



MUSEUMS AS INCUBATORS: THE SYNERGY BETWEEN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

МУЗЕЇ ЯК ІНКУБАТОРИ: СИНЕРГІЯ МІЖ КУЛЬТУРНИМИ ІНСТИТУЦІЯМИ ТА СОЦІАЛЬНИМ ПІДПРИЄМНИЦТВОМ

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Abstract: This study explores the innovative role of museums as incubators for social entrepreneurship, highlighting the synergy between cultural institutions and social enterprises. Museums, traditionally viewed as custodians of cultural heritage, are increasingly becoming dynamic platforms for fostering social innovation. This research investigates how museums can support and nurture social enterprises, examining the mechanisms, practices, and impacts of such collaborations. Findings reveal that museums can leverage their unique resources, networks, and expertise to offer valuable support to emerging social enterprises. By integrating social impact into their missions, museums enhance their relevance and contribute to broader societal change. This research provides actionable insights for museum professionals and social entrepreneurs, offering best practices for creating successful museum-based incubators. The study also addresses the challenges and opportunities inherent in these collaborations, proposing strategies for overcoming barriers and maximizing impact. Ultimately, this work underscores the transformative potential of museums in driving social innovation and fostering sustainable development.

Key words: Museums, Social Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Cultural Institutions.

Introduction.

Museums have long been revered as custodians of history, art, and culture. However, their role extends far beyond the preservation of heritage. Investments in museums can significantly drive innovation across various sectors, influencing economic growth, technological advancement, creative industries, and educational development. This article explores how strategic investments in museums foster innovation and why such investments are crucial for contemporary society.

A museum can be defined as an incubator where the synergy between cultural institutions and social entrepreneurship thrives. Museums serve as dynamic cultural hubs that not only preserve and exhibit historical artifacts and artistic works but also foster innovative solutions to societal challenges. By leveraging their unique position in the community, museums act as catalysts for social entrepreneurship, encouraging



collaboration, creativity, and sustainable development. This synergy enables museums to play a pivotal role in nurturing social enterprises, thereby driving cultural and economic growth.

The object of this research is the role of museums as incubators for social entrepreneurship and innovation. This includes the various functions that museums serve beyond their traditional roles, such as fostering creativity, promoting technological advancements, stimulating economic growth through cultural tourism, supporting startups, and enhancing collaborative innovation.

The subject of this research is the impact of investments in museums on fostering social entrepreneurship and driving innovation within a country, particularly focusing on the example of Brazil. The study examines how these investments contribute to broader economic and social benefits, exploring specific cases and examples of how museums have successfully integrated social entrepreneurship into their missions.

The primary purpose of this research is to explore the multifaceted role of museums as incubators for social entrepreneurship and innovation, particularly within developing countries. By focusing on the example of Brazil, the research aims to demonstrate how investments in museums can lead to significant economic and social benefits, transforming these cultural institutions into dynamic hubs of creativity, technological advancement, and community engagement.

Objectives of the Research

1. Analyze the Role of Museums in Stimulating Creativity.
2. Evaluate the Impact of Technological Investments in Museums.
3. Examine Support Structures for Startups within Museums.
4. Explore Collaborative Innovation Efforts.
5. Highlight the Broader Social and Economic Benefits.

By achieving these objectives, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how museums can transcend their traditional roles and become pivotal in fostering social entrepreneurship and innovation, offering valuable insights for policymakers, cultural institutions, and the broader community.

