



**House Museums at the Crossroads:  
How Do We Empower Social Change?  
MPR Annual Conference 2024 - Call for Proposals**

A joint conference from DEMHIST, ICOM MPR,  
Tbilisi Museums Union, and ICOM Georgia.  
25-29 September 2024, Tbilisi, Georgia

**Want to change the world?**

This is our opportunity to share how museum and cultural heritage communications, marketing, branding, membership, audience research, social media, public relations, and community outreach and engagement around the globe are critical to empowering social change and **how** those lessons and examples can be applied to historic house museums in our communities. **You don't need to work for a house museum to participate!**

Historic House Museums are everywhere! They are guardians of historical and cultural legacies, local stories, and memories. We envision such institutions evolving and partnering to also play a vital role in catalyzing social change in our rapidly changing world. Key questions:

- How can house museums respond to the task of engaging with their communities?
- How do we partner and collaborate to drive transformative progress?
- What opportunities and threats do we face in forging common bonds and interests to empower social change and how do we respond?

We define social change as the transformation of cultural and social institutions through shifts in human interactions and relationships. As these alterations unfold, they frequently yield profound and enduring impacts on society. Social change involves modifying elements within the social structure, marked by changes in cultural symbols, behavioral norms, social organizations, or value systems.

What does this mean in practice? This is what we plan to explore within the context of historic house museums. Communication skills and tools are critical to facing this challenge by opening a dialog with local communities through storytelling, community engagement, social media, educational programs, branding, fundraising, and membership.

That is why ICOM's International Committee for Historic House Museums has teamed up with the International Committee for Marketing and Public Relations in the conference **House Museums at the Crossroads: How Do We Empower Social Change?** Hosted by the Tbilisi Museums Union and ICOM Georgia, this event will present an exciting program of keynote speeches, presentations, panels, roundtable discussions, workshops, expert sessions, off-site visits, and posters focusing on best practice strategies to promote outreach and generate relevance and public value.

## **Show your work: Open call for presentations and participation**

We invite museum professionals, scholars, policymakers, consultants, and contractors to join us in Georgia for this unique opportunity from all world regions to share best practices, learn from one another, and explore how house museums worldwide can play a central role in empowering positive social change in their communities and beyond.

This inclusive conference welcomes your experience, no matter the size of your museum. Submit a proposal featuring your projects, a work-in-progress, or an inspirational vision for the sector. You can submit a proposal for a presentation for a paper or article, a poster, a workshop, a roundtable discussion, an experimental accessibility session, or even suggest a keynote speech – **all exploring work that is related or can be applied to house museums and the conference themes:**

### **Conference subthemes:**

#### **1. From Museum to Community: House museums and museums at the service of society**

We encourage you to share projects and ideas for community outreach and engagement. Examples may include work done in the environs of the house museum with underserved communities, accessibility, education and interpretation, inclusivity projects, and more:

- Examining the role of museums as agents of social change and potential implications
- Learning to listen to your local community and address the diverse needs of residents, staff, and volunteers
- Strategies for house museums to reimagine collections and exhibitions to encourage community engagement
- Exploring the relevance of the [Faro Convention](#) for signatories and non-European nations alike and its emphasis on values over collections in the historic house context
- Examining the role of house museums as Learning Centers for Social Change: Educational hubs addressing contemporary social challenges

#### **2. The Activist Museum: House museums and museums advocating for social causes**

Learning how to master tools that foster awareness and action on current social and environmental issues is critical for inspiring social change. Examples of house museums successfully integrating inclusive narratives into their programming include:

- Examining how house museums navigate and interpret social change issues within diverse cultural contexts. Exploring the representation of women's rights, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, and religious freedom in house museum narratives and exhibits. Discussing challenges and successful approaches in presenting diverse voices and perspectives.
- Showcasing effective strategies for promoting diversity and inclusion in house-museum narratives and exhibits.
- Connecting ecological efforts to the ICOM's strategic plan and its alignment with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Exploring the intersections between environmental initiatives and the overall sustainability goals of house museums.
- Exploring the role of house museums in addressing climate change and action: Collections, facilities, and operations, and programs and innovative approaches to curating exhibits that highlight environmental issues and sustainable practices.
- Research on how initiatives within house museums can contribute to broader discussions on democracy, decolonization, climate action, and related social challenges.

