

Workshop: Museum Challenges & Potentials

Vol. 1

People and Activities Involved in Museums

Report

Date 16th of February, 2019 (Sun) 13:30 – 17:00

Location Kyoto Art Center (In cooperation with the Kyoto Arts Core Network)

Participants Museum Professionals from Kyoto Area (10), Staff (7)

Facilitator Ms. Mariko Murata (Professor at Kansai University)

Graphic Yusuke Higo (NPO Glocal Human Resources)

Organizer ICOM Kyoto 2019 Organising Committee

Program

13:30-13:50 **Welcome speech, meet and greet**

13:50-14:20 **Part 1. Let's share: Your museum and your concerns**
Discuss your daily concerns and challenges at your museum with your group partners

14:20-14:35 **Part 1. Share your thoughts** (each group present their results)

15:35-15:50 Break

15:50-16:50 **Part 2. Let's design new communication: People and Activities Involved in Museums**
Participants are assigned to groups based on the "People Card" and "Activity Card", and discuss new ways of communication at museums.

15:50-16:50 **Part 2. Share your thoughts** (each group present their results) and **overall review**

16:50-17:00 **Summary**



<Protocol>

Part 1. Let's share: Your museum and your concerns

Our participants completed a questionnaire about their daily concerns and interests. Based on this questionnaire, individuals with similar answers were assigned to groups and discussed their ideas and thoughts.

Team A: International Visitor Correspondence

①~⑥ : Corresponds to the numbers of the mind map ▶ : thoughts and opinions

① Interference with daily tasks because of lack of multilingual personnel (lack of budget/staff for best communication strategy/ interference with daily tasks).

② Curators cannot proofread languages, which they do not speak (visitors sometimes point out mistakes).

③ No budget and no personnel (we could hire English speaking volunteers, there are no volunteers who can communicate in languages other than English in local regions).

- How to attract new visitors (with low budget)? For instance, the Maizuru Repatriation Memorial Museum Night Opening with candle light up and Jazz concert attracted many visitors.

④ National Museums and National Art Museums implement the multilingualization of museums as a national policy (Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean).

- National Museum: staff who speak English, Chinese, and Korean. Instead on simply translating the Japanese sources, the members are able to rewrite the materials based on the target audience.

- National Art Museum: Increased efficiency when museum staff gets used to the interaction with translators and translation companies. Languages, which are not spoken by curators, cannot be proofread. Detailed exchange is difficult because of a limited budget.

▶ The materials are difficult to translate without any expert knowledge. Mediators with expert knowledge, who speak the target language, may be needed as mediators between the translators and the curators.

- Outside of Japan, the department of interpretation and education rewrite the materials, which are composed by the curators, for the target audience. The translation of materials also should be recomposed for the target visitors from their respective countries, as well (e.g. International visitors may not be familiar with Japanese history and culture).

⑤ Why do we (want to) multilingualize museums?

- We need to re-think our aims and values, and understand our visitors. Who are our visitors? Who is our target? We need to reconsider our "language strategy" based on our audience.

▶ Each museum has different targets and visitors (different nationalities, background). (Even in Kyoto... Maizuru Repatriation Memorial Museum: Russian, Taiwanese; The Museum of Kyoto: Chinese; Kyoto International Manga Museum: French).

⑥ The Japanese materials require some basic understanding of Japanese history and culture. A direct translation, therefore, would be difficult to comprehend for international visitors, and therefore should be rewritten according to the visitor and their background knowledge.

▶ For instance, a Japanese visitor understands the historical context of "Nobunaga in Kyoto", whereas international visitors may need be provided with additional background information. How much background information should we provide?

▶ Museums should rethink their policies based on their target audiences.

Questionnaire: Daily concerns and interests (Number of responses)

- How to correspond to foreign tourists (4)
- PR (2)
- Designated Administrator System (2)
- Archive (8)
- Disabled access and facilities (2)
- Permanent exhibition (5)
- Collaboration with other organizations (7)
- How to connect with local communities (5)
- Organizational structure (1)
- Renewal (1)
- Educational Programs (1)