Simon, N. (2010). *The Participatory Museum*. Simon discusses how museums



have evolved from static collections to interactive spaces that encourage visitor participation and creativity. This shift helps foster innovative thinking, especially among younger audiences [1]. Janes, R. R., & Conaty, G. T. (2005). *Looking Reality in the Eye: Museums and Social Responsibility*. This work highlights museums' potential to inspire creativity through educational programs and engaging exhibits, emphasizing their role in societal transformation [2]. Hand, M. (2008). *Making Digital Cultures: Access, Interactivity, and Authenticity*. Author provides examples of museums with innovation labs that support startups and entrepreneurs through mentorship, funding, and collaborative opportunities [3]. Silverman, L. H. (2010). *The Social Work of Museums*. Silverman discusses the role of museums in community engagement and collaboration, noting that partnerships with research institutions can lead to significant advancements in science, technology, and the arts [4]. Mike Murawski's article [5] emphasizes the importance of integrating empathy and social impact into museum practices to enhance their relevance and effectiveness in addressing social issues. By focusing on empathetic approaches and measuring social impact, museums can better serve their communities and contribute to meaningful social change. *Museum Innovation: Building More Equitable, Relevant, and Impactful Museums*" offers a comprehensive exploration of how museums can innovate to become more inclusive, relevant, and impactful. The book provides practical strategies and examples for museums aiming to address contemporary challenges and engage meaningfully with diverse audiences [7]. The article [9] emphasizes how innovative financial practices and tools can drive sustainability, offering a forward-looking perspective on investment strategies that align with long-term goals. The article highlights how innovation can play a crucial role in addressing economic diversification challenges, offering insights into how creative solutions and strategic investments can foster a more dynamic and sustainable economy [10]. Despite the wealth of research available on various aspects of museums and social entrepreneurship, the specific intersection of these fields—particularly the role of museums as incubators for social entrepreneurship—remains underexplored. Research into "Museums as Incubators: The Synergy Between Cultural Institutions and Social



Entrepreneurship" offers a unique and valuable perspective that merits further investigation for several reasons.

Main part.

Museums play a crucial role in fostering creativity by providing interactive and educational experiences that engage visitors in unique and meaningful ways. This role is increasingly recognized as essential in nurturing innovative thinking, especially among the youth. Modern museums offer more than static displays; they provide interactive and participatory experiences that invite visitors to engage directly with exhibits. These experiences can include hands-on activities, multimedia installations, and interactive displays that encourage visitors to explore and think creatively. By allowing visitors to actively participate, museums can inspire curiosity and innovation.

Museums often run educational programs designed to stimulate creativity among children and adults alike. These programs can include workshops, lectures, and collaborative projects that introduce participants to new concepts and encourage creative problem-solving. By providing a space for learning and experimentation, museums help cultivate a culture of creativity. Museums serve as platforms to showcase historical and contemporary innovations. By presenting groundbreaking works and the stories behind them, museums inspire visitors to think about how they can contribute to the future of innovation. This exposure to innovative ideas and practices can motivate visitors to develop their own creative projects. Museums often act as community hubs where people from diverse backgrounds can come together to share ideas and collaborate. This community engagement fosters an environment where creativity can flourish. Through exhibitions, community events, and collaborative projects, museums help build networks of creative individuals and groups. The integration of technology in museums has opened new avenues for creativity. Digital exhibits, virtual reality experiences, and interactive online platforms allow museums to reach wider audiences and engage them in innovative ways. These technological advancements make it possible for visitors to experience exhibits in immersive and interactive formats, further stimulating creative thinking. Many museums support the creative industries by providing resources and spaces for artists,



designers, and innovators to develop their work. Some museums have established innovation labs and incubators that offer support for creative projects and startups. These initiatives help bridge the gap between cultural heritage and contemporary innovation, fostering a vibrant creative economy.

The table 1 outlines various mechanisms through which investments in museums can drive innovation. It provides specific examples of museums and describes their impact on stimulating creative thinking, promoting new technologies, fostering economic growth, supporting startups, and enhancing collaborative innovation. The table concludes that well-funded museums play a crucial role in nurturing creativity, demonstrating and promoting technologies, contributing to economic development, incubating new ventures, and fostering partnerships with research institutions.