### **3. Welcome to Our House: Leadership and managing accessibility in house museums and museums**

You want to make your museum available to everyone. How do you build your values and attitudes?

- Public vs. Private Museums: Differences in addressing theme elements and social challenges
- Negotiation: Influencing boards, councils, and policymakers to embrace social causes
- Impact of governance on decision-making and responsiveness
- Influence of ticket pricing on visitor demographics
- Inclusive visits: How can historic sites be made accessible to all? From physical adaptations to digital solutions
- Technology now: Strategies for ensuring accessibility and promoting social change

#### **Call for Papers Opens: February 20, 2024**

**Deadline: April 25, 2024 (Paris time, CET)**

#### **Key Dates:**

- April 15: Submission deadline, midnight (Paris time, GMT +1)
- May 31: Submission deadline for conference grants (see important notes)
- May 15: Acceptance notification of proposals
- May 31: Early Bird bookings open
- June 30: Acceptance notice of grant applications
- July 15: Early Bird booking ends
- July 15: Ordinary booking rate opens
- Sept 15: Registration for in-person attendance ends
- Sept 25-29: ICOM Georgia, DEMHIST, ICOM MPR 2024 Conference
- Sept 24: Daytime: Pre-conference visits and workshop  
Evening: Meet & Greet (optional)
- Sept 25-29: Opening ceremony, Conference sessions, Off-site visits  
DEMHIST General Assembly
- Sept 29: Post-conference tours (optional)

#### **Presentation Formats:**

We will be accepting submissions for participation in a number of formats:

- Presentations for papers OR articles
- Posters
- Workshops
- Roundtables
- Other (Please specify)

Proposals should comprise the following, submitted only via the MPR application form:

- A description (400 words) for reviewers, providing information about the topic and justifying the proposal's significance for inclusion in the program
- An abstract (150 words) to be featured in the conference program and online if the presentation is accepted
- A brief biography (100 words) for each speaker

Proposals will be evaluated based on relevance to the conference themes and feasibility within the specified format and time allocation.

**Important Notes:**

- We can accommodate a limited number of live-streamed or recorded video presentations for speakers unable to travel. However, preference will be given to in-person presentations to foster active participation.
- All proposals must be submitted in English. While the primary language is English, we may consider presentations in other languages, such as pre-recorded videos with English subtitles, if explicitly requested by speakers in their proposals.
- Proposers selected for the conference program are expected to attend the entire conference, whether virtual or in person, ensuring active participation in the full spectrum of conversations sparked by other presentations.
- The decision of the program committee is final.

**Application Process:**

To submit your proposal: Please click here to fill in the **2024 MPR Proposal Submission Form** (Link)

**Registration Information:**

The conference will take place in a hybrid format to accommodate all participants. There is no separate registration fee for either in-person or virtual attendance.

Registration for the conference will open on May 31, 2024. Please follow announcements on the ICOM MPR and DEMHIST websites and social media for further information.

**Important notes:**

- All presenters are required to register for the conference; unfortunately, we cannot provide financial compensation or waive the registration fee.
- Speakers can apply for a limited number of travel grants, to be announced: Both DEMHIST and ICOM MPR offer the ICOM Young Professional Travel Grant; DEMHIST offers the Jeanne Watson Bursary for its members; and ICOM MPR also has Travel Grants for its members.
- Note that a person getting the ICOM Young Professional Travel Grant will not be able to apply for DEMHIST's Jeanne Watson Bursary. Calls for applications will be sent during the paper selection process.
- Suggested hotels and general information will be updated on the conference website: (Link to follow)

Any related questions may be sent to the ICOM MPR at:

Anastassia Belessioti, MPR Secretary

Email: [secretary.mpr@icom.museum](mailto:secretary.mpr@icom.museum)

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