Team B: Museum Archives and Exhibitions

①~⑤ : Corresponds to the numbers of the mind map ▶ : thoughts and opinions

- ① From preservation to the presentation of documents and materials in an exhibitionary context.
 - Tezuka Osamu's Manga manuscript is worth 35 Million Yen in France: from low culture to high-culture.
 - Shunga: Japanese porn paintings are now exhibited in museums as high-art.
 - These are examples of the modernization of museums (can be both, positive and negative).
 - ② What are museum exhibitions for?
 - Museums exhibit their collections based on their values and through their exhibitionary order.
 - ③ How do/can museums (re)present their concept and policy?
 - The discrepancy between the visitor's perception and museum's (re)presentation of its values: how can we improve museums by reconsidering and engaging with the visitor's perceptions?
 - Should we maintain our values, or should we reexamine and readapt our core ideas based on our contemporary visitors?
 - ④ The values of the Manga Museum are relatively lenient, but what about other museums?
 - The exhibition "August 6th" *1 at the Peace Museum: visitors could share their opinions and experiences on a tablet, the screen was later presented as part of the interactive exhibition.
 - Dilemma: Contemporary documents (e.g. interactive museums/ shared opinions and experiences on tablet and museum's values and policies are not aligned).
 - It is the museum's responsibility to contemplate "what kind of content should be exhibited in an era where museum exhibitions are increasingly political"; "what kind of discussion topics may arise"; and "what kind of discussions do we want to facilitate"?
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- ▶ How museum can help tell stories to be told? The museum's exhibition making also depends on the audience's literacy. It is difficult to estimate the visitor's background and knowledge, and how the visitor interprets the museum's message.
- ▶ The collected materials may sometimes not be aligned with the museum's values. Materials such as these can also break down prejudices, as a means by which to tell these stories - this is one of the benefits of examining materials of this sort.
- ▶ How, and should museums represent their values?
- Examples:
- Peace Museum: Educational point of view. Sharing an objective understanding of history that supports the reconciliation among Asian nations.
 - "Manga and War" Exhibition*2 (at the Manga Museum): exhibited the diversity of war manga in the 60s, rather than focusing on the well-known peace education mangas from the 70s (before the peace education mangas in the 70s).
- ▶ Curators need to sincerely engage with the materials. Curators may subconsciously convey their own thoughts and opinions through their exhibitionary order -> these issues must be solved.
- ▶ In the case of the Manga Museum, the social standing point is not clear, and is therefore open minded, but it is difficult for traditional museums to develop a "flat" relationship with their visitors.
- ▶ ⑤ A museum and its exhibitions are not recognized as "media". While it is commonly accepted that readers might have different interpretations or understandings of a book, museum exhibitions are not considered to be a similar medium. A museum and its exhibitions can be expected to represent a "uniform



interpretation".

More information:

*1 August 6th Exhibition http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/mng/er/wp-museum/event/special/2018/exhibition2018_3.html

*2 Manga and War Exhibition http://www.kyotomm.jp/HP2016_php/event/exh/manga_and_war.php

Team C: Museums and Local Community

①~⑥ : Corresponds to the numbers of the mind map ▶ : thoughts and opinions

- ① Due to the aging local population, who have supported local museums so far, the museums lose their significance.
- ② Connect with local schools to increase significance and support: Museums can provide advice to schools in archiving and exhibiting, which are preserved in schools*1, develop new relationships between schools and museums.
- ③ School documents and materials are oftentimes not properly archived/ownership is unclear, and therefore forgotten. Museums can provide advice, and documents and materials can be properly exhibited.
- ④ The know-how of archiving school materials and documents is crucial. In order to exhibit documents and materials, it is important to survey and investigate the material, as we did with the Kyoto Blind Municipal Hospital in the School of Blind and Deaf children of Kyoto Prefecture. We examined documents since the Meiji era, which exceeds the number of 3000 documents, and is designated as an Important Cultural Property*2.
- ⑤ Documentation and Archiving is also a challenge for museums (e.g. data conservation of artist association, documentation of other valuable documents/materials) because of lack of personnel.
- ⑥ There are materials and documents that get lost, and we should discuss how we can overcome the challenges of archiving.

▶ Workshops and services are crucial for maintaining relationships with the local visitors. Archiving and utilizing materials are also an interesting element to consider in developing new relationships, as we actively engage with the local community.

▶ In order to develop and maintain relationships with the local community, we should perhaps not only organize transient events, but “re-think” and expand the role of a curator.

▶ ⑦ Are there any examples, in which museums and local communities have successfully established new relationships?

- Because of a good relationship with local communities, there are more available materials. It is important that museums can “give back” to local communities.

- We hope that local communities wish to work with museums, and think that museums can provide something valuable (e.g. know-how of archiving materials). A teacher said that he was able to use the properly archived school materials for his class.

- The exhibition titled “Excavated documents” at the Kyoto Prefectural Yamashiro Regional Museum did not only showcase archaeological documents, but also braille documents from the School of Blind and Deaf Children of Kyoto Prefecture. It was an opportunity to present the precious collection to the visitors.