Table 1. Impact of Investments in Museums on Innovation

Mechanism	Example	Impact on Innovation
Stimulating Creative Thinking and Education	The Exploratorium (San Francisco, USA)	Interactive science and art museum engages visitors in experiments and exploration, fostering scientific interest and creativity among youth, which in turn stimulates innovation in science and technology sectors.
Platform for Demonstrating New Technologies	Museo del Mañana (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)	The museum uses modern technologies like virtual reality and interactive displays to showcase exhibits. Investments in such projects promote new technologies and stimulate innovations in visual and communication technologies.
Development of Cultural Tourism and Economic Growth	Louvre Abu Dhabi (UAE)	The museum is a key element of UAE's cultural tourism strategy, attracting tourists, boosting economic growth, and stimulating innovations in hospitality and service industries.
Incubation of Startups and Innovative Projects	MoMA PS1 (New York, USA)	The museum created a lab for artists and innovators to develop new projects. Investments in such initiatives stimulate innovations in cultural and creative industries.
Collaboration with Research Institutions	Science Museum (London, UK)	Collaborates with scientific institutions and universities for joint exhibitions and research projects. Investments in such partnerships foster the development of innovations in science and technology.

Source: developed by the author

Museums are emerging as valuable support structures for startups, especially those in the social entrepreneurship and innovation sectors. This role is facilitated through a range of support mechanisms that leverage the unique resources and expertise of cultural institutions. Museums offer physical spaces such as incubation



areas, co-working environments, and exhibition venues. These spaces allow startups to access essential facilities and host events that promote their products or services. In addition to physical space, museums provide significant mentorship and expertise. They often offer advisory services and organize workshops that equip startups with crucial skills in business development, marketing, and management.

Networking opportunities are another key aspect of museum support for startups. Museums act as bridges to valuable partnerships, investors, and other stakeholders, enhancing the startups' ability to build connections and grow their ventures. This is complemented by community engagement, where startups benefit from the museum's established audience and community networks.

Financial support also plays a role. Museums may offer grants, awards, or seed funding, along with in-kind contributions such as access to technology and marketing resources. Startups gain visibility through museum channels, public relations efforts, and promotional opportunities, further enhancing their profiles and outreach.

For instance, the Cooper Hewitt Design Museum in New York runs a design incubator program that provides space, mentorship, and resources for design startups. The Science Museum in London collaborates with Innovate UK to support science and technology startups, offering both mentorship and exhibition opportunities. Similarly, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles supports emerging artists and startups through studio space, exhibitions, and public engagement activities.

The impact on startups includes enhanced access to resources, increased visibility, and valuable networking opportunities. For museums, engaging with startups aligns with their mission to foster innovation and remain relevant in today's society. It also contributes to local economic development and enriches museum programming with new, innovative content.

However, there are challenges. Museums must balance supporting startups with their core missions and manage resource allocation effectively. Measuring the impact of these support structures is also crucial, as developing metrics to evaluate success and gathering feedback from startups can help improve these programs.

