paradox of Change. A Case Study in Urgent Adaptation*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 246-257, 235-237.



**Fig. 2: John Kotter - Eight-stage process of creating major change<sup>15</sup>**

<sup>15</sup> Kotter 2012, 23. Adapted from John P. Kotter, “Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail”, 22.

In his manual for “Lean Change Management”, change management practitioner Jason Little takes a slightly different approach to change. In contrast with Kotter’s eight stages, Little advocates for an agile approach to change management and recommends an adaptable “change management canvas” instead of a set plan.

In accordance with Kotter, Little also suggests for change to be led by a change team that is aided by staff change agents.<sup>16</sup> Unlike Kotter, however, he advises to include staff from all levels in the creation of the canvas to ensure staff alignment with the change effort from the beginning. According to him it is possible within smaller organizations with less than a couple hundred staff to include all staff in this process.<sup>17</sup> Within this approach staff is not only in the position of multipliers or people that need to be engaged in the change, but is actively involved in shaping the plan for the change. This slightly more pronounced emphasis on active staff participation and the agile approach to change management is more in line with both the role of staff participation within museum change management processes and the new concepts of servant leadership or non-hierarchical organizational structures that will be discussed later in this thesis.<sup>18</sup>

Within the literature on change management in the museum field, staff participation and especially the participation of all levels of staff is equally considered to be a crucial aspect of successful change.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The importance of encouraging staff to act as coaches or internal change leaders, thereby supporting the change effort is also stressed in the widely-received book “Switch”, that focusses on the practical side of change. Chip and Dan Heath, *Switch: How to Change Things when Change Is Hard*. London: Random House Business Books, 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Jason Little, *Lean Change Management: Innovative Practices for Managing Organizational Change*. Happy Melly Express, 2014, 141-155. A similar approach to change can be found in Jurgen Appelo, *How to Change the World: Change Management 3.0*. Rotterdam 2012.

<sup>18</sup> See chapter 1.1.3 Beyond Participation: Current Leadership Theory and Organisational Forms in this thesis.

<sup>19</sup> The scarcity of literature on the topic of change management in museums and the need for more in-depths case studies is frequently adressed (see for example Peacock 2013, 235), most recently by Nina Simon. She argues that change would be achieved much quicker if there were more detailed descriptions of processes. Nina Simon, “What’s Stopping us from Building More Inclusive Nonprofits?” *Museum 2.0* (blog), posted February 5<sup>th</sup> 2019, <http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2019/02/whats-stopping-us-from-building-more.html>.

Publications on change management that are interesting but don’t specifically include staff participation are: Elaine Heuman ed., *Institutional Trauma: Major Change in Museums and Its Effect on Staff*. Washington D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1995, Louis H. Silverman and Mark O’Neill, “Change and Complexity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century museum” (originally published in *Museum News*, November/December 2004) In: *Re-inventing the Museum*, edited by Gail Anderson, 193-201. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2012. Richard Sandell focusses on sectoral change in the museum field. He argues that museums as institutions are often resistant to change and that this therefore translates to the whole sector, Richard Sandell, “Social inclusion: the museum and the dynamics of sectoral change”, *Museum and Society* 1, 1 (2003): 45-62. In 2005, a survey on change management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century museum with a focus on emotional leadership amongst directors of art museums was conducted by Sherene Suchy. While she focusses on leadership and change management, staff participation is not a part of her study, Sherene

In a survey of 24 museums that managed change successfully, in 1999, Morris Abraham, Des Griffin and John Crawford tried to see how change in museums related to general change management theories. They concluded that the assumptions of general management literature can also be applied to museums, with the exception of staff participation: General management theory considered participatory leadership as the most effective in leading change, it is argued that sometimes it is necessary to switch to more directive styles. In their survey, Abraham, Griffin and Crawford found that in museums participatory leadership is always required, because they can be considered as professional bureaucracies, with highly engaged staff. Based on their research, they distilled eight hypotheses for successful change efforts, that include a leadership style fostering involvement, participation and empowerment, the need for structural arrangements to manage the change and the importance for managers to show their commitment to the change process and for direct communication on many channels.<sup>20</sup>

A more recent study conducted by U.S. museum scholars Peter Samis and Mimi Michaelson focussed on museums that changed into visitor-centred institutions.<sup>21</sup> According to them, this particular change often led to the creation of flatter hierarchies and new cross-departmental teams. Especially within the context of creating a more visitor-centred museum they stress the importance of abandoning old hierarchies and enabling staff participation early on, because this kind of change is impossible to achieve without support from the whole staff. Their research also showed that enabling participation and include staff in planning efforts as equals takes time and patience and does not happen overnight. Although they stress the importance of direct involvement of a director in this effort, they say it is crucial for everyone to understand that they are part of the effort.<sup>22</sup>

Martha Morris also addresses the importance of leadership. She regards the facilitation of change processes as one of the core tasks for museum leaders of today and emphasises the need for leaders to both champion the change and ensure broad staff engagement.<sup>23</sup>

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Suchy, *Leading with passion: change management in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century museum*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2004.

Darren Peacock. "Making Ways for Change: Museums, Disruptive Technologies and Organisational Change", *Museum Management and Curatorship* Volume 23, Issue 4 (2008): 222-251, Darren Peacock, "No heroes: revisiting the museum leadership crisis." In Janes, Robert R. *Museums and the Paradox of Change. A Case Study in Urgent Adaptation. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*, 246-257. New York: Routledge, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Samis/Mimi Michaelson, *Creating the Visitor-Centered Museum*. New York: Routledge, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Samis/Michaelson 2017, 171.

<sup>23</sup> Martha Morris, *Leading museums today. Theory and Practice*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018, 41-42.

While all these publications stress the importance of staff participation, they don't offer much explanation on the question of how it is done in practice. More detailed accounts can be found in case descriptions from reflecting practitioners.

To this date, the most detailed account of change within the museum field is still Robert Janes' seminal case study of changes at Glenbow museum from 1995 onwards. In a series of three editions he documents and reflects on major organisational changes during his time as a director of the museum over a period of 10 years.<sup>24</sup> Janes advocates for self-organization and staff participation in strategic decisions long before participation became a museum buzzword, which was visionary for the time and still remains relevant today, especially in light of the current discussions about new forms of leadership and new ways of organizing work that are going to be discussed later in this thesis.<sup>25</sup> For him participation means establishing relationships that allow all staff to feel part of the organization and foster respect for the various people contributing to the museum. He stresses the need for a successful organization to encourage staff involvement in organizational decisions at all levels.<sup>26</sup> According to Janes it is absolutely critical to involve as much staff as early as possible in the process of institutional planning, for two reasons:

- First, in an increasingly complex world, managers no longer have all the information and skills necessary to make all decisions by themselves. Broad staff participation is the best way to create a broad range of information.
- Second, those who are going to implement the changes should be involved in creating the plan because people will become more committed to what they help create.<sup>27</sup> He also stresses that it is necessary to determine early on who to involve in the process, to find agents to support the change, and to clarify roles of board and staff during the transition.<sup>28</sup>

At Glenbow, systems were created to enable staff from all level to participate from the beginning in the processes of strategy development, building a new organizational form and defining new job descriptions for senior management.

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<sup>24</sup> Robert R. Janes, *Museums and the Paradox of Change. A Case Study in Urgent Adaptation. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*. Oxon/New York: Routledge, 2013.

<sup>25</sup> See chapter 1.1.3 Beyond Participation: Current Leadership Theory and Organisational Forms.

<sup>26</sup> Janes 2013, 43-46.

<sup>27</sup> As summarized by Michael M. Ames, "Introduction" In Janes, Robert R. *Museums and the Paradox of Change. A Case Study in Urgent Adaptation. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*, 1-7. New York: Routledge, 2013.

<sup>28</sup> Janes 2013, 202.

For strategy development research was led by teams of staff from all levels that were instructed to involve as many staff as possible. This was done via focus groups, workshops, cross-disciplinary brainstorming sessions, written comments and staff interviews.<sup>29</sup> A similar approach was taken for the creation of the new organizational structure. Staff was able to participate via all-staff meetings at key steps, staff workshops to discuss and evaluate the existing structure and alternative models, written comments and a written report was circulated to all staff summarizing comments and concerns raised by staff in the workshops.<sup>30</sup> Staff of every work unit was included in defining job descriptions and the hiring process of the new work unit directors. They met with candidates and filed reports to the director. The final decision rested with him but the insights from staff were found very useful. The whole change effort was led by a transition management team consisting of the CEO, members of the union and the six senior managers. This steering committee was tasked to oversee the change effort and responsible for sharing results of their discussions in all-staff and individual meetings, as well as to send transcripts of to all staff after each steering committee meeting.<sup>31</sup>

Janes emphasises the importance of communication and of leaders making sustained efforts to speak open and frequently to staff about struggles and the future. He also says that creating full, open and sustained communication is one of the biggest challenges in a complex organisation and that it is not only the responsibilities of the leader to do so, but that everyone needs to assume responsibility for it to work.<sup>32</sup> A key element of the processes of staff participation was continuous communication. Project and team members acted as champions of change in department meetings, all-staff meetings and department-head meetings were held for updates, discussions and questions and cross-departmental meetings with staff based on staff questions. As the CEO, Janes chaired all of these meetings.<sup>33</sup> Reflecting on the change process at Glenbow, and in relation to communication, Darren Peacock argues that while the outputs are important, the process of conversation is the most important part. According to him "it is the living and lived conversations which begin to change practices, values, beliefs and identities."<sup>34</sup> In reflection, Robert Janes mentions that participatory change is a difficult path, because during a change effort, the daily business of a museum with all obligations continues. For

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<sup>29</sup> Janes 2013, 32.

<sup>30</sup> Janes 2013, 44.

<sup>31</sup> Janes 2013, 74-75.

<sup>32</sup> Janes 2014, 123-24.

<sup>33</sup> Janes 2017, 33.

<sup>34</sup> Peacock 2013, 238.

him it is one of the major challenges of participatory change to cater for maximum staff participation while meeting current responsibilities. While he mentions that this leads to stress, increased hours and frustration, he admits that there are no easy solutions to this problem.<sup>35</sup>

Robert Janes' Glenbow case description is interesting in many aspects: broad staff participation at all levels was encouraged, and staff participated in various capacities (planning, researching, steering, giving input, giving feedback, asking questions) at various steps throughout the change processes and not just in the implementation phase like in Kotter's description. In addition to his account Janes also added staff perspectives to his book. The fact that Janes draws from 10 years of experience and reflects in such detail on the process of change and staff participation makes his case description one of the seminal publications on staff participation and a most valuable source for this thesis. Still, although it is rich in detail of staff participation the book is still focused on change management and not staff participation.

No other case description reaches the depth of Janes' work, however other cases include interesting accounts of staff participation in change.

Martha Morris describes the process of creating a new strategic plan and reorganisation at the National Museums of American History in 1995 as an example of broad staff participation. According to her there over 50% of staff participated in the process that paid close attention to bottom-up ideas. A staff task force developed options for re-organization that were widely shared with all staff. For implementation, a staff-driven transition working group was created. Membership was self-selected and different from Glenbow, no managers were allowed to join in. Staff participation in the change process was supported by change management workshops, supervision, teambuilding, communication trainings, town hall meetings, suggestion boxes and brown bag lunches with the director. For the rollout of the new strategic plan the museum created a full-time staff position to advocate for it and implement it. The process was led by a guiding coalition consisting of staff from all levels. Because of museum-wide involvement the process led to a culture of collaboration between staff, leadership and board.<sup>36</sup>

A very interesting case study is the transformation process of the Oakland Museum of California in 2011. After the museum had already been in the process of reinventing itself

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<sup>35</sup> Janes 2013, 74.

<sup>36</sup> Morris 2018, 34-39.

through the renewal of its permanent exhibitions, the process led to the creation of a new organizational structure that abolished silos and fostered cross-departmental collaboration. The process is described by the director Lory Fogarty and Gail Anderson, the consultant on the project.<sup>37</sup> Staff from all levels were involved in the creation of a new organizational structure because it was important that staff can contribute to the system they are working in. During the change effort, the importance of staff participation was also repeatedly reinforced on retreats. Anderson concludes that organizational change cannot rest with the leader on top, it must be owned and championed broadly within the organization. Staff was involved in discussions for over a year and supported by extensive training and coaching during the transition. Although not formally appointed, staff change agents became critical to success. Oakland museum is especially interesting, because staff involvement was not only fostered within the change process, but integrated into the new structure as well. Staff from all levels could join the newly created Leadership Advisory Team that makes recommendations to the executive director. The purpose of this committee was to nurture institutional leadership on all levels and to enable personal growth for staff. Due to a rotation of 1-2 years it was made possible to bring in new talent and let as many people as possible understand the complexities of running a big museum.<sup>38</sup>

While broad staff participation is considered important for change efforts, it is considered crucial within the literature on Mission/Vision Statements and Strategic Planning. In 2012, 2015 and 2019, David Flemming reflected on managing change based on his experiences as director of Tyne & Wear Museums & Archives and National Museums Liverpool, focussing on organisational culture, structure and the importance of mission, vision and values for strategic planning.<sup>39</sup> He states that the best way to create Mission and Vision statements is to involve as many people as possible that are responsible for

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<sup>37</sup> Gail Anderson, "Reflections on organizational transformation in the twenty-first century." In Janes, Robert R. *Museums and the Paradox of Change. A Case Study in Urgent Adaptation. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*, 192-204. New York: Routledge, 2013 and Lori Fogarty, "Silo-Busting: Transforming the Rake into the Flower." Filmed October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2013 at the National Summit for Arts & Culture in Denver, Colorado. Video, 12:00. <https://museumca.org/video/lori-fogarty-silo-busting-transforming-rake-flower>.

<sup>38</sup> Anderson 2013, 198-202.

<sup>39</sup> David Flemming, "Museums for Social Justice. Managing organisational change" In *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*, edited by Richard Sandell, and Eithne Nightingale, 72-83. Oxon/New York: Routledge, 2012, as well as David Flemming, "The essence of the museum. Mission, vision, values" In *The international Handbooks of Museum Studies. Volume 2: Museum Practice*, volume edited by Conal McCarthy, 3-25. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015 and David Flemming, "Missions and the twenty-first-century museum – a perspective" In Anderson, Gail. *Mission Matters: Relevance and Museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 12-15. Lanham Rowman & Littlefield / American Alliance of Museums, 2019.

the delivery of the final product. At Tyne & Wear Museums and National Museums Liverpool, staff were involved in the creation and refinement of mission, vision and value statements, that continued for several years.<sup>40</sup> Flemming states that people from all levels can have a strong influence.<sup>41</sup> However, he also says that not all staff can be fully involved and fully agree on what is decided.<sup>42</sup> This is why at National Museums Liverpool the Mission and Vision statement was created solely with managers. First with Senior Managers on a “Vision away day” retreat and later on a “Visioning” workshop for 30 managers.<sup>43</sup>

In regard to broad staff participation, two recent manuals offer the most insights. In “Mission Matters”, her new manual for creating Mission/Vision statements, Gail Anderson explains that it is important to have broad staff participation to ensure a good result and smooth execution: first, having many different voices is essential to the creation of good content and second, by involving as many staff as possible pushback in the implementation phase is avoided. She provides a list of common missteps in Mission/Vision processes:<sup>44</sup>

- Allow too little time (a good process takes 4-8 months)
- Limited stakeholder feedback and involvement
- Mission/Vision statements are only revised by one or two leaders
- To have no clear process design that outlines who is involved and why

Anderson recommends to create an internal leadership team to manage the process. This steering committee should reflect a cross-section of Board, Director, staff and 1-2 external representatives. The committee is responsible for reviewing and write drafts and share them widely within the organisation for feedback and refinement. Internal stakeholders should be engaged in the whole process.<sup>45</sup>

Andersons recommendations are very much in line with Robert Janes’ account of change in Glenbow.

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<sup>40</sup> Flemming 2012, 74.

<sup>41</sup> Flemming 2012, 72-73.

<sup>42</sup> Flemming 2019, 13.

<sup>43</sup> Flemming 2015, 13-15.