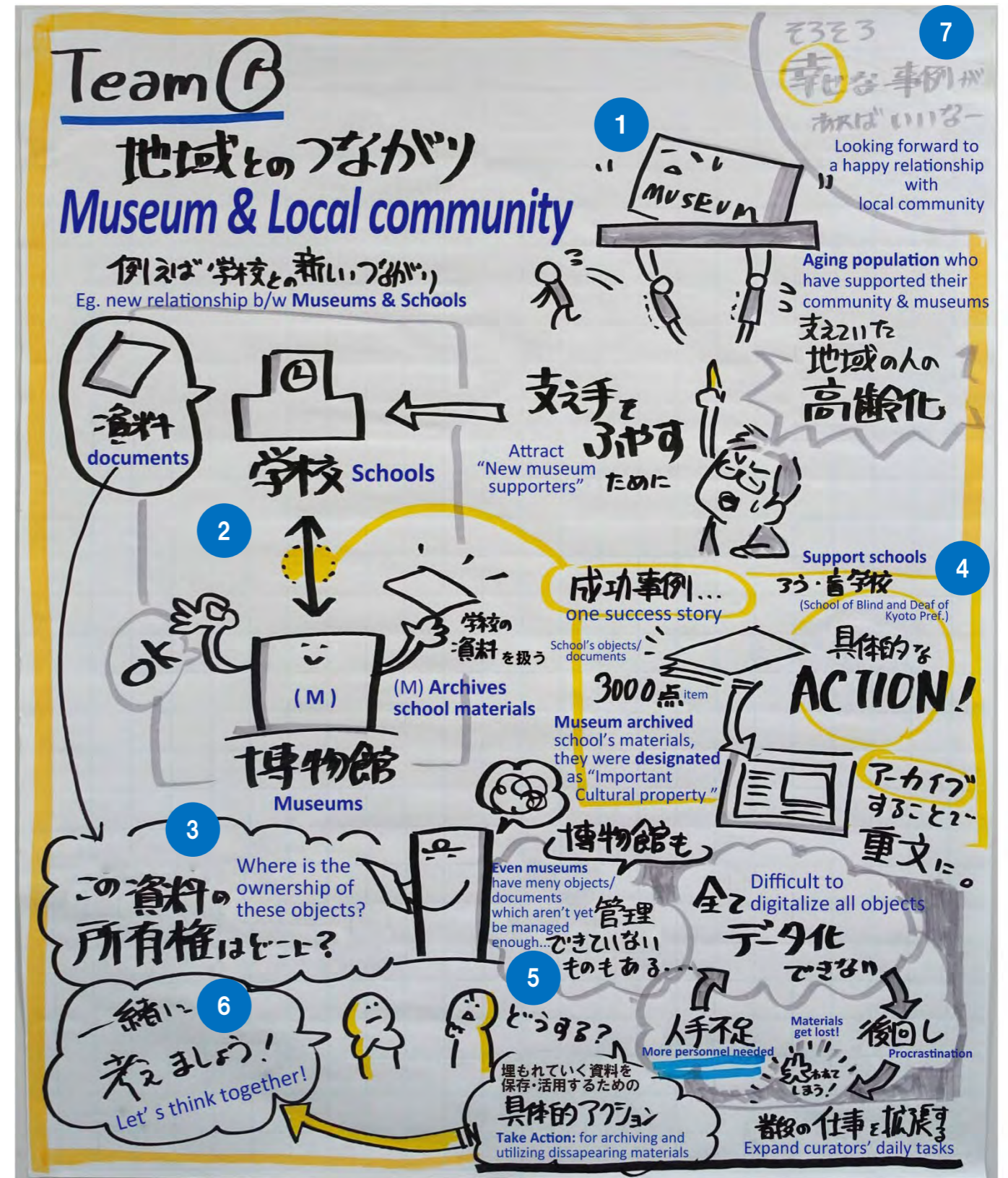
More information:

*1 Utilize the school collection

<http://kyo-gakurehaku.jp/exhibition/H30/301215/img/symposium.pdf>

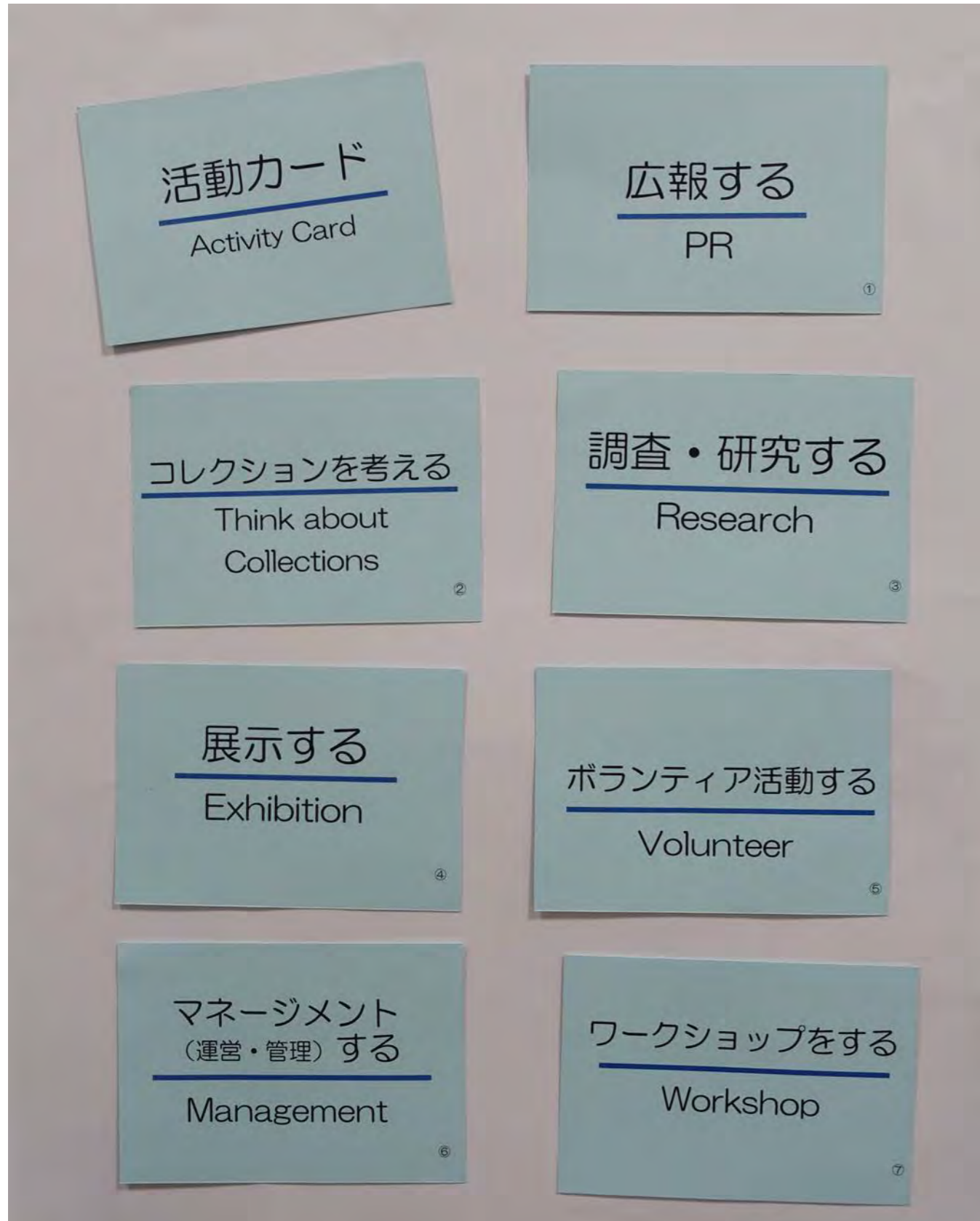
*2 Kyoto Blind Municipal Hospital in the School of Blind and Deaf children of Kyoto Prefecture Collection