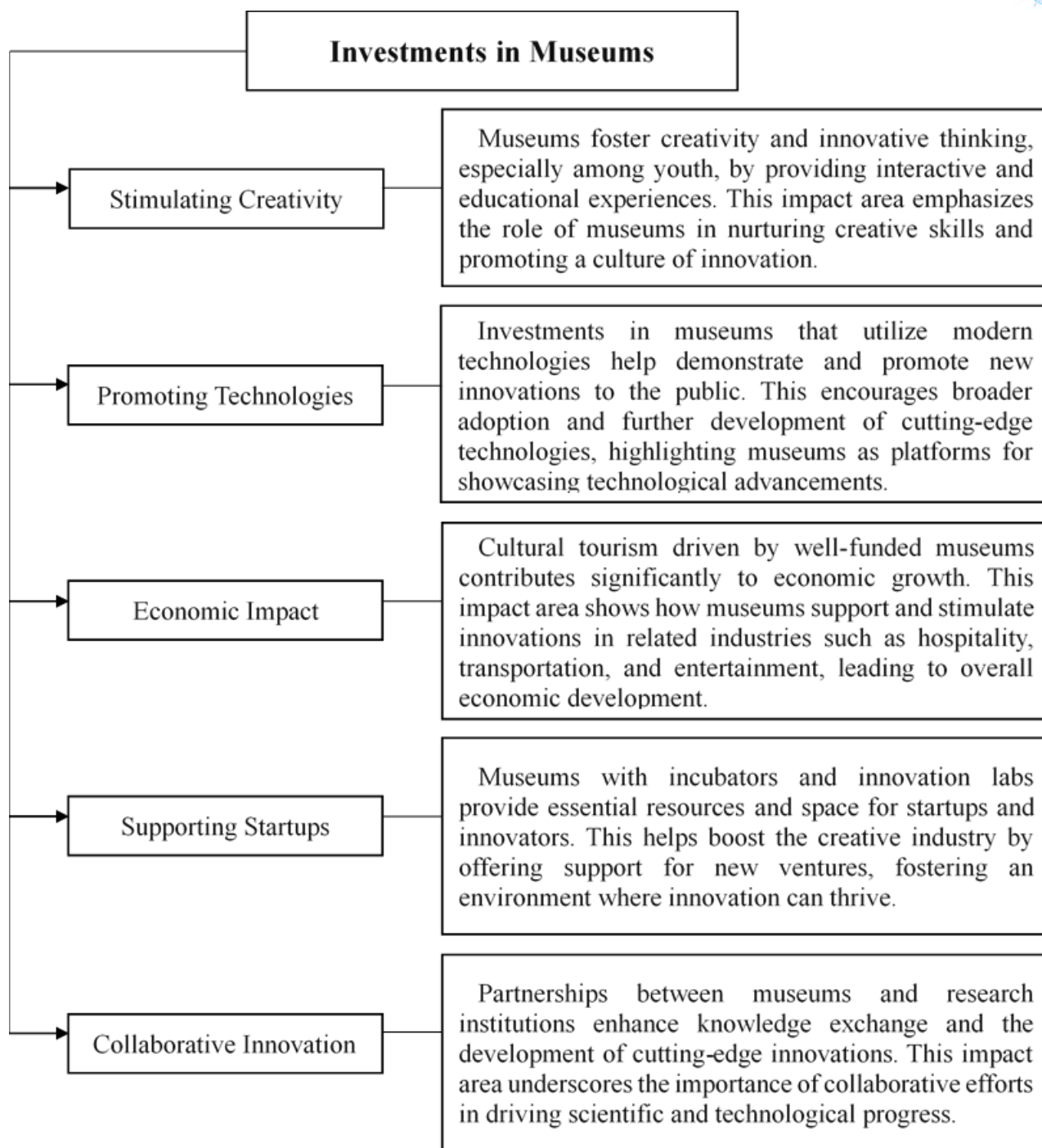


Figure 1. Catalysts for Innovation: Investing in Museums

Source: developed by the author

Looking ahead, museums can expand their support programs to include a broader range of startups and social enterprises, explore innovative models of collaboration, and develop cross-institutional partnerships to enhance their support structures and resources. By doing so, museums can continue to play a significant role in nurturing emerging ventures and contributing to social and economic development.



The schematic representation provides a clear and concise overview of how investments in museums can drive innovation through various channels, making it easier to understand the multifaceted benefits of such investments.

Collaborative innovation efforts, particularly within the realm of cultural institutions and startups, represent a dynamic intersection where creativity and entrepreneurship converge. This synergy not only fosters the development of groundbreaking solutions but also enriches the cultural and economic fabric of communities. Museums, as cultural institutions, have increasingly embraced roles beyond traditional exhibitions and education. They are becoming active partners in collaborative innovation, working alongside startups and social enterprises to drive progress and address contemporary challenges. This collaborative approach leverages the strengths of both parties: museums bring their extensive resources, expertise, and public engagement capabilities, while startups contribute fresh ideas, technological advancements, and entrepreneurial energy.