<sup>44</sup> Gail Anderson, *Mission Matters: Relevance and Museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Lanham Rowman & Littlefield / American Alliance of Museums, 2019, 152. This is a renewed version of Gail Anderson, *Museum Mission Statements: Building a distinct identity*. Washington: American Alliance of Museums, 1998.

<sup>45</sup> Anderson 2019, 154.

Gail Dexter Lord and Kate Markert recommend a similar approach also for the process of strategic planning in their “Manual of Strategic Planning for Cultural Organizations”.<sup>46</sup> In addition, they add another aspect to the reasons for staff participation. In their recent edition of “The Manual of Strategic Planning for Cultural Organizations” they explicitly focus on staff engagement and empowerment as one of the goals of staff participation in strategic planning. Dexter Lord and Markert view strategic planning as a joint responsibility of staff and board and explicitly state that staff from all levels of hierarchy and everyone in the organization should get the opportunity to participate and set big-picture goals for the future. They point out that this is a very different approach to how strategic planning has been done in the past, where it was usually the Director and a few advisors going away for a weekend to devise the strategic plan. After being reviewed by executive staff, financials were added and the plan was presented to the board for approval, then it was rolled out to staff for implementation. While this is a relatively painless process, however, they stress that it has two disadvantages: the plan is not owned by staff and there is no benefit from the insights of stakeholders and communities.<sup>47</sup>

Within their ten-phase process to strategic planning staff at all levels are engaged in every step, although the level of intensity varies. Non-managerial staff is especially engaged during the phases of the environmental scan and implementation. For the environmental scan, Dexter Lord and Markert recommend cross-divisional group meetings to build an understanding of issues from different parts of the organisation and often enable people for the first time to hear from other departments, as well as additional meetings within departments, to enable staff to lift their head from daily business and think about the future and give junior voices a chance to join in. The meeting formats are one way to create excitements and energize people.<sup>48</sup> For the staff workshops they make an

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<sup>46</sup> Gail Dexter Lord & Kate Markert, *The Manual of Strategic Planning for Cultural Organizations: A Guide for Museums, Performing Arts, Science Centers, Public Gardens, Heritage Sites, Libraries, Archives, and Zoos*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield 2017. Like Anderson they state that it is important to create a process that includes as many members of the organization as possible to 1. Capitalize on their wisdom and 2. add energy and buy-in to the implementation of the plan. According to them: “If people feel their voices have been heard and they have participated in discussions, then they are much more likely to understand why certain directions have been chosen and to be supportive in their actions and contributions.” Like Anderson they also recommend the installation of a steering committee to lead the process. It should include the director and board chair and consist of 6-12 people, who reflect the diversity of staff in terms of gender, age, race, length of service, perspective, and level of responsibility. The steering committee is responsible for the design and organization of the process, liaising with consultants, engaging board and staff in the process and signing off on all draft documents. They list similar prerequisites for such a process: allowing for enough time, providing a clear structure and facilitating transparency of information. They especially highlight the importance of communicating about the process and circulate discussion papers and have information accessible to all staff at all time (p.34-76).

<sup>47</sup> Dexter Lord/Markert 2018, 46.

<sup>48</sup> Dexter Lord/Markert 2018, 74.

interesting recommendation to avoid participation of senior management to ensure that staff is able to talk openly and voice criticism.<sup>49</sup> Some steps are led and executed by the steering committee, board and senior management, like the Strategic Planning Retreat, where Mission/Vision Statements get drafted. However, in all phases staff at all levels is engaged at least by transparent information shared on a public drive, regular meetings and reports, as well as the possibilities of feedback and discussion.

Within literature it is not always clear who is included in the term “staff participation” and often it only means management participation, Lord and Markert insist most specifically on the importance to have all staff from all levels participate. This strong emphasis on staff engagement and empowerment in Dexter Lord/Markert’s Manual puts them in line with the changing definition of leadership and the way organizations work and organize themselves described by Martha Morris.

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<sup>49</sup> Dexter Lord/Markert, 2018 70.

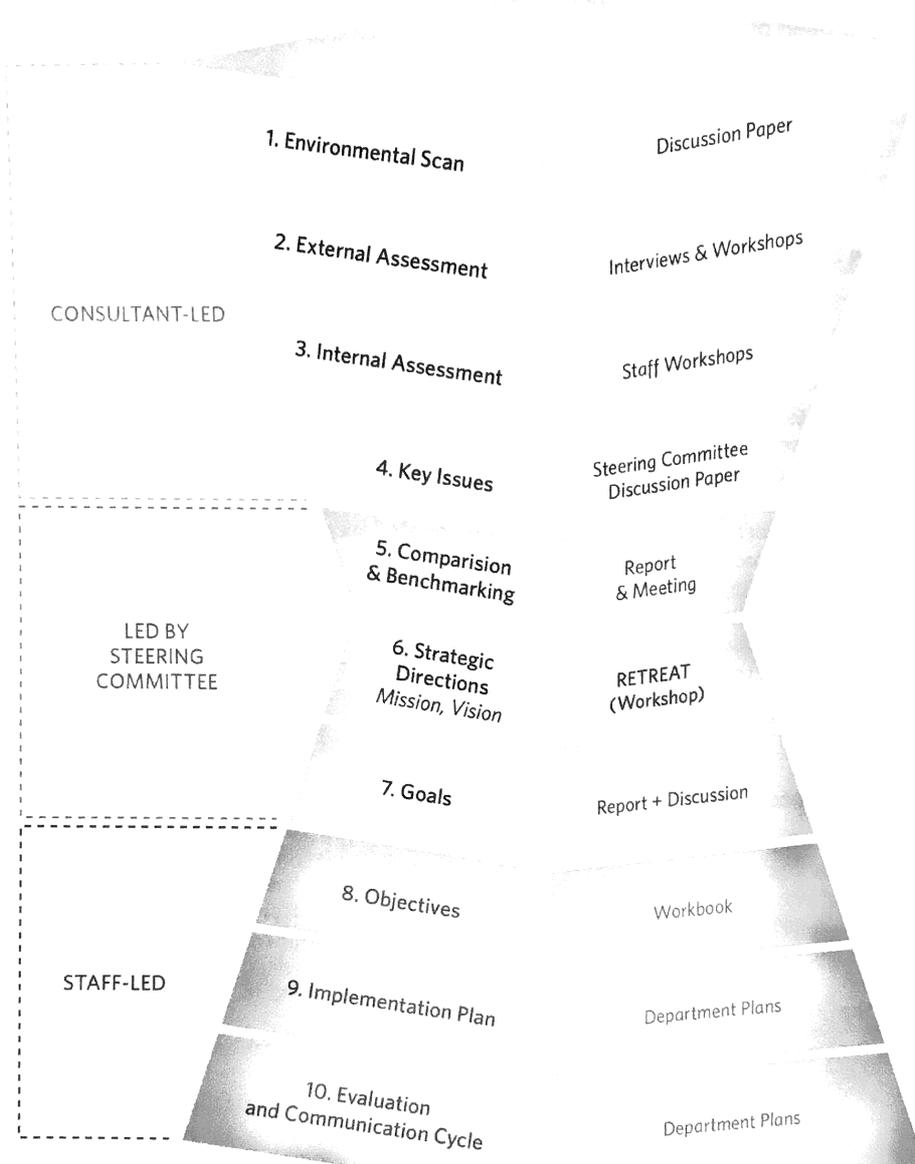


Fig. 3: Lord Cultural Resources - Strategic planning process<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Dexter Lord/Markert 2018, 50.

### 1.1.3 Beyond Participation: Current Leadership Theory and Organisational Forms

For a full understanding of the current relevancy of the topic of staff participation in strategic processes it is interesting to go beyond change management and strategic processes and look at current concepts of leadership and new organizational forms, that are entering the museum field.

Originating in software development, agile practices built to foster innovation and project-based, cross-departmental work are entering the museum field. These methods are based on flat hierarchies, self-organizing teams and new approaches to leadership.

Jacob Morgan, who published extensively on the future of work and collaboration points out that traditional management approaches, or so called “Scientific Management” have stayed the same for the last 150 to 200 years. In this framework organisations are managed like machines managers are top-down decision makers who monitor and control.<sup>51</sup> Within current leadership theories, this model has been replaced and the role of managers and leaders has changed from top-down decision makers to so called “servant leaders”. Within this framework, the role of managers is to act as coaches and to support staff to make decisions and find solutions on their own. As Jacob Morgan describes it:

Managers need to realize that their role is to serve the employees and not the other way around (the way it used to be). Managers exist not to police and control employees but to support them, coach them, and enable them. This is what enables employees to then become leaders themselves.<sup>52</sup>

According to Martha Morris this new approach to leadership can also be found within the museum field. In “Leading Museums Today” she also describes a second trend that is connected to it. She states that there is generally an increased focus on leadership instead

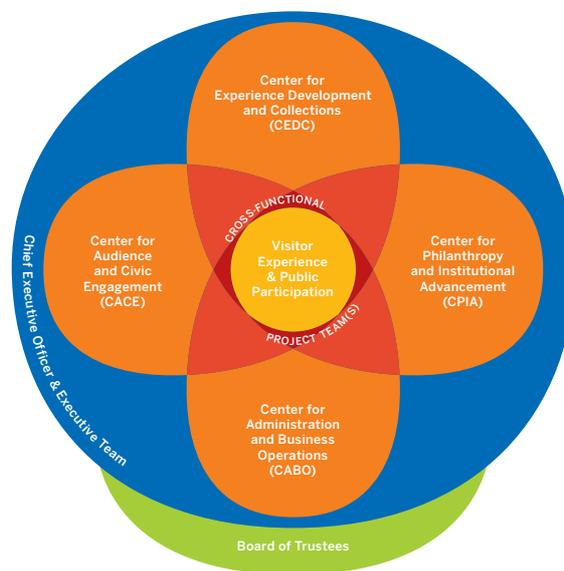
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<sup>51</sup> Jacob Morgan, *The Future of Work: Attract New Talent, Build Better Leaders, and Create a Competitive Organization*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 2014, 95. Other publications include: Jacob Morgan, *The Collaborative Organization. A Strategic Guide to Solving Your Internal Business Challenges using Emerging Social & Collaborative Tools*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012 and Jacob Morgan, *The Employee Experience Advantage. How to Win the War for Talent by Giving Employees the Workspaces They Want, the Tools They Need, and a Culture They Can Celebrate*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 2017.

<sup>52</sup> Jacob Morgan 2014, 95. Within his framework of Management 3.0, leadership expert Jurgen Appelo refers to the traditional management approach of so called scientific management as “Management 1.0”, where organisations are managed like machines and the focus of managers is to monitor and control. While he considers the “servant leader” concept as the right next step, he is critical about the fact that this is still often practiced within hierarchies and calls this “Management 2.0”. His approach of “Management 3.0” offers a more versatile approach that focusses on employee happiness. See Jurgen Appelo, *Managing for Happiness: Games, Tools, and Practices to Motivate Any Team*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 2016, 6-15. For a focus on collaborative working see also Jurgen Appelo, *Management 3.0: Leading Agile Developers, Developing Agile Leaders*. Boston: Addison-Wesley/Pearson Education, 2011,

of management. While managers organize work, develop plans, evaluate programs and staff and acquire resources, leaders create vision, encourage risk taking, see the big picture, develop values, empower staff and listen, facilitate and coach.<sup>53</sup> For the future of museum leadership she predicts that the successful museum will have a culture of collaboration, where everybody is involved in problem solving, high transparency of information and staff participation in important strategic decisions.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to new approaches on leadership, new collaborative ways of working also lead to the creation of new organizational structures based on flat hierarchies, and cross-departmental project teams. One of the most interesting case studies on changing organizational structure in Germany is the City Museum Berlin that is currently trying to switch from a hierarchic silo-institution to an agile matrix-based organization that empowers staff to make their own decisions about their work.<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, however, this case has not yet been thoroughly published. A good example from the museum field is the new organizational structure of the Oakland museum of California. Other than in traditional pyramid hierarchies, management is not on top but around the four teams. It clearly shows the supporting role of leadership within new settings:



**Fig. 4: Oakland museum of California - Organizational Chart<sup>56</sup>**

<sup>53</sup> Morris 2018, 47.

<sup>54</sup> Morris 2018, 57-58.

<sup>55</sup> Markus Kieper, "Vom Mitarbeiter zum Gestalter. Veränderungen der Arbeitsstrukturen im Stadtmuseum Berlin.," Interview by Kristin Oswald, Kulturmanagement.net, May 20th, 2019.

<sup>56</sup> "For the Field", Oakland Museum of California, accessed June 16, 2019, <https://museumca.org/for-the-field>.

What becomes very clear from the discussion on recent leadership theories is that staff participation is not optional in this setting, but a given. The question in this setting is no longer “Is staff allowed to pitch in”, in contrast, it is seen as the task of leaders to ask “How can I support staff to make decisions?”.

The literature review shows that staff participation, together with leadership and communication is regarded as a key element of successful change and strategic planning processes. The degree of participation varies in the different accounts.

In light of the current discussions on change within the museums field and the new leadership paradigms, both change management and staff participation are highly relevant topics. However, they remain under researched.

It has to be noted that there is a general lack of data-based research within the museum field, both for the topics of change management and staff participation. Most publications that address the topic are collections of case descriptions by reflective practitioners or manuals based on case studies and practice.

Apart from Robert Janes’ case study there are no in depth case study descriptions about the topic of change management or staff participation. It is especially important to note that there is no relevant literature or case study within the German museum field.

Staff participation is generally discussed as one aspect of change management and there are no publications or research exclusively dedicated to this topic.

I am hoping to fill both of this gaps with my thesis.

## 1.2 The Case: Strategic Processes at the Jewish Museum Berlin

The Jewish Museum Berlin opened in 2001. According to its Foundation Regulations, it is dedicated to research and describe Jewish life in Berlin and Germany and to highlight the interrelation between Jewish and non-Jewish culture.<sup>57</sup> Since 2013 the newly-founded Academy Programs have expanded the museum's topics to questions of migration and diversity and with the Jewish-Islamic forum a space for interreligious dialogue was opened. According to the webpage the museum is a “vibrant centre of reflection on Jewish history and culture as well as about migration and diversity in Germany”<sup>58</sup>.

The museum offers a broad range of exhibitions, publications, educational work, online formats and diverse events for a broad audience in Germany and internationally. With approximately 700.000 visitors per year the Jewish Museum Berlin is one of Germany's most visited museums. The museum receives two thirds of its funding from the federal government, the rest is raised by ticket sales and donations. As a federal foundation under public law, the museum is an independent legal entity, but is under the direct control of the federal government. It is governed by a board of trustees that consists of representatives of politics, culture and Jewish organisations. It is chaired by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media.<sup>59</sup> The Jewish Museum Berlin has a staff of approximately 200 people. Management consists of three hierarchical layers. The Jewish Museum Berlin is represented by a Director, who has the power to decide upon all foundation matters that are not decided upon by the Board of Trustees. Reporting to the Director are three Deputy Directors who are responsible for managing the day-to-day business of the three main branches of the museum.<sup>60</sup> The Program Director responsible for all content, the Managing Director responsible for all aspects of administration and the Organisational Director responsible for organisational development and infrastructure. Each Deputy Director is leading a group of Heads of

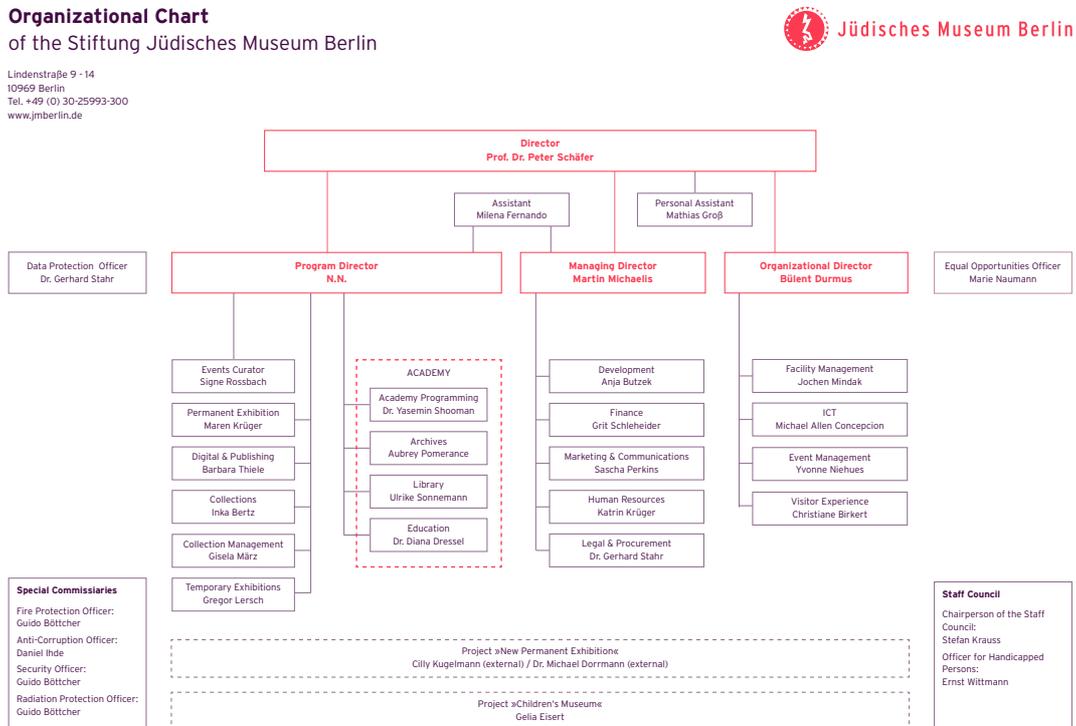
<sup>57</sup> “Foundation Regulations for the Jewish Museum Berlin Foundation”, Jewish Museum Berlin, accessed March 26, 2019, <https://www.jmberlin.de/en/foundation-regulations-jewish-museum-berlin-foundation>.