<https://www.kyoto-np.co.jp/sightseeing/article/20180314000001>

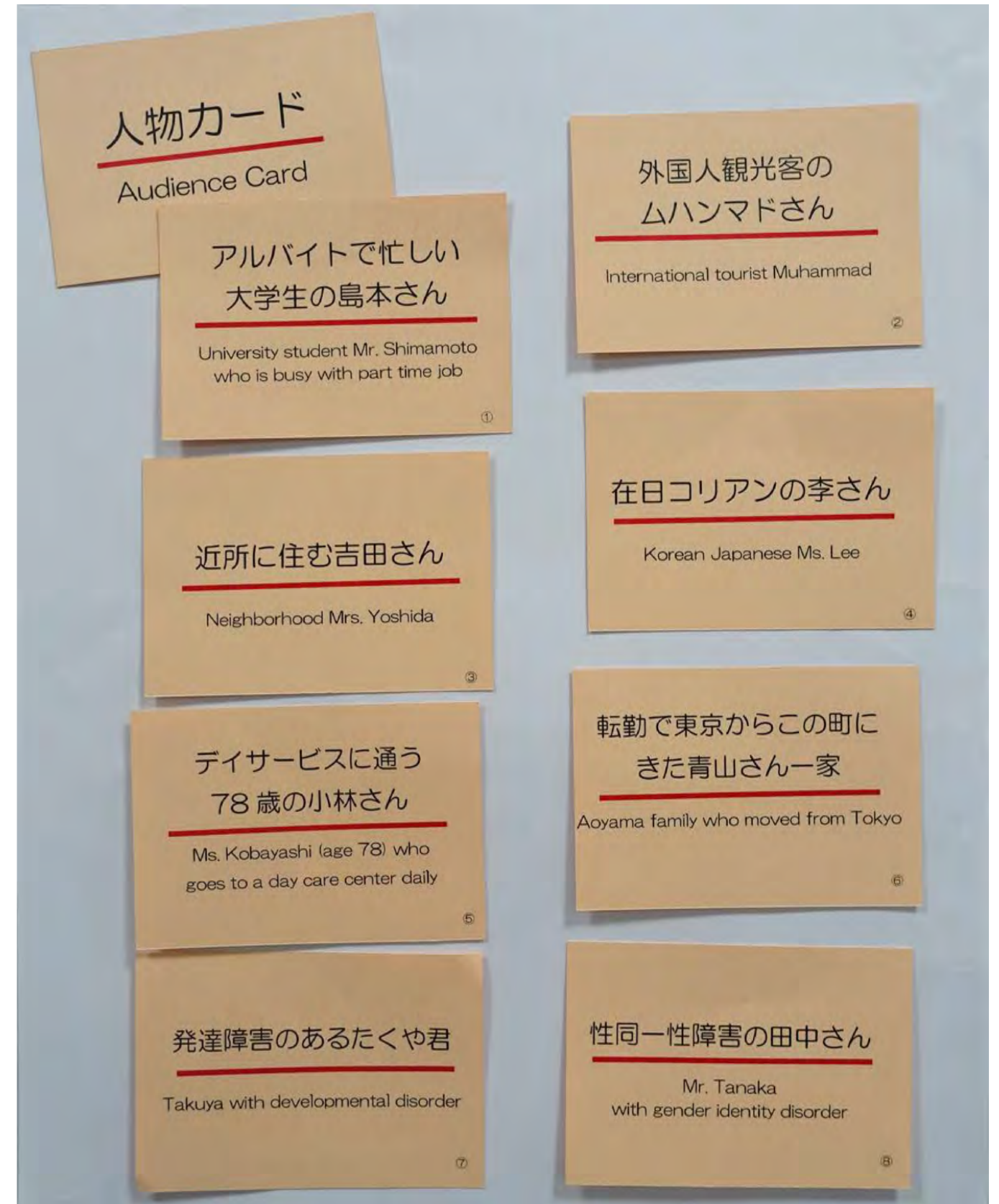


Part2. Let's design new communication: People and Activities Involved in Museums

Participants were assigned to groups based on the "People Card" and "Activity Card", and discussed new ways of communication at museums.