One of the key aspects of this collaboration is the establishment of incubators and innovation labs within museums. These spaces provide startups with access to facilities, technology, and professional networks that might otherwise be out of reach. By offering mentorship and advisory services, museums help startups refine their business models and navigate the complexities of growth and development. This support is crucial for emerging ventures that need both practical resources and strategic guidance.

Moreover, museums facilitate networking opportunities, connecting startups with potential partners, investors, and other key stakeholders. This networking not only opens doors for funding and collaboration but also integrates startups into broader industry ecosystems. The museum's established community and audience provide a platform for startups to gain visibility and engage with diverse groups of people, which is invaluable for building brand recognition and expanding market reach.

Financial support is another significant component of collaborative innovation. Museums may offer grants, awards, or seed funding to support the development of innovative projects. In-kind contributions, such as access to marketing resources or



exhibition space, further enhance the support provided to startups. These financial and material resources can be pivotal in helping startups achieve their goals and scale their operations.

The impact of these collaborative efforts is evident in several ways. For startups, the support from museums translates into enhanced resources, increased visibility, and valuable connections that drive their growth and success. For museums, engaging in collaborative innovation aligns with their mission to foster creativity and remain relevant in an evolving cultural landscape. It also strengthens their role as community anchors and contributors to local economic development.

However, this collaboration is not without its challenges. Museums must carefully manage resource allocation to balance their core mission with the support provided to startups. Additionally, measuring the impact of these collaborative efforts requires developing effective metrics and feedback mechanisms to ensure that both museums and startups can assess and enhance the effectiveness of their partnership.

Looking to the future, there is significant potential for expanding and deepening collaborative innovation efforts. Museums can explore new models of partnership, integrate emerging technologies, and foster cross-institutional collaborations to enhance their support structures. By continuing to embrace and refine collaborative innovation, museums and startups can drive progress and contribute to a vibrant and sustainable cultural and economic environment.

Table 2 highlights the collaborative efforts between museums and social enterprises, focusing on inclusivity and social impact.

Table 2. Collaborative Efforts between Museums and Social Enterprises for Inclusivity and Social Impact

Museum	Project/Collaboration	Description
Berlin's State Museums	Multaqa Project	Refugees from Iraq and Syria serve as Arabic-speaking guides, promoting cultural exchange and inclusion.
Canadian Museum for Human Rights	Share Your Story	Engages communities by allowing visitors to share personal experiences related to human rights.
International Museum of Folk Art	Gallery of Conscience	Exhibitions address social justice and human rights, collaborating with traditional artists.



<p>Museums Galleries Scotland, Association of Independent Museums, Northern Ireland Museums Council and The Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales</p>	<p>Steps to Sustainability Programme</p>	<p>This initiative supports UK heritage organizations by providing grants and strategic leadership training, fostering resilience and enterprise in the sector. Delivered by the Social Enterprise Academy, the program aims to embed enterprise at the core of museum operations, supporting local economies and enhancing sustainability</p>
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Resources: formed by the author based on 6,8

Collaborative innovation between museums and startups extends beyond mere business success; it carries significant social and economic benefits that enrich communities and drive broader societal progress. When museums engage in collaborative efforts with startups, they create a ripple effect that enhances various aspects of society. Socially, these collaborations foster greater community engagement and inclusivity. Museums, traditionally seen as cultural custodians, become dynamic spaces where diverse ideas and perspectives intersect. By partnering with startups, particularly those focused on social impact, museums can address pressing social issues such as inequality, environmental sustainability, and education. For instance, startups working on social innovations can leverage the museum’s platforms to reach wider audiences, raise awareness, and drive meaningful change. This synergy encourages active community participation and helps to create a more engaged and informed public. Economically, the collaboration between museums and startups stimulates local economies and promotes entrepreneurial growth. Museums often provide startups with critical resources, including workspace, technological support, and networking opportunities. These resources enable startups to develop their innovations, attract investment, and scale their operations. The economic impact extends beyond the startups themselves; successful ventures can create jobs, attract tourism, and generate revenue for local businesses. By fostering a supportive ecosystem for startups, museums contribute to a vibrant entrepreneurial landscape that drives economic development and resilience.