<sup>58</sup> “About the Organisation”, Jewish Museum Berlin, accessed March 26, 2019, <https://www.jmberlin.de/en/about-the-organisation>. A detailed description of the history of the Jewish Museum Berlin can be found in Bussenius, Daniel. *Von der Hauptstadtposse zur Erfolgsgeschichte: die Entstehung des Jüdischen Museums Berlin 1971-2001*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014.

<sup>59</sup> “About the Organisation”, Jewish Museum Berlin, accessed March 26, 2019, <https://www.jmberlin.de/en/about-the-organisation>.

<sup>60</sup> Technically only the Program Director and the Managing Director are Deputy Directors. However, for the sake of clarity in my research, I am also going to address the Organizational Director as a Deputy Director, so their hierarchical level can be explained in one term.

Departments. With three hierarchic layers the Jewish Museum Berlin, has a relatively flat hierarchy.



**Fig. 5: Jewish Museum Berlin - Organizational Chart as of February 2019<sup>61</sup>**

Apart from the Director and the three Deputy Directors (marked in red), two former Directors are still affiliated with the museum. The Founding Director who continues to actively support the museum from the U.S. regularly attends meetings with the Board of Trustees and the first Program Director, who, after retiring from her post in 2016 after 15 years, is currently leading the “New Permanent Exhibition” project as an external advisor and Head Curator.

During the time of my research (July 2017-November 2018), the Jewish Museum Berlin was in a state of renewal. In 2020, it will both open a new permanent exhibition and a children’s museum, a new addition to the museums portfolio. Following the appointment

<sup>61</sup> “About the Organisation”, Jewish Museum Berlin, accessed March 26, 2019, <https://www.jmberlin.de/en/about-the-organisation>. Because the Organizational Chart on the Webpage dates from February 2019, the position of Program Director is marked as vacant. From February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 to January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019 (and during the time of my research) the position was held by Léontine Meijer-van Mensch.

of a new Program Director, the museum was trying to transform into a more inclusive and audience-centred institution.<sup>62</sup>

In addition, the museum has engaged in three strategic processes in reaction to the changes introduced by the projects mentioned above: the process to create a new Mission/Vision statement, a new Corporate Design, and a Strategic Plan. My research is focussed on the Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning process that was impacted by course of the Mission/Vision process.

### 1.2.1 The Mission/Vision Process

The Mission/Vision process was started in July 2017 and was scheduled to be finished by August or September 2017. It was led by the Program Director and me. It was designed as an open, participatory process and the whole staff was invited to join. By design it did not just include Heads of Departments, but also staff from all levels of the organizations including Trainees and Interns.

The process consisted of two major elements: Five group workshops with a mixed group of staff from across the organisation and 17 workshops with individual departments. The plan was to develop a first Mission/Vision draft based on open group discussions. The draft would then be discussed between the Deputy Directors and then presented to and discussed with the Director before being presented to the whole staff together with the new Corporate Design.

The group sessions mostly took the form of circles led by the Program Director. It was a mixed group that was slightly different each time but always included a mix of staff from different departments. During five sessions of two-and-a-half hours a range of topics was discussed: the existing Mission/Vision statement dating from 2012, theoretical input in form of Nina Simon's "The art of relevance", examples of Mission/Vision statements of other museums, values and the topic of what lies at the core of the Jewish Museum Berlin, what it means to be a Jewish Museum in contemporary Germany. In the fifth and final session, we discussed and amended the first draft Mission/Vision statement that was then sent up to the executive team to be discussed and approved. The process was very adaptable and the topics for the meetings were not set from the start. Participants were encouraged to give feedback and make suggestions after each session.

Apart from the open group sessions a second series of sessions was added during the process. This was based on feedback after the second session where participants wished

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<sup>62</sup> Jewish Museum Berlin, *Strategic Planning*. Internal Document, May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

for a more diverse group and input to be included in the process. It was decided that I should also invite individual departments to give input on the process. At my request the sessions also included an exercise in visioning. This way the whole museum was enabled to participate in the process in a systematic manner. The workshop sessions with individual departments started on August 1<sup>st</sup> and happened in parallel to the group process. While the aim was to facilitate workshops with all 20 departments, due to time constraints and difficulties in scheduling only 17 departments participated in the end. The workshop sessions were designed for one hour and consisted of two parts: The first part was a visioning exercise based on the question “How do you envision the Jewish Museum Berlin in five years – internally and externally?”. The second part of the workshop invited the departments to give a direct input into current state the process by discussing the preliminary results that were on display on my office wall. The results of the department sessions were then all added to the wall so every input could be considered.

The process was thoroughly documented. Minutes were taken in every group session and included the core topics discussed as well as photographic records of outputs. The results of the workshops with singular departments were entirely documented by photographic records. All material connected to the process was available in a dedicated folder on museums main drive accessible to all staff: literature, material used in the sessions, transcripts and photographic records, as well as the different iterations of the mission statement drafts.

Communication during the process phase of the workshops was done within the participating group via email. Invitations for the next meetings were issued and after every meeting an update on transcripts was sent. Who was on the email-list changed over time. People asked me to add them and I also added various people. I also invited the participants of the individual department workshops to join the group process. Details about the process were not communicated to the whole staff at that point.

One of the issues raised during the process was that it seemed to not have been clear that everyone was invited to join the group sessions. To my knowledge, the Program Director communicated it and asked the Heads of Departments to spread the word to their staff. However, since the communication about who is invited to participate happened before I started my internship, I cannot elaborate on it here. The biggest issue, however, was that the process was not finished.

Based on the discussions of both group and departments workshops the Program Director and I created a first draft Mission/Vision statement. It was discussed and revised together with the participants of the last group workshop. After including feedback from this session, the second draft was forwarded to the Executive Team for discussion in the beginning of September 2017. At this point my active involvement with the process ended.

The plan for the remaining process was that the draft would be discussed between the Deputy Directors and then presented to and discussed with the Director before being presented to the whole staff together with the new Corporate Design. However, at this step, the process got delayed and communication seized, because the Mission/Vision statement coming out of the participatory process was not approved by the Director. I was aware of this through my discussions about the process with the Program Director, but it was never communicated openly. The presentation of the New Corporate Design and the new Mission/Vision statement was scheduled for the beginning of March 2018. However, there was still no Mission/Vision statement to be presented, a fact that remained unaddressed in the presentation. The only Mission/Vision related part of the presentation was the presentation of the data collected in the visioning workshops with the departments that I did on my request.

The process remained in this state of delay until in spring 2018 the Heads of Departments wrote a letter to the Director demanding for him to explain the reasons for the delay in the Mission/Vision process. This had to do with problems in the Strategic Planning process that were created by the missing Mission/Vision statements.

### 1.2.2 The Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Planning process was announced in May 2017 and was interconnected with the Mission/Vision process. It was led by the Organizational Director. The goal was for the Deputy Directors to derive strategic goals based on the Mission/Vision statement as a basis for a financial plan.

In spring 2018, the first draft of the Strategic Plan was presented to the Heads of Departments. It was then refined by a group of Heads of Departments and Deputy Directors and the second draft was presented in the next Heads of Departments meeting. The next step would have been for the Heads of Departments to develop actions and budget plans based on the strategic goals. At this stage, the process got stuck. The Heads of Departments felt it impossible to proceed with Strategic Planning without knowing the

underlying Mission and Vision. This resulted in the letter to the Director mentioned above. As a result of this letter, a workshop was scheduled for September 7<sup>th</sup> 2018 - a year after the draft was sent to the Executive Team - for the Director, the Deputy Director and the Heads of Departments to finish the Mission/Vision statement together and get on with the Strategic Planning process. This is the status of the processes that is the basis for my research.

### 1.2.3 My Role

Due to the fact that I am researching a process that I have actively helped to shape, I want to make my role in it as clear as possible.

Facilitating the Mission/Vision process together with the Program Director was the main project of my internship at the Jewish Museum Berlin. I was involved in the process from the beginning of the group sessions in July 2018 until the completion of the second draft of Mission/Vision statements that was sent to the Directors for approval in September 2017. My responsibilities were to research and prepare materials, literature and best practice cases for the group sessions, to document the process and communicate with participants. Furthermore, by designing schedules and making suggestions on themes for group sessions, I was actively involved in shaping the process and reflected extensively on it with the Program Director. I designed and facilitated one of the group sessions and all of the 17 workshops with individual departments. It was my idea to use them as a visioning exercise. I was further responsible for the first and second drafts of the Mission/Vision statement based on the group process and discussions with the program director. After the end of the group process I analysed the data collected during the visioning workshops and presented it to the whole staff during the presentation of the New Corporate Design in March 2018. I requested to do so, because I wanted to give the results back to the organization to create transparency.

My involvement was limited to the Mission/Vision process. I did not have a role in the Strategic Planning process.

### 1.3 Research Questions

As mentioned in the introduction, the aim of this thesis is to create a case study of an ongoing change process and create insight into what it means to try to implement staff participation in practice. The central research question is how the role of staff participation in strategic processes is perceived by members of management at the Jewish Museum Berlin?

I particularly chose to limit the research to the perceptions of management for three reasons: As has been shown in the literature review, managers/leaders play an important role in the success of change or strategic processes. Further, when it comes to staff participation, management is included in most cases. This has also been the case at the Jewish Museum Berlin, because only members of management were both part of the Mission/Vision and the Strategic Planning processes. Due to these reasons, I found it wise to start with managements perceptions of staff participation.

Based on the literature review and the specifications of the case study I want to include some secondary research questions on concepts of participation and the roles of communication and leadership. Secondary research questions are:

- How does management define staff participation?
- What modes of staff participation are fostered in the Jewish Museum Berlin?
- What is the role of communication in the strategic process?
- What is the role of leadership in the strategic process?

Especially the questions on communication and leadership have to do with the specifications of the Mission/Vision process and the issues that were mentioned in the case study descriptions. It raises questions. Why did the Program Director discontinue communication about the process? Why did the delay happen and what was the role of the Director and the Program Director in it? This leads to the final research question:

- How did management perceive the delay in the Mission/Vision process?

The fact that the Mission/Vision process was led by the Program Director and was held up by the Director is especially interesting, because it taps into the question of impact. Quite often change initiatives are not initiated from the top but within literature it is very clear that top-leadership buy-in is needed for success. I am interested to see how this constellation affected the perception of participation in the Jewish Museum Berlin. I think this will be relevant to many practitioners and change agents in the field.

## 1.4 Position of the Researcher

I am conducting this research as a participant researcher, because during the most part of it I was working at the Jewish Museum Berlin as part of staff as an intern (July - December 2017) or working for the Jewish Museum Berlin as a freelance curator and project leader (February – November 2018).

Facilitating the Mission/Vision Process was the central project of my internship at the Jewish Museum Berlin. Both as an intern and as a freelance curator I worked closely with the Program Director, one of the subjects of my research. The Program Director encouraged and commissioned me to conduct this research and at the beginning acted as an advisor. Now, at the time of writing this thesis and analysing the findings of my research I am not affiliated with the Jewish Museum Berlin.

While my position as a participant researcher allows me to write from an insider's perspective, it also means that I myself, as a change agent involved in the Mission/Vision process, am a subject of my investigation. It further means that conducting interviews in person with people I worked with on a daily basis and questioning them about a process I co-facilitated might influence the results and lead to "polite answers" to some questions.

I am aware of the possible conflict of interest of my two roles. However, I dealt with this by not evaluating or analysing the Mission/Vision process itself. The focus on my research is on how members of management perceived participation. The Mission/Vision process acts as a background to this research but it is not my aim to evaluate the process and research is limited to interviews. I designed the interview questionnaires in a way that there are direct questions and some indirect questions to avoid polite answers.

## 1.5 Methodology

The main source of data for this case study were interviews with members of management at the Jewish Museum Berlin. The goal was to get insights into their concepts of participation and how they perceived participation within the Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning processes.

The research spans a timeframe of roughly one year from the beginning of the Mission/Vision process in July 2017 to September 2018, where the next phase of the Strategic Planning process will begin with a joint workshop of Heads of Departments and Executive Team.

To find out about views on their role and to get insights into the perceptions of participation the two processes, I decided to conduct semi-structured individual interviews, that were scheduled for approximately one hour each. Other than standardised interviews or written surveys done by questionnaire, semi-structured interviews create a relatively open interview situation that leave room for subjective opinions and for topics to arise during the interviews that the interviewer had not thought of before. This is based on the methodology of Grounded Theory developed by American sociologists Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser in 1967, which allows the researcher to derive conclusions depending on the collected data and to develop a theory during research.<sup>63</sup> Soft data like impressions and insider knowledge as well as preliminary desk research, policy papers, internal documents and emails. Together with my experiences and observations, reflections and conversations during the period of research, served as the basis for the development of the interview questionnaire. I prepared three separate questionnaires for the interviews with the Heads of Departments, Deputy Directors and the Director. In the interviews with the Heads of Departments I more or less followed the questionnaire, with the Directors it was more open since some questions did not apply to everyone.

I interviewed six Heads of Departments, the three Deputy Directors and the Director. Interview partners were chosen by me on different criteria. Within the group of Heads of Departments, I selected participants according to two criteria: they must have taken part in the Mission/Vision Process at least once. To get a varied impression I aimed for parity

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<sup>63</sup> Barney Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *Grounded Theory: Strategien qualitativer Forschung*. Bern: Huber, 2010. A good overview of Grounded Theory is provided by Kathy Charmaz, "Grounded Theory: Methodology and Theory Construction." In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Volume 10 (2015): 402-406. A general overview on qualitative research can be found in Nel Verhoeven, *Doing Research: The Hows and Whys of Applied Research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. The Hague: Eleven Publishers, 2011.

of numbers in interviewing two Heads of Departments in every of the three silos of the organisation. For the Directors, I chose to interview all four to get a complete impression. The Program Director was interviewed twice in order to get insight on the background of the Mission Process in an extra interview before the other interviews started. This led to a total number of eleven interviews. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, especially from an internal point of view, all interview partners were granted anonymity. I said that I would analyse the data within hierarchical ranks, so the Heads of Departments, Deputy Directors and the Director would be three separate groups. That meant that the Director would be clearly recognizable because of his singular status. I informed him of this when I requested the interview and after considering it he gave consent. The Program Director gave permission to be cited by name and not anonymously, as well. I will do so where necessary (e.g. when she is reflecting on the Mission Process or where it is in the interest of my research to clarify that she said certain things), otherwise she will be cited as one of the Deputy Directors to ensure similar treatment for all participants. The interviews were done between August 16<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. All of the six Heads of Departments and two of the Directors were interviewed before the joint Mission/Vision/Strategic Planning workshop on September 7<sup>th</sup> 2018. Two interviews were done after the workshop: the interview with the Executive Director on September 24<sup>th</sup> and the second interview with the Program Director on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. At the time of this interview the Program Director had already announced that she would not prolong her contract and leave the museum in February 2019. All other interviews were conducted before this information has been announced. The interviews were conducted in German. The quotes used in the thesis were translated by me. The original questionnaires used for the interviews were also in German. Questionnaires are attached in the Appendix in translation.