※ The "People Cards" also included people, who are usually not involved with museums. The "Activity Cards" were mainly based on museum activities. The participants randomly drew a card, and were not allowed to see the cards prior to the discussion, so that they could throw off their own prejudices and get new viewpoints.



Team A: "Aoyama family who moved from Tokyo" x "Management"

①~⑥ : Corresponds to the numbers of the mind map ▶ : thoughts and opinions

- ① Mr. Aoyama and his family were recently transferred from Tokyo, and feel homesick. The management team of the museum decided to connect Mr. Aoyama/his family with the local community.
- ② What can a museum do? : Connect local residents and new residents (Mr. Aoyama) and share the heritage of the local culture, and introduce Mr. Aoyama to the *Jizobon* festival *1 (a local festival).
- ③ The museum as an "information hub" for local events, and encourage new residents to take part in the local community activities.
- ④ However, not all leaflets and information that could be provided at museums. Information are being selected either consciously or unconsciously.
 - Museums can, provide information about local activities (e.g. Mama Festival).
 - Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art: open museum renewal construction site to visitor (PR on Local Newspaper)*2.
- ⑤ Museums should think outside of the box and act an "information hub" for various.
 - Museums can, provide information about local activities (e.g. Mama Festival).
 - Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art: open museum renewal construction site to visitor (PR on Local Newspaper)*2.
- ⑥ Example to target "local" and "new" visitors:

Jizobon festival has attracted and targeted a new audience (it is now more accessible to new visitors) with a new perspective on the *Jizobon* festival: collaboration with artists, in which *Juzumawashi* *1 could be experienced through VR technology.

▶② Why *Jizobon* festival?:

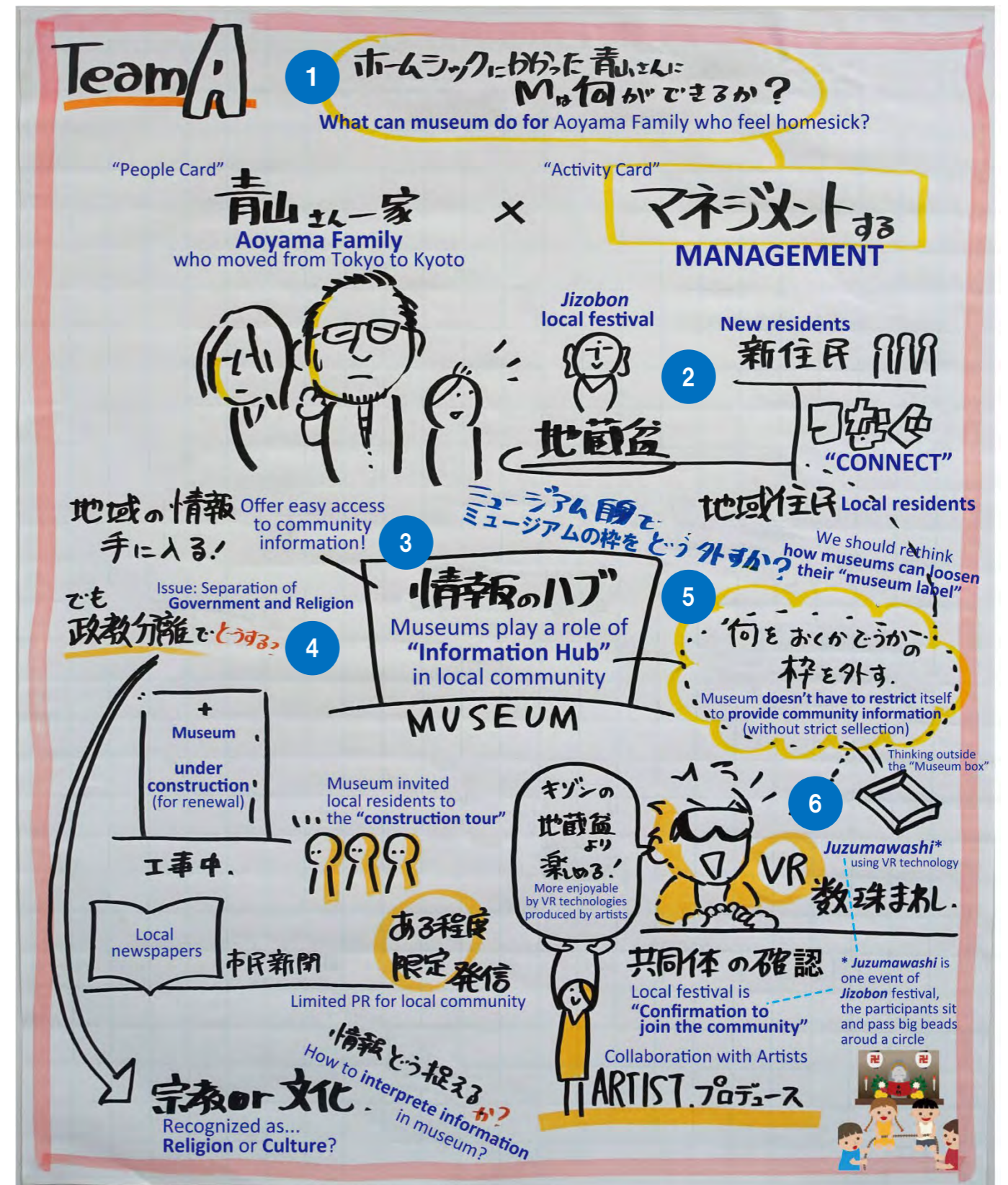
- Accessible for families with children, a good opportunity to get involved in the local community.
 - "New people who join the community" connect with the "local people who welcome new people into the community" by playing games together (team work).
- ▶② (Re)think the museum as a place in which people can interact and connect by enjoying the local culture. Due to the aging population, it is increasingly difficult to preserve the local culture. The museum could act as a coordinator of local festivals and culture.
- ▶④ The museum is restricted in terms of what information they can provide. We should rethink how museums can loosen their "museum label" to be able to act as an "information hub".