Museums benefit from these collaborations by enhancing their relevance and expanding their roles within communities. Engaging in innovative projects helps



museums attract diverse audiences, boost visitor numbers, and strengthen their community connections. This increased relevance can lead to more robust funding opportunities, whether through grants, donations, or sponsorships. Additionally, the museum’s involvement in cutting-edge projects reinforces its position as a leader in cultural and social innovation, which can enhance its reputation and impact. Overall, the broader social and economic benefits of collaborative innovation between museums and startups are substantial. These partnerships not only advance individual business goals but also contribute to the social fabric and economic vitality of communities. By leveraging their unique strengths, museums and startups can create a positive feedback loop that drives progress, fosters inclusivity, and supports sustainable development.

Table 3 showcases how various museums are leveraging their platforms and resources to drive innovation, community engagement, and inclusivity through different initiatives and collaborations.

Table 3. Innovative Collaborations between Museums and Social Enterprises

Museum	Project/Initiative	Description
Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales	Youth and Community Engagement	Engages youth and communities in innovative projects that enhance cultural understanding and creativity.
Horniman Museum, London	African and Caribbean Collections Research Hub	Uses digital tools to broaden access and engagement with African and Caribbean collections.
Durham University	Street Museum	Transforms streets into collaborative, co-curated outdoor exhibitions, fostering community involvement and creativity.
Birmingham Museums Trust	Digital Inclusion Project	Addresses industrialization, colonialism, and racial equality through inclusive and multidirectional digital projects.
Foundling Museum, London	Creative Portals for Care-Experienced Individuals	Develops creative portals providing a platform for expression and connection for care-experienced individuals.
Various Museums	Adapting to Global Challenges	Embrace plural perspectives, community connections, and responsive practices to stay relevant and impactful in response to global challenges like pandemics and climate change.

Resources: formed by the author based on 6,8.

Museums, traditionally seen as repositories of art, history, and culture, are increasingly redefining their roles in society. They are transforming into dynamic



incubators that foster social entrepreneurship, innovation, and community engagement. This article explores the synergy between cultural institutions and social entrepreneurship, highlighting how museums are becoming catalysts for social change and innovation.

Museums have historically been places of education and preservation, offering the public a chance to engage with cultural heritage. However, in the 21st century, museums are embracing a broader mandate. They are becoming active participants in addressing contemporary social issues, fostering creativity, and supporting community development. This evolution is driven by the recognition that museums can leverage their resources, networks, and cultural capital to inspire and incubate social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurship aims to solve social problems through innovative and sustainable business models. Museums, with their unique position as community centers and cultural hubs, are ideally suited to support this endeavor. They offer several advantages as incubators for social entrepreneurship:

1. Museums attract diverse audiences, providing social entrepreneurs with opportunities to engage with a wide range of people. This diversity can spark new ideas and collaborations, essential for social innovation.
2. Educational Programs and Workshops. Museums offer educational programs and workshops that can equip aspiring social entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. These programs often cover topics such as business development, social impact measurement, and creative problem-solving.
3. Collaborative Spaces. Many museums are creating collaborative spaces where social entrepreneurs can work, meet, and network. These spaces often include access to museum resources, such as archives, collections, and expert staff.

By supporting social entrepreneurship, museums contribute to sustainable social impact. Social enterprises often address long-term social issues, and the support they receive from museums can help ensure their success and longevity [15].

The United States is among the top countries investing significantly in museums.