## 2 Presentation of Findings

### 2.1 The Heads of Departments

#### 2.1.1 The Aim of the Current Transformation

According to the Heads of Departments there is currently no shared vision or aim for the transformation process.

From the aims that were mentioned (breaking up siloed departmental structures, foster a culture of discussion and participation, to have a more visitor-centred approach and more visitors) none were mentioned by more than one person. Three of the Heads of Departments explicitly said that it is not clear if there is a goal or vision.

In many interviews the transformation was linked to certain processes: the new permanent exhibition, the children's museum, the processes of Corporate Design, Mission/Vision and strategic planning, as well as the existence of planning processes in general. Some Heads of Departments felt that the transformation is driven by external circumstances like the big projects, rather than planned by the Executive Team. One of the Head of Department was missing a clear communication from the Directors:

I see the new concept 'visitors first', the new permanent exhibition, the children's museum, the mission/vision process and the vague term 'new Jewish Museum Berlin'. But I have the feeling, that these separate parts are not very well connected with each other, that we have very strange communication patterns and I have no clear overall picture of it. There was one meeting with the Heads of Departments or even a full staff meeting, where the Program Director gave a presentation about her vision of the museum, but it was not really like: and now we are going to start with this. There never was a moment where it was said 'ok, now we are going to start' or Change Management process, that means this and that, that never happened. It somehow turned out later, that everything is connected, but it was not made clear from the start.

Many of the Heads of Departments saw the need for the transformation process and shared Visioning in the light of the big projects mentioned above. There is hope that the changes in leadership would lead to a new beginning, because the museum is now ripe to redefine itself. As one of them said:

I think this is the process that is coming now, to evade the storm and stress period of youth, like at 18 years old the museum is growing up and it does not always have to rush and follow every crazy idea. It can look at itself and ask, who are we really anyway, what are our strengths and what can we do with it?

## **Criticism**

However, most of them also were very critical about how the process is executed and mentioned that there was much more potential if done correctly. According to them this is due to a lack of competence, communication and planning on the part of the Directors.

In their own words:

I have the impression, that there is big consensus within the museum, that it is necessary to think about a shared Vision, but there is little communication about what it means in practice. On the level of the Directors I would say there is in part the insight that it is necessary, but I think there is a lot of helplessness and no real plan, how to do it. I would say that the will is there in theory, but in practice it fails due to reality and I think also often due to a lack of understanding.

I have the feeling that there is no real answer on the level above the Heads of Departments, as to where we are really going.

According to another one there is a structural problem and a lack of decision making on the part of the Executive Team:

What I would wish for above all, would be a formulated Vision of the Directors, what they want for the organisation as a basis to discuss or to say, ok, I'm going to look for another organisation. Because what I am so overwhelmed by is the total ambivalence and the uncertainty and this is a structural problem in my opinion. I think the Executive Team is too big and it worked before, because it was tailored to certain people and now it is just too many people. Now the Executive Team is like a huge executive department for itself and you can see very clearly that this is not working and I would just wish for more clarity. No Matter the content, I really think that we most of all need a clear positioning.

Another general complaint was that the museum is simply doing too many things at the same time. As two Heads of Department explain:

I think that these strategic processes are often being underestimated and taken too lightly. They are hard and annoying work and it takes time and resources and up front you have to think twice about what you want and what you can achieve and in which time, because everything else will lead to frustrations. This is something we are doing wrong as an organisation, we tend to always put too much on our plate on many different levels and in the end, everyone is always frustrated, because many things must inevitably come to nothing.

We are simply doing too much. I think it would be important to say: first and foremost, we are now doing the new permanent exhibition, the children's museum, Vision/Mission and the Strategic Planning process. This is more than enough for the next one and a half years.

### 2.1.2 Concepts of Staff Participation

In most interviews staff participation was defined by negation. It was made clear that participation does not mean that there are no hierarchies or everything is being discussed with everyone. Two Heads of Departments put it like this:

For me participation always means that I can say something and it is being heard, but that I cannot insist on it to be done exactly as I said. We are 200 people and you have to find compromises, that has to be clear to everyone as well.

Participation does not have to mean, ok, we're now discussing one question and everyone can say, what they want and in the end, we decide on the average.

Other definitions included: at a minimum to have a shared status of information through transparent communication and that every member of staff is given room to work in their own discretion and is allowed to make propositions. It is also mentioned that participation needs to be encouraged and fostered from above, as well as wanted from the bottom up to become part of organizational culture. Within strategic processes time should be allowed for the possibility of feedback to ensure participation.

One Head of Department said that staff participation is one of the most important things for staff motivation and both staff and the organization benefit from it.

#### **Staff Participation at the Jewish Museum Berlin**

In regard to the role of staff participation at the Jewish Museum Berlin, the Heads of Departments said that it is better than in the past. The new Program Director is seen as the one spearheading participatory practices.

They named some good examples of successful staff participation practices at the Jewish Museum Berlin: For example, the Head of Departments meeting, that has been made more participatory and regular. It is now allowed for them to add points to the agenda and ask questions and it is considered less top-down than before. The establishing of Committees, where mostly the Heads of Departments are enabled to discuss and coordinate certain aspects (IT, Security but also Event and Exhibition programming) was also mentioned as a good move in principal, although it was questioned if the right people were a part of the committees. Another good example was the merger of departments "Visitor Services" and "Visitor Studies" to form the new department "Visitor Experience". The two affected Heads of Departments were actively involved in the process and were allowed to shape the new department, which was different to mergers in the past that were dictated top-down by the Deputy Directors. The process of creating the new digital strategy was named

as a good example as well, because, similar to the Mission/Vision process, every member of staff is welcome to join one of the meetings. The Mission/Vision process was mentioned as well.

Nevertheless, most of them also said that staff participation is done in a very unsystematic way and lacks consistency. They feel that sometimes staff is consulted by the Deputy Directors, but that it is restricted to certain people and not all staff is included. Although they are privileged, there are very different grades of participation, even amongst Heads of Departments. A lack of alignment within the Director and Deputy Directors is seen as one of the reasons for this.

As one Head of Department put it:

I think that in fact we have a lot of freedom, everyone from Head of Department to a student trainee, if you want to put it like that. There are many opportunities and people get asked, there are more committees than before, so there is an effort to have more different people participate. But at the same time there are parallel structures that are not the least participatory and I think this discrepancy is what makes it so tricky. If you would know that this is a totally hierarchic organisation where one person always makes all the decisions, then you can come to terms with that. But the promise of participation on the one hand and on the other hand it just doesn't happen, this is difficult. (...) We have a Director that is clearly opposed to it and a Program Director that wants to apply participation to every process, which I also find wrong. Confounding factors are single persons. I think that structures need to fit the person in charge and the person in charge needs to fit the structure and I think that we have too many different models for it to work.

Another Head of Department says that the real problem lies not in a lack of participation, but in the fact that there is a lack of decision making within the Executive Team. She says:

I always had the feeling that I can say anything. I think the basic approaches are there, I have to say, especially because of the Program Director, this is a total change, where you have the feeling, she really listens to what we have to say and then decides accordingly. But I think that things don't get decided as a last consequence. I have the feeling that the problem is not a lack of participation, but the lack of decision-making. Nobody wants to decide, and this is what I am missing.

Many Heads of Departments articulated their wishes for a better Staff Participation at the Jewish Museum Berlin. They suggested to have more really open participation like in the Mission/Vision process in other processes as well, more frequent meetings with all staff about the state of the organisation and processes. In general, they wish for more clarity where discussion or participation is wanted and if so, to enable earlier participation.

Facilitation from outside experts is also seen as crucial, because nobody really has the time to do it and the expertise.

### 2.1.3 Perceptions of Staff Participation in the Mission/Vision Process

The Heads of Departments had very positive reactions to the participatory nature of the Mission/Vision Process. They felt that the fact that the whole organization was allowed to participate was both empowering and something new.

They especially mentioned that it was an open process where everyone was invited and not only heads of departments were allowed to take part, but also all kinds of other staff from different levels. That there was time for open discussion and participants were able to hear opinions from others and widen their scope was seen as positive. Especially the fact that everyone got heard because of the additional visioning-workshops with the singular departments was seen as empowering and something new that got people excited, but also led to disappointment when the process was not finished. One Head of Department said:

That all departments were asked to participate, I think that was really a positive, that was also psychologically important, in that people had the feeling that they are finally being heard. There also was, you could hear that at our presentation of the Corporate Design, there was a whole different expectation and then also disappointment, that it, and I think this is the problem now, started good, but came to nothing again.

Another positive factor was time. They appreciated the fact that the Program Director took the time to get to know the museum and staff and did not just plan one or two days with an external workshop leader, that there was time for open discussion and she was interested in what staff actually said were seen as positive. Also, the theoretic discussions about what is Jewish about the Jewish Museum, and what does this mean for the museum were mentioned as well as the fact that everyone was brought to the same level at the start by discussing theoretical input first.

Some Heads of Departments mentioned that there should have been more participation by certain people, especially the Director. As one of them put it:

Certain people should have been forced, so to say, to participate. And I do not only mean the Director, although it is downright absurd that there is a Director who does not pay attention to the Mission/Vision process, this just isn't right. But we all know how the alliances and the front lines run within the organization and there should have been a more strategic approach to say, these people absolutely need to participate, so that they don't get to say in the end: I was not a part of it, this is all bad and I don't support it.

#### 2.1.4 Perceptions of Staff Participation in the Strategic Planning Process

Heads of Departments felt that they had no or too little participation in the strategic planning process. It was mentioned that participation was too late and on a questionable level. The strategic goals were developed by the Deputy Directors. Neither the Heads of Departments, nor non-managerial Staff were participating in the development of the Strategic Plan. A few members of staff were asked by the Deputy Directors to give feedback on their plan. However, this was not communicated broadly.

After the presentation of the Strategic Plan, Heads of Departments were asked to develop actions with their departments.

There were concerns about the lack of shared discussion and the need for strategies to be developed together. Too little time, a lack of information, transparency and communication were mentioned. According to them, a better method would be to facilitate a workshop and discussion with all Heads of Departments, to ensure that everyone is on the same page.

The Strategic Planning process was generally not well received by the Heads of Departments. They described it as “disastrous”, “not working” or “simply didn’t happen”. While the lack of participation was one of the reasons, the main reason was actually the dissatisfaction with the planning and execution of the process by the Deputy Directors who were considered to have used the wrong tools for Strategic Planning. Their presentation of a list of strategic goals was perceived as not thought through, vague and unworkable. Another reason was the fact that the process was delayed due to the fact that the Mission/Vision statement had not yet been approved. The Heads of Departments felt it impossible to develop actions based on this list without the Mission/Vision statements. According to them, the processes of Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning should have been better linked.

On the positive side the fact that there was at all a Strategic Planning Process was mentioned. Further, the fact that all Heads of Departments were struggling with the list of goals provided by the Executive Team, was mentioned as positive, because it allowed for a feeling of shared experience and the resolution to try for more cross-departmental collaboration. There was hope that the Executive Team had learned from the protest and suggestions that it can be done differently and that it would be nice to take that into account for future processes.

### 2.1.5 Communication

#### **Communication before the Mission/Vision Process**

There are different opinions amongst the Heads of Departments about the quality of the initial communication of the process and the question if it was clear that everyone was invited to participate in the creation of the new Mission/Vision statements.

According to the different accounts the information was communicated in the Program Director's opening speech about her plans, in an email to the heads of departments with the request to forward it to all staff and in one of the weekly "Monday meetings", the minutes of which are usually sent to all staff by email.

Some Heads of Departments said that it was very clear from the beginning that everyone was invited or that they thought so, since the group of participants was so diverse. As one person put it:

The Program Director said in her opening statement that everyone who is interested should get in touch with her. It was clear to all staff that they have to become involved themselves and to write a short email to the program director that they would like to take part and that the program director would surely not say 'no, you cannot take part'.

However, the majority of them said that it was not communicated well enough. The given reasons were: unclear communication by the Program Director, the use of the wrong channels, as well as hierarchies that kept people from taking part in spite of the Program Directors open call. One head of department said:

I can only really remember the point when you called for our department session. I also thought that Mission/Vision has a strong focus on content, so to what extent are the administrative departments affected? This is why I did not think that it had such an importance for us.

Another one speculated that maybe the Program Director communicated vaguely on purpose:

I heard from many people that they didn't know that they could take part. It can be an excuse, but it was really not that clear, but I thought that it was on purpose, so that the Program Director gets only the people who really want to become involved.

However, the most prominent explanation was a lack of forwarding the invitation by the Heads of Departments. While all interviewees said that they forwarded the Program Director's email to their staff they also mentioned that they think that this might not have been the case in other departments. As one of them said:

I forwarded the email to my staff but I can imagine that this is maybe different in other departments. I think that the structures of communication are different in each department, if there are regular meetings and how much time there is between them.

Another one mentioned that there is a general problem of communication within the museum:

The communication from heads of departments to their teams doesn't work so well. It is not enough when you say something in the Monday meeting, often it will not be communicated further, sometimes it doesn't go into the minutes and even if, you can't expect all 200 staff to read those. There should have been an email to all staff, but the email was only sent to the heads of departments and then we have the problem again that just not everyone forwards it. And I don't know if every department has a team meeting, we have that and I said it there, but I think this does not work everywhere, at least that is what I heard from many people, that they were not well enough informed about this.

According to the Heads of Departments, a possible solution for better communication would have been to actively invite people over and over again or to send an email to all staff about it.

### **Communication of the delay of the Mission/Vision process**

Several people mentioned the lack of communication after the group process was finished and the first draft of Mission/Vision Statements went to the director for approval. There was no official communication about the process being halted and information about this was only obtained by informal channels or office grapevine. As one Head of Department put it:

In the beginning communication was very good but then it came to nothing and then you realized something is not working out here, the process is not being continued and the mission statement cannot be used, but why indeed? And it was only during the strategic planning process, when the heads of departments said, we want to do it properly, that it came to light that we could not use the tool [the Mission/Vision Statement] that was needed and that we thought to have had created for this purpose.

Another one said:

It was clear that the Mission statement is in the background of the strategic plan but nobody knew it, that's why it was non-transparent. Only at the second meeting the Program Director said that the Mission/Vision is being discussed between her and the director, but she didn't mention exactly what was going on.

### **Communication between Heads of Departments and their staff**

The Heads of Departments were quite self-critical about the general communication from them to their staff. They said that there are clear directions from the Executive Team to inform staff about the Head of Department meetings and to forward the minutes when available. How and when this is done is up to the heads of departments themselves to decide to do it.

While all of the interviews Head of Departments said that they are passing information on to their teams as requested, many of them said that they don't know if this is the case in every other departments and that in general the museum doesn't have a good communication culture.

There were indeed different grades of diligence and not everyone always informs their team about everything. One of them said that it is crucial for the team to have all information:

During our team meeting I always tell my team what happened and I also always forward the minutes. It is important for them to have them, so they can ask questions. It is important for me that my team is always well informed. I am forgetting a lot, but I tell them they can always come and ask me about anything.

Another one said that there is room for improvement in his own way of communication:

I am doing it if there is interest from staff to read the minutes, but I don't always do it, it depends. It is not an automatism, it would probably be better to make it one, though.

The lack of communication to non-managerial staff was both seen as a problem at the level of the Heads of Departments themselves, but also as a consequence of a lack of control on the side of the Deputy Directors. As one Head of Department put it:

It is one thing to have a regulation, but to really check, if it gets executed is something different. And this is what actually never happens here and I sometimes wish that management would pay more attention if someone really executed something or not.

