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Background

Ten years after a first sustainable development policy came into force (in 2012) and following the implementation of a number of related measures, the McCord Stewart Museum and its Foundation are renewing their commitment to sustainability with this policy. In this document, they present an updated and transformative vision of sustainable development designed to address growing environmental issues, the challenges of inclusion and social justice, and the need for a decolonization process. By leveraging their professionalism, boldness and creativity, the Museum and its Foundation are putting in place the means to become the sustainability benchmark for the museum world.

This policy defines a common language of sustainable development and a responsible vision for Museum and Foundation activities. The plan of action supporting these commitments calls for concrete initiatives to reduce the negative footprint of these activities and maximize their positive impacts. The Museum and its Foundation acknowledge their responsibility in this regard and are committed to pursuing this sustainable development process with complete integrity.

Definitions

Sustainable development

Development that meets current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is rooted in a long-term vision that takes into account the inextricable nature of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of development activities (*Sustainable Development Act*, R.S.Q., c. D-8.1.1). In an organization, this involves practices that allow it to grow and prosper while paying close attention to the impact of its activities on society and the environment (Canada Council for the Arts, 2021).

Environmental responsibility

The need to incorporate environmental stewardship and impact mitigation measures into an organization's activities, paired with a moral obligation to act responsibly in regard to the environment. Although environmental responsibility clearly focuses on environmental considerations, it is indissociable from social responsibility.

Equity

An approach that upholds fair conditions that allow everyone to participate fully in society and recognizes that while everyone has the right to equitable treatment, not everyone has – or has had – access to the same means, advantages and opportunities (Canada Council for the Arts, 2021).

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles presented below provide a framework for implementing the sustainable development process adopted by the Museum and its Foundation. They are either the direct focus of the policy's strategies and general objectives, or they influence the manner in which those strategies and objectives are implemented.

Preservation and recognition of cultural heritage

The Museum and its Foundation identify, conserve and enhance material and immaterial cultural heritage, taking into account its rarity and fragility, in a spirit of inclusion and long-term preservation.

Inclusion and accessibility

The Museum and its Foundation are committed to embracing their inclusive values by focusing on openness and acceptance. They strive not to leave anyone out and aim instead to include and actively make room for all while respecting their diversity. In this way, the Museum and its Foundation seek to facilitate physical, intellectual and economic accessibility to their content and programs.

Decolonization

The Museum and its Foundation are committed to decolonizing their museum management practices by sharing power and amplifying non-dominant voices. They acknowledge the colonialist biases of their origins and redress inequalities by showcasing the knowledge of historically marginalized segments of the population.

Social justice and equity

The Museum and its Foundation wish to participate in creating a just society. Social justice is a moral and political construct that aims to achieve equality of rights and comprises the need for group solidarity between the members of a given society. It advocates equal rights, solidarity and the equitable distribution of wealth.

Health and quality of life

The Museum and its Foundation are committed to protecting the health and enhancing the quality of life of their personnel. This principle is a priority in their sustainable development process.

Environmental stewardship

The Museum and its Foundation believe that environmental stewardship is an essential consideration in developing and implementing their initiatives. Accordingly, the Museum's and the Foundation's organization, production and procurement methods must include the aim of reducing environmental impacts.

Cooperation

The Museum and its Foundation take a collaborative and co-creative approach with all stakeholders. They are committed to working with their stakeholders' personnel and clients to reach shared goals, primarily through joint reflection and dialogue.

Creativity and innovation

Creativity and innovation underpin the concepts and practices of the Museum and its Foundation, which consider them to be assets in the pursuit of their sustainable development process.

Sharing and transparency

The sustainable development process adopted by the Museum and its Foundation is fully transparent to stakeholders. The Museum and its Foundation believe that communicating information on sustainable development and their approach helps raise awareness among stakeholders and the museum community regarding the adoption of responsible practices and behaviours.