More information:

*1 *Jizobon festival* is a local festival that takes place in Kyoto and the surrounding areas, on August 23 and 24. It is a children's festival, with many events including the opportunity to join together in *Juzumawashi* - an important community practise where the children sit and pass beads around a circle, as part of a Buddhist prayer.

*2 Visit to the construction site of the Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art

<http://www2.city.kyoto.lg.jp/bunshi/kmma/images/3009151COMkohoshiryō.pdf>



Team B: "Neighborhood Mrs. Yoshida" x "Research"

※ Order of presentation: Team C → B (please refer to Team C)

①~⑥ : Corresponds to the numbers of the mind map ▶ : thoughts and opinions

- ① People from the neighborhood: an ordinary person, usually does not visit museums.
- ② How to involve general public from the neighborhood?
 - Create a new "space" for new local visitors → What are their common interests? Food culture? Should we create a space in which the general public can enjoy? → What should museum be able to provide?
- ③ Can museum create connection for general public? For instance, Ms. Yoshida takes her friend to the museum, and her friend connects with other people from the museum.
- ④ Museum as a "Meeting Hub" for "Ordinary People".
 - Co-research/exhibition project with people from the neighbourhood.
 Not only investigate the life of Mr./Ms. XX from the neighborhood, but to research with Ms./Mr. XX from the neighborhood, and make people know that they can be museum supporter.

▶ Making the most of the characteristics of "Nobody" (Unnamed / Anonymous): Team C "Ms. Yoshida Collection Exhibition" is similar to the special exhibition of the National Museum of Ethnology (Japan) "Seoul Style" *1, which is collectively exhibited and different from Team B's approach.

▶ It is more meaningful to develop a connection even if you don't yet know to whom you will be connected, rather than just collect and exhibit with a purpose.

- Exhibition : Exhibiting and providing information/ message (there is a purpose).
- Research Study: focus on the continuous interconnectedness with/among people through a cooperative research project.

▶ The meaning of collecting the life stories of "ordinary people"

- the stance of the local folklore museum, "purpose of fostering civic pride" ← this does not seem to be everything, might have another meaning.

▶ "Ms. Yoshida from the Neighborhood" from the "People's Card" may be the most difficult case study. It is difficult to grasp their needs and the issues they are facing. We need to consider who "Ms. Yoshida from the Neighborhood" is. Perhaps, they are the most distant people, who usually do not visit museums.

▶ Team C has tried to delve into research on Ms. Yoshida, but Team B has abstracted Ms. Yoshida.