The Deputy Directors are also blamed for a lack of communication in the Strategic Planning Process, but also within certain aspects of the Mission/Vision Process.

Suggestions were made to switch from a push-communication to pull-communication, where every information is made transparent and available via intranet and can be accessed by all staff.

### 2.1.6 The Impact of the Mission/Vision Process

When asked directly about the impact of the Mission/Vision process most of the Heads of Departments said that they thought it had no impact due to the fact that it was not finished. However, they did mention positive developments that were inspired by the participatory nature of the process.

According to some, the process had a big impact, because of the big surge of energy that came from the fact that it was so different and open to all. The fact that all staff was heard was considered to be very important for the museum, because of the lack of recognition in the years before. The fact that the Program Director generally brought a new atmosphere to the museum was considered to have a very positive impact.

One Head of Department mentioned that the presentation of the results from the visioning sessions with the separate Departments together with the new Corporate Design had a big impact, because people are repeatedly talking about how interesting the results were and that they carried weight, because they were based on so many opinions. Another one suggested for the results to be included in discussions for the Strategic Planning process. The process also prepared staff to engage deeper with other viewpoints and made it possible to be more open. It encouraged staff to work differently and in cross-departmental collaboration. As one Head of Department put it:

Personally, I am doing much more with other departments. We did it before, but now we are more serious about it. Where it gets more complicated is to implement it on staff level. I think it will simply take some time to really implement it, but I find that this is a positive effect.

### 2.1.7 The Impact of Delaying the Mission/Vision Process

According to the Heads of Departments the fact that the Mission/Vision process had not been finished had a huge impact. It destroyed the positive vibe of the participatory process, led to frustration and made it impossible for the Heads of Departments to fully participate in the Strategic Planning process.

The biggest impact was that the majority of Heads of Departments felt that because it was not finished, the whole Mission/Vision process has had no impact at all. Because the participatory process had been so inspiring and empowering and filled people with hope, it was seen as especially frustrating that this process came to nothing, like many other processes at the Jewish Museum. As two Heads of Departments put it:

I think that was really a positive, that was also psychologically important, in that people had the feeling that they are finally being heard. There also was, you could hear that at our presentation of the Corporate Design, there was a whole different expectation and then also disappointment, that it, and I think this is the problem now, started good, but came to nothing again.

If you spend half a year discussing and in the end, nothing comes of it, then I think you have taken everything away from the process. And that is sad, because if there had been a decision in the moment, it would have had an impact.

Reactions included frustration over the time and work that was put into the process and especially the fact that there was a lack of communication about the reasons for the delay after the first draft statement was sent to the Deputy Directors and the Director. There was a strong wish amongst them to finish the process and the hope for the upcoming workshop in September to enable the process to be finished. Only one Head of Department did not see the unfinished Mission/Vision process as a problem:

For me the fact that it is not finished had no consequences, because I am not dependent on a Mission/Vision statement. Our decisions are made with our Deputy Director and my staff, if I have questions I will directly ask and the Mission statement is not necessarily something that would change my decisions.

Another impact was that it created disillusionment about the overlying power structures within the Executive Team. According to one Head of Department it showed that there are very long processes in a big house and that there is obviously no consensus within the Executive Team. Another one concluded that the Mission/Vision statements are obviously not important to the Executive Team. The lack of decision making within the ranks of the Executive Team was seen as a general problem and a major source of frustration. Two Heads of Departments attributed it to the fact that there are too many Directors involved, because both the former Program Director and the Founding Director are still actively involved in the museum. In their own words:

If the Executive Team would say once, this is our vision and we all follow it, this is why you write a Mission statement after all, then you have a foundation and with every project you can ask yourself, does this fit our Vision, why are we doing that? I think we ask ourselves way too little, why are we doing that? And this has to change, we have to work more goal-oriented and I think this only works if all six directors, and I'm really saying six now, because de facto there are still six of them, if they all say, this is what we are going to do and we are behind this, I think that then the whole staff would be behind this as well and I think it would simply be a much more effective and efficient way of working if we wouldn't need to have these discussions over and over again in small groups. I believe that the only reason that the impact is not there, is the fact that there simply has not been made a decision and this is something I hope to happen at the workshop.

What I would wish for above all, would be a formulated Vision of the Directors, what they want for the organisation as a basis to discuss or to say, ok, I'm going to look for another organisation. Because what I am so overwhelmed by is the total ambivalence and the uncertainty and this is a structural problem in my opinion. I think the Executive Team is too big and it worked before, because it was tailored to certain people and now it is just too many people. Now the Executive Team is like a huge executive department for itself and you can see very clearly that this is not working and I would just wish for more clarity. No Matter the content, I really think that we most of all need a clear positioning.

Most Heads of Departments attributed the lack of decision making to the Director, who refused to approve the Mission/Vision statements that came out of the participatory process. The frustration about his continued refusal led the Heads of Departments to write a letter demanding that he would explain himself. This led to the joint workshop in the beginning of September 2018, where Heads of Departments and Directors were trying to finish the Mission/Vision process.

The hope was to create a Mission/Vision statement that can be used after the workshop. There was frustration that this step was necessary, because roughly one year ago the process had already been at this point. But the Heads of Departments had learned from the Directors refusal to approve the Mission Statement that it is important to involve him in the process. In their own words:

In hindsight, it was a little frustrating to see that we didn't really take along the Director in the process, to see that a part of the Executive Team is very cohesive, but that there is another part acting as a disturbing factor when you least expect it, because you thought we are already way past that. And to also learn that, to say that this constellation of the Executive Team, I think that they themselves have to learn, or the Director has to find his role and where does he intervene or where does he trust the Deputy Directors and doesn't have to butt in. So, the fact that we now have to have a similar process again in September, just for the Director, after what seems like two years, you feel kind of outmanoeuvred, or where you had the feeling for the last half a year, we actually do have a Mission and Vision, why can't we work with that already and this is a little frustrating.

It is important to talk about things not only with the three Directors of the Executive Team, but also to involve the Director himself. It has been one of the results of the Mission/Vision process, that, even if we create something, that it does not necessarily mean that it is going to be lived.

The most commonly shared expectation for the workshop was to finally get the Director on board with the Mission/Vision process and to make clear to him the importance of this process. One interviewee put it like this:

It is about the basics, I would say, why to have a Mission/Vision statement and that this is important. That the Director cannot refuse this to his museum and that he cannot hold up a process, for whatever reason, that is important for the museum. To make clear to him that he either has to participate, or stay out of it, but preferably participate of course.

## 2.2 The Deputy Directors

### 2.2.1 The Aim of the Current Transformation

According to the interviews with the three Deputy Directors the current transformation has two aims: to foster cross-departmental collaboration and to rethink the position and relevance of the Jewish Museum Berlin for contemporary society.

The Deputy Directors especially want to abolish the silo-thinking that is currently prevalent in the museum. According to them departments should decide and plan more directly with each other. One of them stresses that museums need a different structure to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

Most museums, and also the Jewish Museum Berlin, are still operation within an organisational structure of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, despite the fact that what we do and what the realities are have long since changed. We have to change if we want to survive this newest phase and really evaluate how relevant organisations are.

Measures to foster cross-departmental collaboration include: the implementation of committees where Heads of Departments can decide on specific topics like IT, Security, Event or Exhibition Programming, and a qualification programme for the Directors and Heads of Departments. According to one Deputy Director, this should lead to deregulation, quick implementation of innovation and quick decision making. Another one mentioned that it is a slow character change, and that learning happens through singular projects, where staff work together across departments. According to one Deputy Director the whole transformation process should have been started two years earlier and that there is too little time because of daily business.

### 2.2.2 Concepts of Staff Participation

Similar to the Heads of Departments the Deputy Directors also agree on what staff participation is not. According to them, participation does not mean that they don't make the decisions in the end. It is not a grassroots democracy system where things are discussed for weeks until everyone has been heard. Not every decision can be reached by vote. It is also not only bottom-up or top-down. But it is important to have staff as idea givers, to create a plurality of voices and enable different perspectives. And it is important to hear staff out before a decision and explain decisions afterwards. One Deputy Director mentions that staff participation also means that all decision-making instances are participating, including the Director.

They all consider staff participation to be important, but offer variously nuanced reasons why. They range from staff management being a resource for effective management to a measure of empowerment for staff.

One reason for staff participation is that it simply leads to better results, acceptance and legitimacy. According to them top-down decisions without consulting staff do not activate the full potential of knowledge in the organization and have no chance of survival. One Deputy Director even went as far as to say they destroy everything. Proposals from staff are seen as one of the most precious resource in processes, because staff bring many aspects to the table that the Deputy Directors wouldn't be able to come up with. They admitted that they made mistakes with past processes, where staff was not allowed to participate and that they are now doing it differently. The second reason for staff participation is that it has a motivational effect on staff. The Program Director mentions a third reason, that staff participation is important to create a feeling of unity or group identity amongst staff:

Participation is important to create a sort of basis, a feeling of unity, all of us are the organization, we're all embracing the process (...) and that is my fundamental position on leadership, that the knowledge is in the system and I only have to facilitate it and provide a frame and value it and to incorporate in a sustainable way.

In her opinion participation is also about who gets to decide and who is allowed to take part in a decision and that contemporary cultural organizations can only be led in a participatory or collective way, as she put it. According to the Deputy Directors this is not currently the case in the Jewish Museum Berlin. Two of them say that it is still very hierarchic in some areas. As one of them puts it:

There is so much expertise that is not being used, because in the end the Jewish Museum is very hierarchic, incredibly hierarchic, although it claims not to be hierarchic at all. (...) The Jewish Museum is one of the most hierarchic organisations that I know, where it is really dictated, ok, you work on this and you do this now. This is something I would like to change.

One of the Deputy Directors has a different view. He says:

I am so close to the colleagues, I talk to them so much that I always pick up their wishes and try to realize them. I am pretty happy how it is going right now and I hope that communication stays that open.

### **Participation within the Executive Team**

The Deputy Directors meet with the Director once a week to talk about the big topics. They explicitly say that it is clear that the Director decides everything in the end and asks

for opinions on some issues. While he delegates some decisions and the execution, he reserves the right to veto, which they say does not occur often. One of the Deputy Directors said that the Director is especially interested in some areas like exhibitions, big programs and events and that in other areas the Deputy Directors have a lot of freedom. Another Deputy Director said that within this frame, autonomy was only to be created by simply not mentioning certain things in the weekly meetings.

### 2.2.3 Perceptions of Staff Participation in the Mission/Vision Process

#### **Reasons for a participatory process**

The Deputy Directors decided to create a new Mission/Vision statement as a reaction to the many changes that happened in the museum: the development of a New Permanent Exhibition and Children's Museum, but also the addition of the Academy of the Jewish Museum Berlin that was not reflected in the old Mission/Vision statement from 2012.

The idea to create the new Mission/Vision statements in a participatory way came from the Program Director but was embraced by all three Deputy Directors, because of the benefits of collecting insights from staff and staff motivation. One of the Deputy Directors explicitly said that it was important to have this process:

I think that the Executive Team has clearly internalised the significance of such a process, the influence it has on the Strategic Planning process, its contribution to staff motivation and orientation, but also the impact it has on the general orientation, to stop and get clarity about both what we want and what we should do, and this is made possible in a highly-focussed way and this is why I completely stand behind this process.

They agreed that the process had to be led by the Program Director, because Mission/Vision statements are a content-related task. According to the Program Director the plan was discussed up front with the Director, who understood the wish to get to know the organization and her participatory approaches, although he didn't share this passion. The Program Director had her own reasons for leading this process herself. In addition to the above-mentioned need to redefine the direction of the museum, she wanted to use the process to get to know the organization and introduce herself, to show that she is interested in what people had to say and to introduce a new concept of leadership. In her own words:

I thought I could kill two birds with one stone: to get to know the whole organization, also to show, that I am actually interested to involve the whole organization, because I knew from staff, that this has often been said, to involve staff, but not really lived. And to show them that this is something I really believe in. And for me it was important to get to know the people and to give them the feeling that they are heard and also appreciation, where I noticed that this could

really be improved, appreciation, listening, in fact a paradigmatic shift from a very hierarchic ordering people around to leadership, to really see, that the expertise is sitting within the organisation and to give it much more room, this was really important to me.

Another reason was to use the Mission/Vision process to introduce staff to her agenda and inspire them to move forward together. She says:

You could also say to me: you needed the process to brainwash people and to draw them to your side of the museological Force. I would say, yes, of course that was a part of it, because I really wanted to get to know the colleagues, but I also wanted for them to get to know me and to see, oh, this is what she stands for and it is great, where she wants to go, this is where we also want to go to. It is almost like a religion and somewhat demagogical. (...) I sometimes very consciously use demagogy, because I think you can't do such change processes without that. For me it means to inspire people and to create a feeling of unity and to say to everyone: you are important, without you the museum wouldn't exist.

A third reason was the fact that she was not directly involved in the development of the New Permanent Exhibition that was led by the former Program Director and wanted to start changing things and not wait for the Director and the former Program Director to retire.

### **The Role of Staff Participation<sup>64</sup>**

With the Mission/Vision process the Program Director wanted to have a plurality of voices and different perspectives and to try to implement the goal of cross-departmental collaboration within the process. She explains that to her participation means to level the playing field of who gets to decide, no matter the hierarchic level:

Participation means, that the Finance Department has the same vote as the Collections Department and I would also say that the Finance Department was more inspiring for me in the end, because I heard a lot of things that were new to me. (...) And for me participation is also about, what is expertise and who decides and who is allowed to have a say. And the fact that in the Mission/Vision discussions the voice of a Trainee, who didn't even work in the Collection Department is equally as important as the voice of a seasoned Curator, I think this was a revolution for this museum. Because here everyone acts, as if we are so without hierarchies, but this is one of the most hierarchic institutions that I know, where it is really dictated, ok, you work on this and you do this now. This is something I would like to change.

Apart from that the group process was also important to let people voice their fears and get them out of the way. The Program Director said that she had a genuine interest to see what staff within the organisation thought. This is why she considered the Visioning

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<sup>64</sup> This has only been discussed with the Program Director.

sessions with the singular departments a great success, because of the interesting results and the fact that she felt like she could be a part of it, without being there, because I facilitated those meetings and let her see the results. She admitted that she had not foreseen to be so engaged in organizational duties.

In relation to the above-mentioned goals of creating allies for her agenda and the fact that she already had a notion of what the Mission/Vision statement should include, the Program Director describes the role of participants in the Mission/Vision process equally as idea givers, multipliers and people that need to be convinced within strategic efforts of persuasion.

Reflecting on the participatory nature of the Mission/Vision process the Program Director came to the conclusion that there were not many mistakes. She regarded these things as especially good: listening and to give people a voice, the fact that staff listened to each other and discussed their perceptions, as well as the discussions about what it means to be a Jewish Museum and the fact that the Mission/Vision draft was revised together within the last group session. However, she says that the process could have been more participatory, if communication from the Heads of Departments had worked better in the beginning. But it was a first step to a collective way of working and to have plurality of voices and feeling of unity. She says that maybe she tried to do too many things in the Mission/Vision process, like implementing cross-departmental collaboration or, as she put it “flirting with the organization”, to get people excited about her vision for the museum, but that she learned a lot from the process.

The final Mission/Vision statement is going to be decided at the workshop on September 7<sup>th</sup>. To this workshop only Directors and Heads of Departments are invited. One of the Deputy Directors explicitly refers to that as a change in composition, compared to the mixed group that drafted the first statement, but said that the last Mission/Vision process 2012 was far less participatory. The fact that only the Heads of Departments are invited to the workshop series on Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning is explained by one of the Deputy Directors as a practical solution to a systemic problem. Because the fact that the Jewish Museum is too small to conduct these processes with the whole staff and that it costs time and money, in the end they fell back to the hierarchic structure and the Heads of Departments, although this structure should be abandoned and changes like this are easier in a smaller house.