Scope

This policy applies to all on-site and off-site activities of the Museum and its Foundation. The individuals subject to this policy are personnel, board members, volunteers and interns. They play an active role in pursuing the Museum's and its Foundation's commitment to sustainable development and achieving their stated objectives.

The stakeholders associated with this policy are the partners, external service providers, clients, donors and the public. The Museum and its Foundation invite them to read this policy and assist with its implementation.

Strategies

The commitment of the Museum and its Foundation to sustainable development has three main components, each of which corresponds to one or more strategies supported by general objectives.

1. Responsible governance

1.1 Incorporate the concept of sustainable development into all practices

- 1.1.1 Include sustainable development practices in decision making.
- 1.1.2 Include sustainable development principles in collection utilization practices.
- 1.1.3 Train and engage personnel in sustainable development and in achieving objectives.
- 1.1.4 Cooperate with all internal and external stakeholders.
- 1.1.5 Implement responsible investment practices.
- 1.1.6 Incorporate equity, diversity and inclusion into Museum and Foundation culture.

1.2 Report on the process and contribute to the promotion of sustainable development

- 1.2.1 Communicate sustainable development process status and results in a transparent way.
- 1.2.2 Educate external stakeholders, including the general public, on sustainable development and responsible behaviour.
- 1.2.3 Participate actively in the museum sector's lasting transition by championing Museum and Foundation initiatives and sharing sustainability-related learning and experience.

2. Social and cultural responsibility

This component is covered in detail in the 2022–2027 Strategic Plan, under the objective “Decolonizing our practices.”

2.1 Champion the Museum and Foundation values of inclusivity and social justice

- 2.1.1 Include decolonization practices in all Museum and Foundation spheres of activity.
- 2.1.2 Facilitate physical and virtual accessibility to Museum and Foundation activities and collections.
- 2.1.3 Prioritize health and quality of life for personnel.
- 2.1.4 Present history in a critical and inclusive manner through the Museum's collections.
- 2.1.5 Encourage dialogue and exchange through public programs.

3. Environmental responsibility

3.1 Minimize the environmental footprint of Museum and Foundation activities

- 3.1.1 Optimize resource use by prioritizing reduction at source and reuse, and manage waste responsibly.
- 3.1.2 Curb greenhouse gas emissions by adopting best practices in the use of energy, digital technologies and transportation.

Structure and Responsibilities

The Museum and Foundation management team is responsible for reporting on the sustainable development process status and objectives to the Board of Directors, which approves its reports.

The Sustainable Development Committee consists of one representative from each of the Museum's and Foundation's main departments. It advances the priorities set out in the plan of action by carrying out the following responsibilities:

- Monitor, supervise and coordinate the execution of tasks and actions identified in the plan of action
- Review the plan of action annually
- Evaluate the status of tasks, actions and objectives
- Monitor best practices in sustainable development
- Engage department heads and teams
- Raise employee awareness of sustainable development
- Bring team challenges and suggestions to the Committee's attention

The committee is headed by two co-leaders with the following responsibilities:

- Coordinate committee meetings
- Report to management on a quarterly basis
- Form subcommittees as required and assign special mandates to committee members
- Prepare an annual report on the sustainable development process and a summary for inclusion in the Museum's annual report
- Represent the Museum and its Foundation on external sustainable development committees
- Take part in reviewing this policy

The Museum and Foundation department heads and their teams play an active role in enforcing this policy. They participate in implementing the sustainable development plan of action and assist with collective efforts to promote the policy's strategies according to their respective areas of responsibility.

Authority

Enforcement of this policy is the responsibility of the executive management team of the Museum and its Foundation.

Review

This policy shall be reviewed every five years.

Effective Date

This policy, which can be found on the McCord Stewart Museum's website, was adopted by the boards of directors of the Museum and its Foundation in June 2022 and came into effect on July 1, 2022.



Iskwewaštotin (hood), 1830-1850, Eeyou, stroud, cotton, glass beads, silk ribbon.
Gift of David Ross McCord, McCord Stewart Museum, M7059