The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has allocated over \$31 million in grants for various museum projects across the country in 2023 alone [11]. These funds are used to enhance community engagement, lifelong learning, and the preservation and access to museum collections.

In addition, the United Kingdom, through Arts Council England (ACE), has also made substantial investments in museums. For the 2023-2026 investment round, ACE allocated £37.6 million to 82 museum organizations. This funding is part of a broader £446 million distributed to arts and cultural organizations across England [12, 13].

Both countries demonstrate a strong commitment to cultural preservation and innovation through substantial financial support for their museums, which plays a critical role in fostering creativity, promoting new technologies, and supporting economic growth and innovation.

Identifying the developing country that invests the most in museums is challenging due to the limited specific data available on this subject. However, some developing countries are making notable strides in cultural investment, including in museums.

Brazil stands out as a developing country that has made significant investments in its museums and cultural institutions. Brazil's government and private sector have both played a role in funding museums, recognizing their importance in preserving cultural heritage and promoting tourism [14].

Brazil has invested in modernizing its museums and improving their infrastructure, which has attracted international attention and increased visitor numbers. This investment not only enhances cultural preservation but also contributes to the economy through cultural tourism, fostering creativity, and promoting technological advancements.

Brazil's approach to museum funding demonstrates how developing countries can leverage cultural institutions to drive broader economic and social benefits. By investing in museums, Brazil has managed to stimulate creativity, promote new technologies, support startups, and encourage collaborative innovation between cultural institutions and research organizations. This investment strategy can serve as



a model for other developing countries looking to enhance their cultural sectors and overall economic development.

Conclusion.

Museums play a multifaceted role in stimulating creativity by providing interactive experiences, educational programs, and showcasing innovation. Through community engagement and the integration of technology, museums create environments where creativity can thrive. As incubators of social entrepreneurship and innovation, museums contribute significantly to the cultural and economic vitality of their communities. Museums are evolving into powerful incubators for social entrepreneurship, leveraging their unique resources and positions to foster innovation and community engagement. By providing access to diverse audiences, educational programs, collaborative spaces, and supportive environments, museums can play a crucial role in nurturing social entrepreneurs. The synergy between cultural institutions and social entrepreneurship not only enhances the impact of museums but also contributes to the development of sustainable solutions to pressing social issues. As this trend continues, we can expect to see even greater contributions from museums to the field of social entrepreneurship and innovation.

Acknowledgement. This article is integral to the Affiliated Honorary Research Fellow four-year program to earn the Patron of Philosophy title, conducted by Prof. Fil. Dr. Jan-Urban Sandal.

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Анотація: У статті досліджується інноваційна роль музеїв як інкубаторів соціального підприємництва, підкреслюючи синергію між установами культури та соціальними підприємствами. Музеї, які традиційно розглядаються як охоронці культурної спадщини, дедалі більше стають динамічними платформами для сприяння суспільним інноваціям. У статті продемонстровано, як музеї можуть підтримувати та розвивати соціальні підприємства, досліджено механізми, практики та вплив такої співпраці. У статті показано, що музеї можуть використовувати свої унікальні ресурси, мережі та досвід, щоб запропонувати цінну підтримку новим соціальним підприємствам. Інтегруючи соціальний вплив у свої місії, музеї підвищують свою актуальність і сприяють швидким суспільним змінам. Це дослідження надає практичну інформацію для музейних професіоналів і соціальних підприємців, пропонуючи найкращі практики для створення успішних музейних інкубаторів.



Дослідження також розглядає виклики та можливості, властиві цій співпраці, пропонуючи стратегії подолання бар'єрів і максимізації впливу. Зрештою, ця робота підкреслює трансформаційний потенціал музеїв у стимулюванні соціальних інновацій і сприянні сталому розвитку.

Ключові слова: музеї, соціальне підприємництво, інновації, інституції культури.

Стаття надіслана: 11. 09. 2024 р.

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