### **Participation of the Deputy Directors and the Director**

The Program Director said she invited the other two Deputy Directors to join the process and kept them in the loop about results and the Mission/Vision statement drafts. She described her role as an “advocate of staff”. Because the Mission/Vision Process was led by the Program Director, the other two Deputy Directors did not feel the need to participate. They both said that it was enough to be included at the stage after first draft Mission/Vision statement that resulted from the participatory process and felt that they could have the opportunity to voice their opinions and make additions. As one said:

I was not participating in the process and I didn't find it necessary. I found, that I could join at the stage of the interim result very well and that I have plenty of opportunities in that stage to bring different ideas into the process.

Their accounts about the stage where the first Mission/Vision draft statement was discussed between the Deputy Directors differentiate slightly. One of the Deputy Directors said that the Program Director presented the draft and the three Deputy Directors reflected on it. He specifically mentioned that they didn't correct the draft, because that would be presumptuous. Another one said that they looked at the results, and were quite amazed at what the results of staff consultations were. They added their part, but didn't change much. The Program Director adds that they were able to agree on a draft, but they did change quite a bit. The version the Deputy Directors presented to the Director was slightly less radical than the first draft coming out of the process. She explains that this was due to their process of finding a common ground between the three of them that was going on parallel to the Mission/Vision process.

All three Deputy Directors made it clear that in the end it is the Executive Team that “dictates” the Mission/Vision statement and has “to stand behind it” and that especially the Director has to support it, since he has the overall responsibility on every decision. The Program Director said that she had a clear direction in mind and knew that she wanted certain things to be in the Mission/Vision, but left the degree of radicalism to the process:

You have to allow for an element of surprise, but on the other hand you also have to know exactly where you want to go. For me a lot of components were already clear. (...) I knew that I wanted certain components, but how radical these components are, that has to do with context and there I find that the museum is not so radical yet, but maybe in about three years, because hopefully by then I will have convinced some colleagues a little bit and empowered others.

According to the three Deputy Director the Director was not involved in the process. He knew about it, got updates and gave feedback. When they presented their Mission/Vision

draft to the Director they were surprised by his strong rejection of it. However, one of them mentioned that the process cannot end without the approval of the director. According to the two Deputy Directors that were interviewed before the workshop on September 7<sup>th</sup>, the Director was in the process of formulating his own ideas. They mentioned that the process has not been ended yet, but didn't give an explanation why.

#### **2.2.4 Perceptions of Staff Participation in the Strategic Planning Process**

According to the Deputy Directors there has been a Strategic Planning Process in the past, that was not continued out of a lack of support within the Executive Team. The reason to try again was both the necessity because of the changes the museum is undergoing, and the fact that the Executive Team has changed since 2012. The main reason to have a Strategic Plan is to enable budget planning.

##### **Participation of Deputy Directors and Director**

The Deputy Directors are the main participants in the Strategic Planning Process. The process is led and structured by the Organizational Director. On the basis of the results from the Mission/Vision process they devised a list of strategic goals that was then presented to the Heads of Departments. According to one of the Deputy Directors the Director did not want to be involved and has been a source of delay both in the Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning Processes. However, after the letter from the Heads of Departments demanding that he position himself to the Mission/Vision draft, he is committed to the process and will be joining the workshop on September 7th.

##### **Participation of Heads of Departments and Other Staff**

The Heads of Departments were not included in the development of the Strategic Goals. Some selected staff members were asked for feedback by the Deputy Directors, before they presented the Strategic Plan to the Heads of Departments. One of the Deputy Directors said that he included the ideas of staff by currently talking to staff and picking ideas, but that there was no structured way or active invitations for staff to participate. The Heads of Departments were asked to provide feedback on the first draft of the Strategic Plan and to devise goals and actions within their departments or committees. After the presentation, a select group of Heads of Departments volunteered to refine the first draft. Non-managerial staff will participate in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. After demanding a joint workshop on Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning, the

Heads of Departments will be participating in the further development of the Strategic Plan. None of the Deputy Directors considered this to be a problem. One of them offered a reason: keeping the Strategic Planning Process between the three of them was important for them to find alignment. If they had opened the process to include the Heads of Departments sooner, they wouldn't have been able to do this. The finding of alignment was one of the things that were considered positive about the Strategic Planning Process. As one of them said:

I have to say that it was very good for the three of us, to first get to know each other. We were talking a lot, we were fighting and talking past each other to first get to the point to say: where do we want to go, how do we see the museum, because we partly have a very different view on the museum. And I think if we had opened the process sooner to the Departments, then we wouldn't have had this process and the kind of melting together, that eventually really happened.

In a way staff input was ensured indirectly by the results and protocols from the Mission/Vision process that the Program Director brought to these meetings. However, there was no broad staff involvement in the Strategic Planning process was not intended.

As one Deputy Director said:

The Strategic Planning process is not communicated to everyone in the organisation, that has to be said in all honesty. But the question is, is that necessary? It is definitely discussed with the Heads of Departments and it is not forbidden for them to talk to their staff about it. However, it hard to imagine to conduct the Strategic Planning process in a row of staff meetings, that is not the right format. So we need to have a certain representation of staff and it is the Head of Departments' task to be spokespersons for their staff.

### **Reflections on the Process**

The Deputy Directors did acknowledge that the process was not very well perceived by the Heads of Departments. Two of them mentioned the lack of structure as one reason of rejection and the Program Director said that she should have included the Organizational Director in the Mission/Vision process, so as to translate the agility of this process to the Strategic Planning process, which is now provided by the external consultants. The third Deputy Director offered a different explanation and said that the Head of Departments were simply overwhelmed by something so new as a Strategic Planning Process.

They all agreed that it was not a good idea to proceed with the Strategic Planning process although the Mission/Vision process was not finished. They relayed that this was one reason for the Heads of Departments to reject the Strategic Plan and it would have been smarter to wait until it was finished to achieve greater clarity and security within the process. The decision to move forward with what part of the Mission/Vision draft that

they thought would be approved by the Director was made, because they wanted to have a budget plan at the end of the year. In general I got the impression that the Strategic Planning process is more about budgeting and less about strategic goals as a visioning activity.

#### 2.2.5 Communication

According to the three Deputy Directors there is a clear expectation within the organisation that Heads of Departments are to pass along all proceedings and information from Heads of Departments meetings, Monday meetings or committee sessions to their staff. Similar to the Heads of Departments they also concluded that there is a problem with communication from Heads of Departments to their staff. As one Deputy Director put it:

In some departments it works well, in others less well. It's interesting, no matter in which institution you are and how much effort you put into giving information to everyone, there is always someone to say 'I didn't know this or I know too little' and this is something I really want to tackle on an institutional level. I expect from every Head of Department to pass everything on to their staff that is said in the Heads of Departments meetings, committees or Monday meetings. But this also means that Departments have to have regular meetings and this was also not the case a few years ago, In general, the awareness that every Department has to have regular meetings and that every Head of Department has the responsibility to pass along information to their staff. I think it has changed a little, it is getting better, but we have to work on it some more.

#### **Communication before the Mission/Vision process**

The Program Director also blamed the fact that not every staff member felt that they were invited to join the Mission/Vision process on a lack of communication on the part of the Heads of Departments.

According to her she started the process by writing an email to all Heads of Departments and other interested staff, inviting them and asking them to spread the word. She was hoping for a snowball effect and the creation of a community of interest. In addition, she mentioned that everyone was invited on several of the weekly Monday meetings and also within the Heads of Departments meeting. She said that she did not know that this would be insufficient and that not all Heads of Departments would pass the invitation along to their staff and that the process enabled her to see how impermeable the level of Heads of Departments was. In her words:

With the Mission/Vision process, I was a little naive to think, ok if I invite everyone and write an e-mail and say, bring people along that you want to bring

along, that this then will go its way and I just didn't see in the beginning how impermeable this rank of Heads of Departments really was. You can't see everything from above, because the Heads of Departments naturally have a very different behaviour upwards than downwards. And I read and experienced that the middle management is actually always the toughest level in such change processes. And I would say that this was an important learning moment, that on the one hand you have to empower them and on the other hand you really have to limit their powers, this is something that I am taking away.

### **Their own Role**

The Program Director admitted that it was her mistake to rely on this system and said that the Deputy Directors have now changed their approach to communication. She mentioned that there will be a thorough leadership training programme for the Heads of Departments, that should also cover communication. For the present, the Deputy Directors also engaged in a new strategy not to solely rely on the Heads of Departments to pass on information, but try to ask opinions from different staff that act as advisors, critical friends or sparring partners. She said that they had good experiences with this and that this has an effect on the organization.

Although knowing that the communication system does not always work, the Deputy Directors still rely on it, for example in the Strategic Planning process. The process has not been widely communicated. As one Deputy Director said:

The Strategic Planning process is not communicated to everyone in the organisation, that has to be said in all honesty. But the question is, is that necessary? It is definitely discussed with the Heads of Departments and it is not forbidden for them to talk to their staff about it. However, it is hard to imagine to conduct the Strategic Planning process in a row of staff meetings, that is not the right format. So, we need to have a certain representation of staff and it is the Head of Departments' task to be spokespersons for their staff.

According to the Program Director the problem of communication has also been raised by the Heads of Departments at the Mission/Vision/Strategic Planning workshop on September 7<sup>th</sup> 2018. She concludes:

Communication is not the greatest strength of this museum, that became very clear as a weak spot within the discussion of values in the workshop. We don't communicate well with each other.

#### **2.2.6 The Impact of the Mission/Vision Process**

Reflecting on the impact of the process, the Program Director felt that there were a few things that, in her opinion, came from the participatory nature of the process:

She sees the process as a first step for the museum to become more participatory and collective. According to her the process led to a culture of more openness, the possibility to think about projects together. It created the possibility of new staff positions that were shared between departments, as well as impulses in the academy to integrate new museological practices in the museum and led to the creation of a new format for staff to talk about all things Jewish.

She thinks that the participatory nature of the process empowered staff, especially the non-content-related departments because of the visioning sessions with each department. Many people within the museum are asking about the Mission/Vision statement: the team of the New Permanent Exhibition, the staff council, so she thinks that in the end the few sessions and talks with staff did actually start something. She also thinks that it empowered the Heads of Departments as well. It is possible that the fact, that the Heads of Departments got together to write the letter to the Director demanding to finish the Mission/Vision process, which resulted in the facilitation of the workshop in September 2018, was due to their participation in the Mission/Vision process. She said:

Because people collaborated in the Mission/Vision process and found it important and then nothing came of it and of course they know why that is. It is difficult to deduce and I don't want to make the Mission/Vision process more important than it was, but I think it has contributed to it.

While she said that maybe not everything can be directly related to the Mission/Vision process, she definitely sees little delicate plants of participation popping up across the museum.

Another Deputy Director said that the fact that staff was involved in the Mission/Vision process led to a greater sensibility to the fact that they all have to change to create the new Jewish Museum Berlin and that it also helps with identification in the implementation phase, if staff is involved in the creation of the Vision. However, he did also say that the process did not reach its full potential as a moment of kick-off and mobilization, because of the delay induced by the Director's refusal to approve the draft.

### **2.2.7 The impact of Delaying the Mission/Vision Process**

In regard to this question the opinions of the Deputy Directors are a little divided. They all were surprised by the Directors big opposition to the Mission/Vision draft.

However, two of the Deputy Directors said, that they did not see this as a big problem initially, since they were still able to base the Strategic Plan on the parts of the

Mission/Vision statement, that they knew he would approve. They did this to keep with the schedule of the Strategic Planning process to be able to have a budget plan ready for the end of the year.

In hindsight, they acknowledged that this was a problem. They also acknowledged that the delay in finishing the Mission/Vision process had a direct impact on the Strategic Planning Process, which had to be put on hold after the Heads of Departments demanded to take a step back and finish the Mission/Vision statement first. One Deputy Director explains:

I think the big mistake was that we didn't finish the Mission/Vision process, before we started the Strategic Planning process. Although, from my view, I was coping with that better than others, because to me the Mission/Vision seemed to be very clear and the finalization of the process was not crucial for me in regard to the content, it was clear to me, where we are going, so to say, from the interim result of the process. I felt secure enough to go ahead with this interim result and consciously wanted to proceed to be able to implement the process in time. But I think that not everyone feels like that and this is why it would probably have been better to take one step after the other, because it would have led to greater clarity and security.

He further says, that he thinks that the long duration and the missing completion of the process led to irritation and insecurity amongst staff, which was aided by the fact that the delay was not communicated or explained properly. He thinks that this might have led to disappointment and the fear that the process would never be finished or never be taken seriously. One of the other Deputy Director disagrees and claims that the Heads of Departments were simply overwhelmed by something new like the Strategic Plan and this was the reason for their refusal to continue. In his own words:

We started the Strategic Plan, because we already had Mission/Vision and our Values in mind and we didn't change much, this is the gap that we still have, but we were able to close it. It shouldn't be done like that, but it was a good temporary solution, by which we tried to move into the Strategic Planning, because we wanted to go through with the budget. And the Heads of Departments were overwhelmed by something new like this.

While it did not impact them at first, the two Deputy Directors in the end agreed that the delay caused by the Director was responsible for the delay in the Strategic Planning process, because the Head of Departments felt that the Executive Team is not unitedly standing behind it.

In contrast to the two other Deputy Directors, the delay of the Mission/Vision process had a direct impact on the Program Director. For her the Director's refusal to approve the

draft coming from the process meant a first realisation that she didn't have as much freedom as she thought:

At that time, I still thought that I have more freedom with regard to contents, that I can steer and decide more things myself. Because I thought, I will present the draft and then it will of course be corrected, sharpened or softened, but that the content related, programmatic agenda that I am setting will be accepted, especially because it is coming from within the organization itself and because I am here because of a certain expertise. And then it was of course the first disappointment, so, oh, it is actually completely different.

She said that it was a problem that the Director did not whole-heartedly support the participatory nature of the Mission/Vision process and ended up holding everything up. She mentions that this lack of alignment between her (and the other Deputy Directors) and the Director was one of the reasons for the problems with the Mission/Vision process and that the external consultants also diagnosed that. In hindsight, she said that she would both force the other Deputy Directors to participate in the process to have more leverage with the Director and to insist that the Director be supportive of the participatory process and ask for a vote of confidence. The Program Director also said that the Directors refusal to approve the Mission/Vision draft led to a certain amount of internal pressure on the Director himself, which is unusual for the museum:

We were, but you have to ask the other two, surprised how opposed the Director was to the draft, but now the Heads of Departments have written, that they want him to react to the Mission/Vision draft, because otherwise we are stuck and I actually find this to be quite beautiful. It is very limited, but it is a little, I wouldn't want to say revolution, but it is indeed a little pressure coming out of the organization.

## 2.3 The Director

### 2.3.1 The Aim of the Current Transformation

The director stressed that he sees it as his role to really embrace this process and to deliberately think about the responsibilities and position of the Jewish Museum Berlin as a national museum in the current German museum landscape. According to him nothing is more dangerous than to stand still. In his own words:

I see it as my job to make sure that we are facing this process and that we try to determine in a very deliberate and reflected way how we are going to position ourselves and what we see as our purpose. I strongly believe that nothing is more dangerous than to stand still (...) we continuously have to think about what our tasks are, how we are facing them and to try to find new ways of fulfilling them.

However, he did not give a specific answer as to where the current transformation process is leading. He also said that he cannot be part of all strategic processes.

### 2.3.2 Concepts of Staff Participation

In regard to staff participation he said that a broad discussion of core responsibilities of the Jewish Museum Berlin is beneficial to everyone and that it is impossible to formulate and dictate this alone from the top down. For him the Mission/Vision process (the workshop that is) had been a learning experience, to see that through participation and the process many things were set in motion and were put up for discussion, that he could not have foreseen from a distance. He came to the conclusion that broad participation is the only way to do these things.

According to the Director decisions are made together within the Executive Team. It is a strong wish of the Director to always try to reach a consensus. He introduced weekly meetings, as he himself calls it “endless meetings”, where all important issues are openly discussed between him and the Deputy Directors. In hindsight, he admitted that he has often been too distracted by details during his time at the museum, but that he has now learned to better focus on the important issues within these meetings. He says that usually a consensus is reached. However, he also states that in his role as the Director he is accountable for every decision in the end.