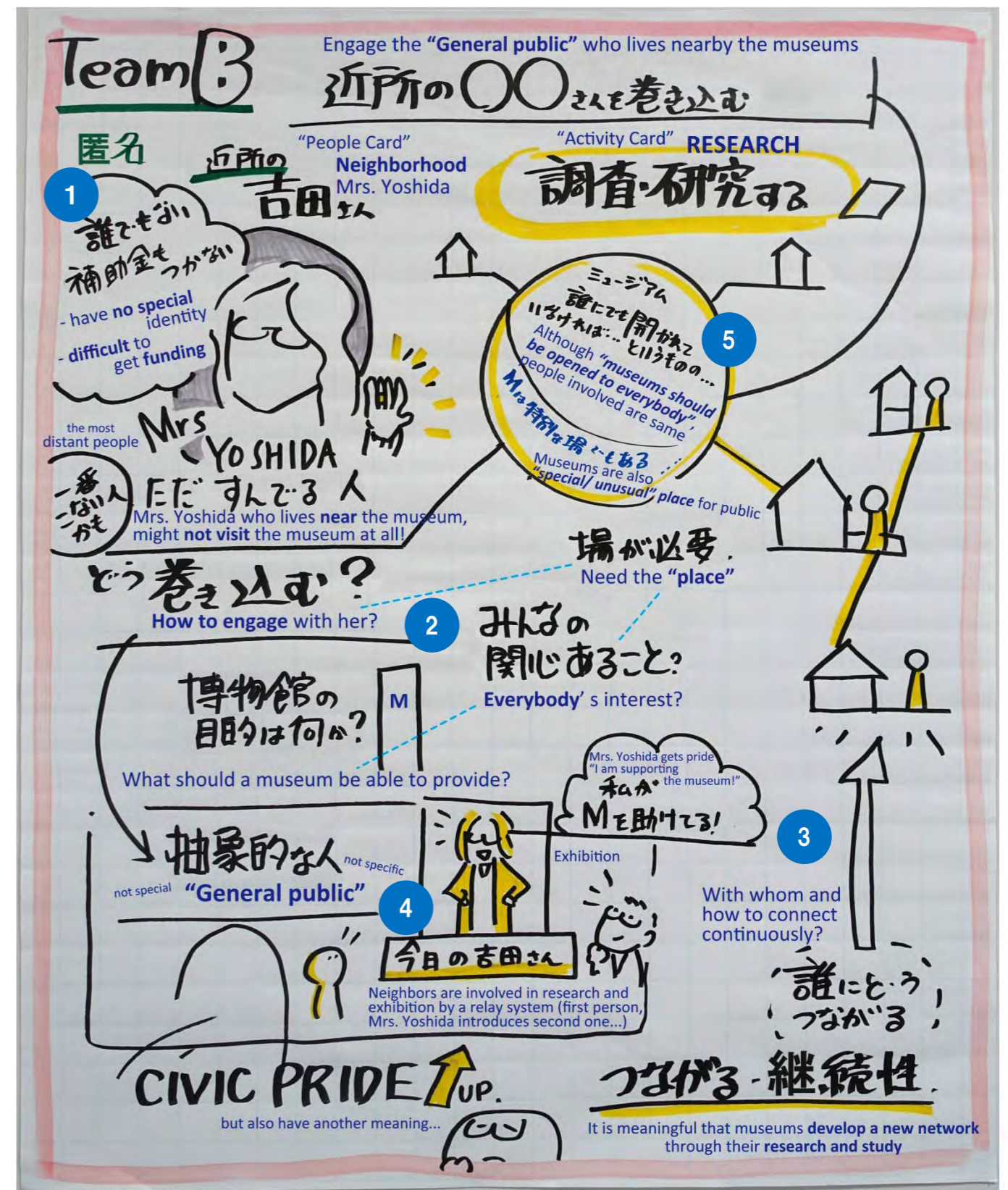
- ⑤ The museum is open to everyone. However, the people who visit museums are often regular visitors.
 - Museums should not be too specialized, and also attract the wider audience.

- Nankai Hooks Exhibition*2: Documents and items from a local Nankai Hooks Fan (Baseball Fan) were exhibited: his family visited the museum every day, as they wanted to see how their own possessions were exhibited in a museum.

▶ The museum is a privileged, and "particular" place.

- The collection individuals value, may not be valued by others (e.g. family members), but if the collection could be exhibited in museum, it can establish a sense of pride.

▶ Museum is a place with the concept of nondualism, can be privileged but also connected to the general public.



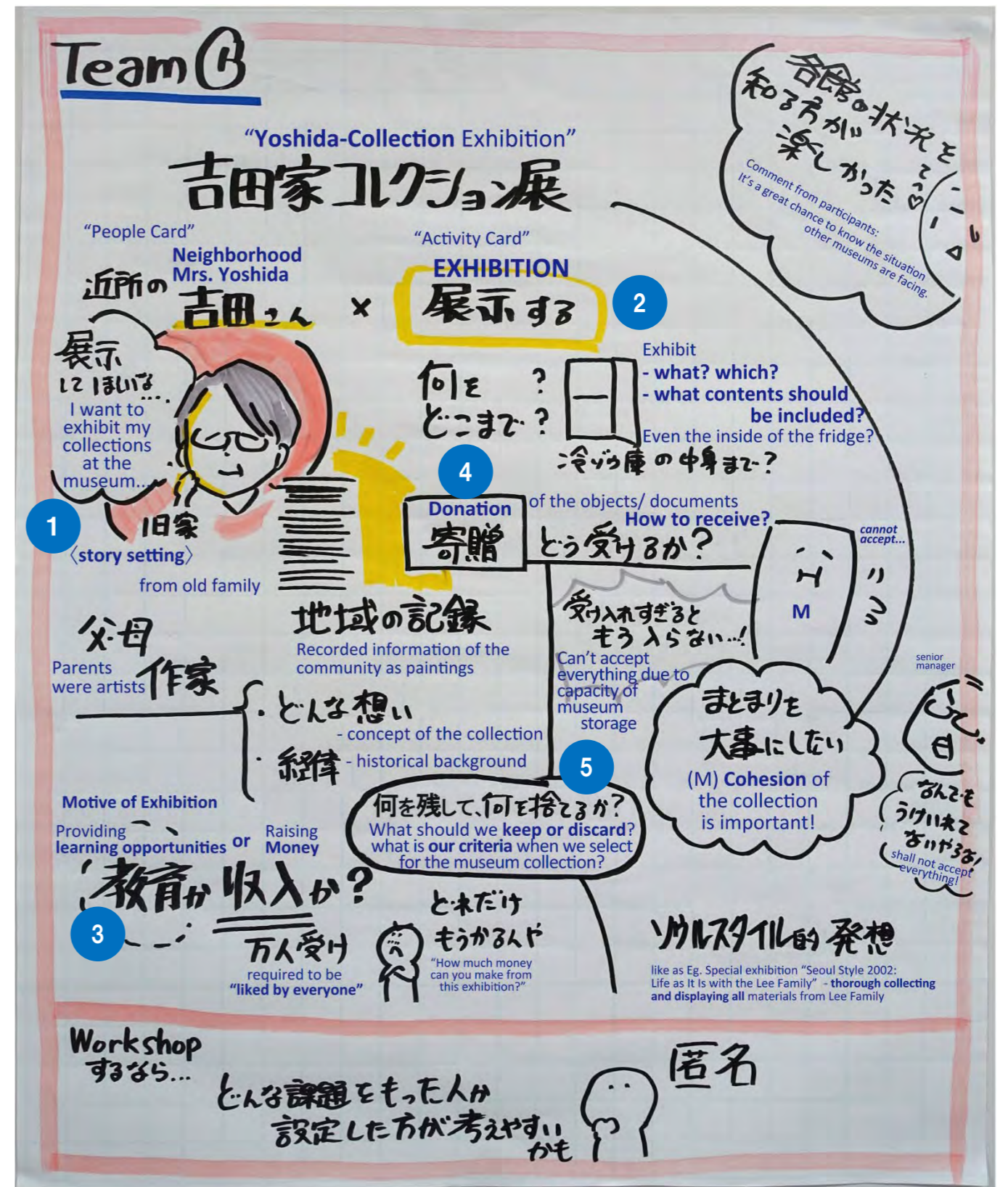
More information:

- *1 "Soul Style" Exhibition <http://www.minpaku.ac.jp/museum/exhibition/special/200203/index>
<http://www.minpaku.ac.jp/english/museum/exhibition/special/200203/index>
- *2 Nankai Hooks Exhibition <http://nagaizemi.cafe.coocan.jp/hawksexhibition2013.htm>

Team C: "Neighborhood Mrs. Yoshida" x "Exhibition"

①~⑥ : Corresponds to the numbers of the mind map

- ① A story about Ms. Yoshida's who comes from an artist family, she owns many paintings with depictions of local landscapes and cityscapes -> paintings as "community records".
- ② How much information should we presented in the museum "exhibition"?
 - Apart from paintings, e.g. the painter's life and family, painter's feelings toward the painted object, what kind of clothes did he wear, what was his generation like...etc.
 - Exhibit paintings within the institutional framework (museum's values and ideas)/ Exhibit and tell Kyoto's history through the paintings/ it's important to be coherent (collection)/ value, and focus on the collection of the Yoshida family.
- ③ What is the purpose of this exhibition? - Educational? Raising money? Liked by everyone?
- ④ What should we do if Ms. Yoshida asks the museum to exhibit her entire collection?
 - The museum needs to narrow down the materials due to limited storage.
 - Is it acceptable to narrow down a collection, if the materials are not aligned with the museum's theme and subject for research and exhibition? What should we do with the other related materials which are part of the story?
- ⑤ What should we keep, and what is our criteria when we select the collections?
 - museum's theme/subject vs. curator's values/criteria vs. donor's values/criteria?



<The Scene of Workshop > Photos



<Thoughts and Impressions after the Workshop >

Throughout the workshop, we came to realize that curators from other museums and institutions share similar ambitions and issues. Even if our museums are all different from one another, I thought it was wonderful to support each other, and to share our ideas, to overcome challenges faced by museum professionals. Archive and Museum Representation was an interesting topic in particular. It allowed us to discuss the challenges from various angles, as have all participants different approaches, methods, and topical expertise. In that sense, I realized that the various museums in Kyoto City can contribute to Kyoto's rich culture and heritage.

The number of participants and the location were just perfect to share our ideas and opinions. People at all ages and from various backgrounds, positions, and experiences gathered at this workshop. The groups were evenly dispersed, and all members shared their opinions and I learned a lot from it. I did not know what 'Graphic Recording' was prior to this workshop, but the summarized and visualized contents were incredibly helpful. The points raised by third parties were straight forward, and the organization and visualization through the graphic recordings, helped us to deepen the discussions. Also, I believe that people who did not attend the workshop are interested in it, and can get a general idea of our ideas and opinions we discussed. I was very stimulated by the opinions of various people, and would be more than happy to attend the next workshop, as well.

This workshop only included museums in the Kyoto area. Nonetheless, there were various examples, tasks, issues, and challenges that were discussed by passionate individuals, that I could not believe that the four hours passed so quickly. Having worked for one institution for a long time, I oftentimes struggle with being bound to one fixed idea and not being able to escape from my narrow point of view. If we could extend our communication with more people, we can get more ideas and more support to solving the problem. With a large number of participants, discussions tend to be rather stiff, but I hope there are more opportunities to have joyful discussions in the future. I think it is our mission to execute the ideas we have discussed today. The workshop was encouraging and inspiring for my daily work.

Inheritance of Regional Museums as Archives

The theme of Work 1 was "Museums and Local Communities" and "Cooperation with other Organizations". The opinions and real voices were very meaningful. Since the ICOM General Conference in Kyoto is held together with Kyoto City and Kyoto Prefecture, I thought that it was important to discuss the challenges with regional museums in Kyoto. Each institution is a treasure that archives and exhibits important materials of this region. However, the facilities are obsolete, and the inheritance of knowledge and regional museums are endangered. I would like to share the idea of the "Inheritance of Archives" to the general audience. And with various viewpoints and knowledge, I would like to discuss the "Future of Museums."

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