### 2.3.3 The Background of and Participation in the Mission/Vision Process

The idea for a Mission/Vision process came from the Deputy Directors, but was positively received by the Director, when he read the old Mission statement from 2012 and realized that there was no reflection on the “Jewishness” of the Jewish Museum Berlin. He thought this to be necessary to be included.

The Director was not participating in the initial process and he didn’t want to be. It was clear that there was going to be a very open process led by the program director and that he would get the result at some point. He explicitly said that this does not mean that he would be the topmost authority to say “no, I don’t like this, not like that”.

No, I was not a part of it and I didn’t want to be a part of it. That is, you know, I cannot be a part of all these processes, this is not possible. But it was clear that there will be a process, that will be very open and that I will of course have a look at the result.

The Director’s involvement began when he saw the Mission/Vision statement drafts that came out of the participatory process. He was still missing the concept of “Jewishness” that he found important to be included. He attempted to include this concept and to draft his own version.

He was participating in the two workshops facilitated by the external consultants in September 2018, one for the Director and the Deputy Directors and one for the Director, Deputy Directors and the Heads of Departments on September 7<sup>th</sup>. He found both workshops extremely productive. He was not present for the whole length of the second workshop, but said that there will be further workshops for Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning processes. But it has been made clear by the consultants, that the Strategic Planning process will be a much longer process than everybody anticipated at the beginning. He was supportive and positive about the continuation of the processes.

As for his further participation, it is not clear when and how he is going to be a part of that processes. He found some aspects very specific to singular departments and he felt that he wouldn’t have the competences to add to these discussions in a qualified manner. However, he found everything to be very interesting.

He especially mentions the beneficial impact of the external consultants that facilitated the workshop on September 7<sup>th</sup>, where Directors and Heads of Departments met to finish the Mission/Vision Statements. For him the fact that the moderators were external facilitators was crucial to the success of the process. He admitted that he didn’t know that

until then, but that from now on he would always do it like that and recommend this to everyone. He said that he learned a lot from the external consultants, especially on what a Mission/Vision statement should really look like.

#### 2.3.4 The Impact of Delaying the Mission/Vision Process

The fact that the Mission/Vision statement drafts coming out of the participatory process were not approved and presented together with the new corporate identity in February 2018 as scheduled, was not seen as a problem by the Director. For the Director, it would have been too early for the Mission/Vision statement to be presented. His reason for not approving the first Mission/Vision statements was that he was still missing the concept of “Jewishness” that he found important to be included. He attempted to include this concept and to draft his own version. He explicitly mentions that this did not mean that he wanted to override the process. He said:

It is not like I am the topmost authority to say: I don't like this, that's not how we are going to do it. No, on the contrary I have tried, on the basis of the draft that resulted from the process, I have tried to phrase it a little differently and to bring out the aspect of “Jewishness” a little stronger.

The Director admitted that this was the wrong approach, because on a content level he had the wrong notions of what a Mission/Vision statement should be. He again mentions the benefit of having external consultants. They explained in the first workshop with only the Director and the Deputy Directors that Mission/Vision statements should be very short and to the point. He said that he instantly realized that his version was very bad and quickly abandoned it. After that there was a very constructive discussion. In his own words:

I saw the result and I found that the aspect of ‘Jewishness’ is still not strong enough. Then I sat down and wrote a draft myself, and we talked about it within the Executive Team. Soon after the external consultants were hired and it quickly became clear that my version, that was very similar to the draft from the process, was based on the wrong assumption of what has to be included in a Vision and Mission statement. Mine was worse, I didn't realize and we all didn't really realize, that Vision needs to be very concise and short and Mission has to elaborate what the Vision wants. And I realized that my version was way too descriptive, because I thought that all key aspects of our activity and our responsibilities have to be listed in the Mission. And after that we had a fruitful discussion and the external consultants really helped us to draft a Mission/Vision statement that we presented to the Heads of Departments in the next workshop.

While he didn't see the delay as a problem, he did mention that this was a topic of discussion in the workshop on September 7<sup>th</sup>, and that this discussion had been very open and that he is positive that there will be a final Mission/Vision statement soon.

## 3 Discussion of Findings

### 3.1 The Role of Participation

#### **Similar Concepts of Participation**

The research data suggests that there are similar concepts of participation within the ranks of management. Heads of Departments and Deputy Directors agree on the same definition of staff participation by negation. Both groups stated that participation does not mean that everything is decided democratically or that there are no hierarchies of decision making. It is made very clear that both Vision/Mission and Strategic Goals are going to be decided by the Executive Team in the end. The Head of Departments' definition of a participatory setting further included transparent information, empowering staff to make decisions on their own, asking for feedback and enable staff to weigh in on decisions. The Deputy Directors stressed the strategic value of staff participation. They stated that it creates better results, acceptance and legitimacy, motivates staff and creates a feeling of unity. The Director also states that staff participation ensures a better result. These definitions are in accordance with the reasons for staff participation listed in literature on change management.<sup>65</sup> The following discussion shows, however, that the proclamation by the Director and the Deputy Directors about the importance of staff participation does not always correspond to the actions taken in practice. The same is true for the Heads of Departments.

#### **Staff Participation is Something New**

According to the data, the concept of staff participation is perceived as something new at the Jewish Museum Berlin. Both Heads of Departments and Deputy Directors agree that the museum has become more participatory than it has been in the past. This change is mostly credited to the Program Director. The Mission/Vision process was mentioned as being the first time that staff was asked for their input in strategic decisions which made it so special and empowering. It became clear that staff participation is also a new concept within the ranks of management. Heads of Departments mentioned that there were no regular Heads of Departments meetings with the Executive Team in the past, meetings were held in a top-down fashion and they were not allowed to add to the agenda. One of

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<sup>65</sup> Robert Janes 2013, as well as Anderson 2019 and Dexter Lord/Markert 2018. See also chapter 1.1.2 Staff Participation in Change Management and Strategic Planning Processes.

the Deputy Directors mentioned that there had been a Mission/Vision process in the past, but that it was much less participatory. Both Heads of Departments and Deputy Directors mentioned that apart from the Mission/Vision process, staff participation is also fostered in other processes like committees, the process to create a digital strategy and in the process of merging two departments. However, especially the Heads of Departments criticise the lack of consistency and transparency in regard to staff participation. They ask for more staff participation. Their wording in defining participation: “we are allowed to participate” and “we get to ask questions” adds to the impression that staff participation at the Jewish Museum Berlin is in a very early stage of development and two of the Deputy Directors stated that the Jewish Museum is still very hierarchic.

Data suggests that the Jewish Museum Berlin is in a state of learning, when it comes to participation. Especially the Director and two of the Deputy Directors stressed that they have made mistakes in allowing for too little staff participation in the past, but have learned from it. After the merging of two departments that was dictated top-down created problems, they allowed for staff participation with the next one. The Director mentioned that he has learned from the Mission/Vision process, that staff participation is necessary to create better results.

### **The Mission/Vision Process was About More than the Final Product**

The reasons given by the Program Director for designing a participatory process to create the new Mission/Vision statements suggest that for her the process was not only about the final product. She used the process not only to create a new Mission/Vision statement, but to get to know the organization, empower staff by giving them the feeling of being heard and appreciated, to introduce herself and to create allies for her agenda. She also used the process as a showcase for the changes she wanted to create, a new approach to leadership instead of top-down hierarchy and cross-departmental collaboration. As for the final product, she already had a clear direction in mind and knew that she wanted certain things to be included in the Mission/Vision statement, but left it to the process of how radical these elements were going to be.

In this regard, her goals were much more about process than about the final product. The emphasis on process and staff empowerment is very much in line with current leadership theories and literature on change, especially with Dexter Lord/Markert’s approach to

strategic planning.<sup>66</sup> The explicit focus on creating allies, however, is the Program Directors own addition. Nevertheless, the Heads of Departments' data suggests that they appreciated the Mission/Vision process exactly because it was not only about product.

### **Heads of Departments appreciated the participatory Mission/Vision process**

The data shows that the participatory nature of the Mission/Vision process was appreciated by the Heads of Departments. They especially mentioned the fact that broad participation by staff from all levels of hierarchy and different departments of the organization was enabled as positive. They found the process to be very positive and empowering, especially the fact that everyone was heard due to the additional visioning workshops with separate departments. This was considered important, because in the years before there was a lack of recognition. The fact that the Program Director took the time to get to know the organization was mentioned as positive. Although the Heads of Departments were disappointed that the Mission/Vision statements were not presented together with the Corporate Design, they especially appreciated the presentation of the results of the visioning workshops.

### **Mixed feelings about participation in Strategic Planning process**

In regard to participation in the Strategic Planning process, Heads of Departments and Deputy Directors have different opinions. The Heads of Departments would have wished for more participation in the development of the strategic goals and shared discussions about them. Most of them perceived the Strategic Planning process was perceived as unsuccessful and poorly executed. A lack of participation was one reason, but the main reason named was poor preparation and the use of the wrong tools on the part of the Deputy Directors. The Deputy Directors did not see a lack of participation within the Strategic Planning process. According to them participation for both Heads of Departments and non-managerial staff was ensured in the implementation phase of the process.

### **Different grades of staff participation**

The data also shows that there are different grades of staff participation within the Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning processes. Within the Mission/Vision process

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<sup>66</sup> Dexter Lord/Markert 2018. See also chapter 1.1.2 Staff Participation in Change Management and Strategic Planning Processes.

broad staff participation on all levels was enabled. The Program Director, Heads of Departments and non-managerial staff participated in the process. In the Mission/Vision process staff was participation in the development of both the draft statement and the process itself, as well as in giving feedback. The two other Deputy Directors did not participate in the process. Within the Strategic Planning process there was also staff participation at all levels, but in different grades. In the development phase only the Deputy Directors participated, selected non-managerial staff was asked to give feedback. Participation of the Heads of Departments as well as broad non-managerial staff is limited to the phase of implementation. The data also shows that staff participation is often limited to the Deputy Directors and Heads of Departments. Broad participation of non-managerial staff in the development phase is only enabled in the Mission/Vision process and the process for the new Digital Strategy.

The grades of staff participation within the Strategic Planning process resemble the approach to strategic planning in the past, where the Director and a few advisors would write the strategic plan, get feedback and then go straight to implementation, that is criticised by Dexter Lord and Markert as creating no staff buy-in and ownership.<sup>67</sup>

The grades of staff participation within the Strategic Planning process are in contradiction to the results on the importance of participation. The Deputy Directors particularly stressed the importance of broad staff participation to create better results and empowerment. This leaves the question why this was not done within the strategic planning process, especially since there was the precedent of the Mission/Vision process that was done in a very participatory way. The data does not suggest a clear explanation for this. One of the Deputy Directors offered an explanation that they needed to find alignment within their group first, before inviting in the Heads of Departments. This points to the general problem of leadership alignment that is criticised by the Heads of Departments. However, there is no clear evidence in the data and more research is necessary to determine the reasons for this decision.

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<sup>67</sup> Dexter Lord/Markert 2018, 46. See also chapter 1.1.2 Staff Participation in Change Management and Strategic Planning Processes.

## 3.2 The Role of Communication

The data suggests that there are problems with communication both in the Mission/Vision process and the Jewish Museum Berlin in general. It further suggests that the biggest problem is a lack of communication from Heads of Departments to their staff, but that there are also shortcomings in communication on part of the Deputy Directors.

### **A lack of communication by the Heads of Departments**

Both the Heads of Departments and the Program Director agreed that there was unclear communication in the beginning of the Mission/Vision process about the fact that everybody was invited to join the process. They agreed that although the Program Director had a part in it by not using direct communication, the main reason for this is the lack of communication from Heads of Departments to their staff. They all mentioned that there are clear expectations for the Heads of Departments to keep their staff informed, but that they doubt that this is always the case. Both Heads of Departments and Deputy Directors agree that the lack of communication from Heads of Departments to their staff is a general problem within the museum. While the Heads of Departments are very critical about their own shortcomings in relation to communication, they also address the need for the Deputy Directors to more actively check-up on the way their Heads of Departments communicate and to engage in more direct communication to ensure broad information. Although they know it is a problem, the Deputy Directors still for the most part rely on the system of communication through the Heads of Departments. The Deputy Directors took measures to counterbalance the lack of communication of the Heads of Departments, like introducing a training programme or engaging directly with different members of staff bypassing the Heads of Departments. This is seen as non-transparent and unsystematic by the Heads of Departments.

### **A lack of communication by the Program Director**

The data shows that there are also shortcomings of communications on the part of the Deputy Directors both in the Mission/Vision process and about the transformation process in general. According to the Heads of Departments there was a lack of communication about the delay of the Mission/Vision process after the draft got sent to the Executive Team in September 2017. They were first informed about the delay at the first presentation of the strategic plan. They perceived this as non-transparent. Data does

not suggest why the delay was not communicated by the Program Director or the rest of the executive team. Further research is necessary to answer that question.

**A lack of communication about the aim of the transformation**

Further, according to the Heads of Departments there was a lack of communication about the whole transformation process on the part of the Deputy Directors. This is supported by the data about the aim of the transformation process. The findings show that there is no shared goal or vision amongst Heads of Department and Deputy Directors. Amongst the group of the Heads of Departments several people explicitly said so and named a lack of communication from the Deputy Directors as the reason. Within the group of Deputy Directors there is agreement about the aims of the transformation, however, only one Head of Department listed the same aims. The Director mentioned that transformation is necessary, but did not state a precise goal for the transformation process.

While the data suggests that there are problems with communication in the Jewish Museum, both on the level of Heads of Departments and Deputy Directors, further research is necessary to determine the exact reasons for that.

The lack of communication is at odds with the unanimous positions in literature. Literature clearly states that communication and transparent information from leadership is an essential part of any successful change effort as shown in the literature review.<sup>68</sup> The data on communication is conflicting with the data on the concepts of participation. While both Heads of Departments and Deputy Directors expressed that participation is important, the data suggests that both Heads of Departments and Deputy Directors are hindering participation by a lack of communication.

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<sup>68</sup> chapter 1.1.2 Staff Participation in Change Management and Strategic Planning Processes.

### 3.3 The Role of Leadership

#### **The delay in finishing the Mission/Vision process had a huge impact**

The data strongly suggests that the Director's refusal to approve the Mission/Vision statement had an immense impact on various levels.

Most of the Heads of Departments said that it had a direct impact on their morale and led to big frustration and disappointment on their part. They said that exactly because the Mission/Vision process had been so inspiring and empowering and created excitement about the upcoming transformations, the fact that it was delayed without a clear explanation completely undermined this effect.

It also impacted the way how the Mission/Vision process was perceived. One of the biggest results of the delay was that the Heads of Departments felt that because of it, the Mission/Vision process had no impact at all and all the energy, excitement and positive vibe that it created was gone. According to them the Mission/Vision process became one of the many processes within the museum that had a good start but then came to nothing. It also led the Heads of Departments to doubt the Executive Team's power to lead the museum and their commitment to the Mission/Vision process. Especially the lack of decision making was named as a frustrating aspect.

It led to big frustration with the Director, because the Heads of Departments felt that to get him on board at the workshop on September 7<sup>th</sup> they had to repeat the Mission/Vision process that they thought they had finished a year ago.

The delay also had a big impact on the Program Director. She had been certain that the draft coming out of the organisation and written under her supervision as Program Director responsible for all content-related matters would be approved. The delay made her realise that she might have limited freedom in content-related matters.

Apart from the impact on staff, the Director's delay in approving the Mission/Vision statements also impacted the Strategic Planning process, because the Heads of Departments felt that they could not work with the Strategic goals provided by the Deputy Directors without knowing the Mission/Vision statement.

The data shows that apart from the Program Director, the Executive Team did not perceive the delay as a problem initially. The other two Deputy Directors did not initially see the delay as a problem. They proceeded with the Strategic Planning process based on the part of the Mission/Vision statements that they thought would be approved by the Director, because they wanted to keep in time with the budget plan. Nevertheless, in hindsight they acknowledged that both the delay and the lack of communication about it

did have an impact on staff and that they should not have proceeded without a finished Mission/Vision statement.

The data shows that the Director did not see the delay as a problem as well and did not feel that he was interfering with the process by delaying it. According to him, it would have been too early to present the Mission/Vision statement together with the Corporate Design in March 2018. His reason was content-related. He felt that the Mission/Vision statements was missing the aspect of “Jewishness” and tried to add that based on the draft. He specifically said that he did not see his role as the one to say no to the draft statement coming out of the process and that he did not see his refusal to approve as interfering with the process, because he built on the draft. However, after attending the workshop on September 7<sup>th</sup> he acknowledged that this had been an issue for the Heads of Departments. The data suggests that the reasons of the Director and the two Deputy Directors for not perceiving the delay as a problem were related to their focus on content and product. The Deputy Directors wanted to finish the strategic plan to be able to create a budget for the end of the year, the Director was concerned that the Mission/Vision statement lacked an important aspect. It is possible that they underestimated the importance of process which was one of the declared goals of the Mission/Vision process.

It is interesting to note that both the Director and the two Deputy Directors, who did not participate in the Mission/Vision process, were the ones that did not perceive the delay as a problem. However, it is not clear from the data that there is a connection.

The data does not explain the long duration of the delay. The presentation of the Corporate Design was scheduled six months after the draft Mission/Vision statement was sent to the Executive Team, the workshop with Executive Team and Heads of Departments happened a year after the draft was sent. Further research is necessary to both identify the reasons for the long duration of the delay and the perceptions of the Deputy Directors and Director.

The big impact of the delay of the process is a clear confirmation of the prevalent opinion about the importance of leadership in change processes. As John Kotter said, it is impossible to achieve change without active leadership support from the top and that it is not a good solution to leave out the leader.<sup>69</sup>

However, many questions remain open: Why did the delay go on for a whole year? Why was the presentation of the Mission/Vision statement announced and then did not happen?

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<sup>69</sup> Kotter 2002, 60. See also chapter 1.1.2 Staff Participation in Change Management and Strategic Planning Processes.

What was the role of the Program Director and the other Deputy Directors in the duration of the delay? Did they try to speed things up and if so, why did it not work? If not, why did they not interfere?

**A lack of alignment and decision making**

The data suggests that there might be problems of alignment and decision making within the Executive Team. The issue is raised by both Heads of Departments and the Program Director.

The Heads of Departments perceived both the transformation process in general as well as the delay in the Mission/Vision process as being caused by a lack of decision making within the Executive Team. According to them, this is a structural problem based on the fact that there are too many current and former Directors and that the structure of Director and Deputy Directors does not work anymore. They criticised a lack of coordination and the fact that the museum is doing too many things and there is too little time for strategic processes. Especially in relation to the aspect of participation, a tension between the Program Director and the Director was mentioned. It is interesting to note that the wish for clear decisions and direction is more important than the wish for participation in the creation of the direction.

Other data points to the same conclusion. The fact that the Program Director had such different perceptions of the impact of the delay than the rest of the Executive Team, the differences in the grades of participation within Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning processes, as well as the fact that they needed the Strategic Planning process to find common ground, could be read as a possible lack of alignment within the Deputy Directors. The fact that the Director did not approve the Mission/Vision draft as well as the long duration of the delay of the Mission/Vision process suggest a lack of alignment between Deputy Directors and the Director. According to the Program Director, this was also diagnosed by the external consultants. The data does not suggest the reason for this lack of alignment. It is not clear from the data if it is a personal or a structural problem. Further research is needed to clarify.

## 4 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to gain insight into the role of staff participation in strategic change processes in museums. Based on the case study of the Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning processes at the Jewish Museum Berlin, qualitative expert interviews were conducted with members of management to find out about their perceptions of staff participation and the concepts of staff participation within the museum. The aim was to create a case study of an ongoing change process and create insight into what it means to try to implement staff participation in practice. The case of the Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning processes at the Jewish Museum Berlin is special in that the Mission/Vision process was a participatory experiment, but had been delayed, because the Director never approved the draft Mission/Vision statement that was created in the process.

The literature review showed that there is great alignment within the discourse on staff participation in strategic change processes. Staff participation is crucial for the success of any change or strategic process, because major change is dependent on staff buy-in. While staff participation can take many forms, depending on the grade of engagement (e.g. in phases of development, steering, feedback, implementation or through transparent information) or in regard to who is participating (Directors, Senior Management, Middle Management or non-managerial staff), broad staff participation at all levels and as early as possible is considered best, because it creates better results, better alignment and leads to staff empowerment, especially important within strategic planning processes. Apart from staff participation, leadership support and frequent and transparent communication are important aspect of successful change. It is made clear that it is impossible to achieve major change without active support from top-leadership.

The case studies and manuals on change and strategic planning all include similar elements in regard to staff participation: there is always a form of guiding coalition formed to support the leader at the top in steering the process, broad staff participation is ensured by facilitating workshops and retreats, providing frequent and transparent information and allowing for the possibilities of feedback. It is seen as critical to allow enough time for the process and create a clear structure.

As has been shown in the literature review, staff participation in strategic change processes is a highly relevant topic in the light of both changes in the museum field and

current leadership theories but remains under researched. There is a lack of detailed case studies, especially for the German museum field.

Within this study, qualitative expert interviews were conducted with six Heads of Departments, three Deputy Directors and the Director to find about how management perceived the role of staff participation within the strategic processes in the Jewish Museum Berlin. The outcomes of this study suggest that there are issues regarding the aspects of participation, communication and leadership within the Jewish Museum Berlin. In relation to the concept of staff participation it showed a conflict between theory and practice. While all interviewees mentioned the importance of staff participation, this does not always correspond to the actions taken in practice, especially within the members of the Executive Team. Examples for this are the lack of staff participation within the Strategic Planning process and the lack of communication about the delay of the Mission/Vision process. Research also showed that the concept of staff participation is relatively new to the Jewish Museum and is mainly attributed to the new Program Director. The Mission/Vision process was valued as the first-time broad staff participation was enabled within the museum. It also showed different grades of staff participation within the Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning processes. While the Mission/Vision process was very well received because it enabled broad participation on all levels of staff, the Strategic Planning process was criticized for being poorly executed and allowing for too little staff participation. It further showed that the Mission/Vision process was not solely focussed on product, but rather on process, one of the goals being to empower staff, another to create allies for the Program Directors agenda. In this the Mission/Vision process is in line with the emphasis literature puts on staff empowerment. Research also showed that this was one of the main reasons why staff appreciated the process.

Research strongly suggests that there is a lack of communication within all ranks of management at the Jewish Museum Berlin. While there is a general problem with communication from Heads of Departments to their staff, there was also a lack of communication on the part of the Program Director during the delay of the Mission/Vision process. The lack of communication is also in conflict with the proclaimed importance of staff participation mentioned above.

One of the main outcomes of this study was that the refusal of the Director to approve the Mission/Vision draft had an immense impact both on the morale of staff and the

perception of the impact of the Mission/Vision process. It led to a delay both Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning process and great disillusion and frustration with both the Director and the overlying structures within the Executive Team. Data shows that because the Mission/Vision process was so empowering, the delay was perceived as especially frustrating. The perceived impact of the delay proves the point made within literature that change is not possible without the support from top-leadership. The fact that both the Director and two of the Deputy Directors did not perceive the delay as a problem pointed to a greater focus on product over process and to a lack of shared concept of staff participation. Other limiting factors to staff participation were identified as: a lack of time and planning, lack of leadership alignment and decision making and a lack of transparent communication. Another main outcome of this study was the lack of alignment within the Executive Team. Results that point to it are: The differences in process design of the Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning processes, delay in the Mission/Vision process in general, its long duration, the differences in perceptions of the impact of the delay between the Program Director and the rest of the Executive Team. The reasons for this lack of alignment remain unclear and further research is needed to clarify if it is a personal or a structural problem.

## 5 Recommendations

The aim of the research is to collect data about perceptions as a basis for further research into the topic of staff participation in strategic processes. While the results point to problems in regard to theory and practice of staff participation, communication and leadership alignment within the Jewish Museum Berlin, the reasons for these issues remain unclear.

Open questions include: why was the delay in the Mission/Vision process so long? Why was there no communication about it? Why has there not been more alignment in process design of Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning? Why are there issues with communication? Why is there a lack of alignment within the Executive Team and what are the reasons for the misalignment of theoretical concepts of staff participation and implementation in practice? Based on the findings and open questions I would like to make the following recommendations to the Jewish Museum for further research and actions:

Since this study was limited to members of management, as a second step I would recommend to expand the research to how non-managerial staff perceived staff participation at the Jewish Museum Berlin.

I would like to recommend further research to determine the reasons for the lack of communication and to identify structural problems. Based on the outcomes I would also recommend a museum-wide discussion about strategies to solve this problem. In relation to the lack of alignment within the Executive Team, further research should be conducted to clarify if it is a structural or personal problem and to offer possible solutions. In regard to the misalignment between theoretical concepts of participation and implementation in practice. I would suggest further research into both the concepts of participation and the understanding of leadership within the museum to open up a discussion and enable a shared understanding.

It would be particularly interesting to conduct further research into the question of impact of the participatory Mission/Vision process, since this was explicitly not the aim of this thesis. Exactly because the process was delayed and perceived as having had no impact, I would like to see if there is any long-term impact in spite of it.

In regard to staff participation in strategic change processes at the Jewish Museum I would recommend to conduct the above-mentioned research to create clarity and a shared understanding before entering into the next strategic process. Based on the limitations of a lack of time and planning mentioned above, I would also like to suggest the appointment of a dedicated staff position to lead the next process.

The results of this study show that change is a very complex topic and that many factors influence its implementation in practice. I think it would be beneficial for the museum field to have more detailed case studies and data-based research on both the topic of change management and staff participation in strategic processes. Because most literature stems from the Anglo-Saxon museum discourse, it is especially important for the German museum field to create its own case studies. I hope to have made a contribution to that with this thesis.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Interview Guide: Heads of Departments

##### **General Questions:**

1. How long have you been in the Jewish Museum Berlin?
2. How would you describe your role as a manager?

##### **Questions about the Transformation Process and Staff Participation:**

3. The museum is currently in a process of transformation. What does it transform into?  
*(Which measures have been taken during the last year? Are you a part of any?)*
4. What is the role of staff participation in the transformation process?  
*(How would you describe the grade of your participation/of your staff? What is your idea of staff participation in strategic processes? What is needed for that? How relevant/not relevant do you consider this to be for the museum?)*

##### **Questions about the Mission/Vision Process:**

5. The Mission/Vision Process was designed as a participatory process. How did you perceive the process? What was successful, what would you wish to have been different?  
*(Was participation something new at the Jewish Museum? What impact did the fact that the Director did not ratify the Mission/Vision statement have?)*
6. How would you describe the communication in the beginning of the process? Was it clear that everyone is allowed to participate?  
*(Did you encourage your staff to participate? How would you describe communication within the museum in general?)*
7. How do you perceive the impact of the process?  
*(Did anything come of it? Did something change for you because of it?)*

**Questions about the Strategic Planning Process:**

8. Can you describe the Strategic Planning Process? What role does staff participation play?

*(Who is participating and how? How is your staff participating? How do you perceive the process? What is good, what should be different? There were attempts in the past to implement strategic planning. Why did that not work?)*

9. In September, there is going to be a workshop for the Directors and the Heads of Departments. Can you describe how this came to be and what is going to happen there?

*(How do you prepare? How does your staff prepare? What do you expect from it?)*

10. How would you describe the communication of the Strategic Planning Process?

*(How are you being informed as a Head of Department? How do you inform your department? How are the results of Head of Department Meetings communicated in general?)*

**Final Questions:**

11. What are your wishes for the future?  
12. Would you like to add anything?

## Appendix B

### Interview Guide: Deputy Directors

#### **General Questions:**

1. How long have you been in the Jewish Museum Berlin?
2. How would you describe your role as a Deputy Director?

#### **Questions about the Transformation Process and Staff Participation:**

3. The museum is currently in a process of transformation. What does it transform into?  
*(Which measures have been taken during the last year? Are you a part of any?)*
4. What is the role of staff participation in the transformation process?  
*(How would you describe the grade of your participation/of your staff? What is your idea of staff participation in strategic processes? What is needed for that? How relevant/not relevant do you consider this to be for the museum?)*
5. In the Visioning workshops during the Mission/Vision process, more than half of the participants wished for more participation and cross-departmental collaboration. If so many want this, why does it not work? And what is the reason?
6. Can you describe the decision-making process within the Executive Team?

#### **Questions about the Mission/Vision Process:**

7. Why was there a Mission/Vision process?  
*(Why did you decide for a participatory format? Did you reflect on the process? What was your role in the process?)*
8. How would you describe the communication in the beginning of the process? Was it clear that everyone can participate?*(Did you encourage your staff to participate? How would you describe communication within the museum in general?)*
9. How do you perceive the impact of the process?  
*(Did anything come of it? Did something change for you?)*

**Questions about the Strategic Planning Process:**

10. Can you describe the Strategic Planning Process? What role does staff participation play?

*(Who is participating and how? How is your staff participating? How do you perceive the process? What is good, what should be different? There were attempts in the past to implement strategic planning. Why did that not work?)*

11. In September, there is going to be a workshop for the Directors and the Heads of Departments. Can you describe how this came to be and what is going to happen there?

*(How do you prepare? What do you expect from it?)*

12. How would you describe the communication of the Strategic Planning Process?

*(How are the results of Head of Department Meetings communicated in general?)*

**Final Questions:**

13. What are your wishes for the future?

14. Would you like to add anything?

## Appendix C

### Interview Guide: Director

#### **General Questions:**

1. How long have you been in the Jewish Museum Berlin?
2. How would you describe your role as Director?

#### **Questions about the Transformation Process and Staff Participation:**

3. The museum is currently in a process of transformation. What does it transform into?  
*(Which measures have been taken during the last year? Are you a part of any?)*
4. What is your idea of staff participation in strategic processes?  
*(How is participation being lived within the Executive Team? What would be needed for that? How relevant/not relevant do you consider this to be for the museum?)*
5. In the Visioning workshops during the Mission/Vision process, more than half of the participants wished for more participation and cross-departmental collaboration. If so many want this, why does it not work? And what is the reason?
6. Can you describe the decision-making process within the Executive Team?

#### **Questions about the Mission/Vision Process:**

7. Why was there a Mission/Vision process?  
*(Why did you decide for a participatory format? Did you reflect on the process? What was your role in the process?)*
8. How do you perceive the impact of the process? Did anything come of it?
9. Why has the Mission/Vision process not been finished for so long?
10. What impact did your decision not ratify the Mission/Vision statement have?

**Questions about the Strategic Planning Process:**

11. Can you describe the Strategic Planning Process? What role does staff participation play?

*(What happened so far? Who is participating and how? How are you participating? How do you perceive the process? What is good, what should be different? There were attempts in the past to implement strategic planning. Why did that not work?)*

12. On September 7th, there a workshop for the Directors and the Heads of Departments was scheduled. Can you describe how this came to be and what happened there?

*(How do you prepare? What do you expect from it? How did you perceive the workshop? What is going to happen now?)*

**Final Questions:**

13. What are your wishes for the future?

14. Would you like to add anything?



## Abstract

Staff participation is considered to be a crucial element of successful change and strategic planning processes. While it is a highly relevant topic in the light of both changes in the museum field and current leadership theories it remains under researched. There is a lack of detailed case studies, especially for the German museum field. The aim of this study is to gain insight into the role of staff participation in strategic change processes in museums. Based on the case study of the participatory Mission/Vision process and the Strategic Planning process at the Jewish Museum Berlin, qualitative interviews are conducted with members of management to find out about their perceptions of staff participation and the concepts of staff participation within the museum. The aim is to create a case study of an ongoing change process and create insight into what it means to try to implement staff participation in practice. The study reveals the potential of staff participation to create better results, alignment and empowerment, as well as the importance of communication and support by top-leadership for successful change processes.



## Declaration of Originality

I, Christiane Lindner, hereby declare that I am the sole author of the thesis submitted by me as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master in Museology and that I have compiled it in my own words. Parts excepted are corrections of form and content by my supervisor.

**Title of work:**        Changing Museums Together?  
                                 The Role of Staff Participation in Strategic Processes  
                                 at the Jewish Museum Berlin

With my signature, I confirm that

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