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Communication and Cultural Sustainability in the Gulf of Nicoya

Museum-Led Initiatives through New Technologies

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PROPOSAL
TYPE

INDEX

OBJECTIVE

 The paper explores the transformative potential of museums in Costa Rica by examining their collaboration with marginalized coastal communities and new initiatives to co-create exhibitions and programs that address access to rights, cultural heritage preservation, and environmental justice

01

PUBLIC ADVOCACY AND MARINE GOVERNANCE

THE FUTURE OF MUSEUMS IN RAPIDLY CHANGING COMMUNITIES

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Role of museums in shaping public advocacy

Ancient Greece: Art was not confined to a specific institution; instead, it was an integral part of daily life.

The museums' 'role is to serve as custodians of culture, preserving works of art and artifacts of life from different time periods and contextualizing them within ever-changing perspectives.'

ICOM 2022: Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability.

Museums can promote public advocacy by using their platforms to educate, inspire, and challenge societal norms, while engaging with communities and addressing both external and internal issues.

What is public advocacy?

Refers to the organized efforts by individuals, groups, or organizations to influence public policy decisions by representing, promoting, or defending specific interests, opinions, or populations. At its core, 'public advocacy involves strategic actions aimed at initiating, directing, or preventing changes in public policy. It targets decision-makers as the primary audience, often employing persuasive communication to convince them to adopt or act on proposed ideas'

- International Centre for Public Advocacy, 2025.

Relationship between museums, technology and community engagement

Core Mission & Modern Preservation: Museums are ethically responsible for preserving cultural heritage. They employ advanced conservation technologies to combat decay, ensuring artifacts are sustainably safeguarded for future generations.

Tech-Enhanced Education: As educational hubs, museums use technology like VR, interactive exhibits, and digital media to create tailored, accessible, and engaging learning experiences for diverse audiences of all ages.

Community as Collaborative Partner: Museums act as civic spaces that foster social cohesion. They collaborate with local communities through partnerships, inclusive events, and co-created narratives to address social issues and strengthen community ties.
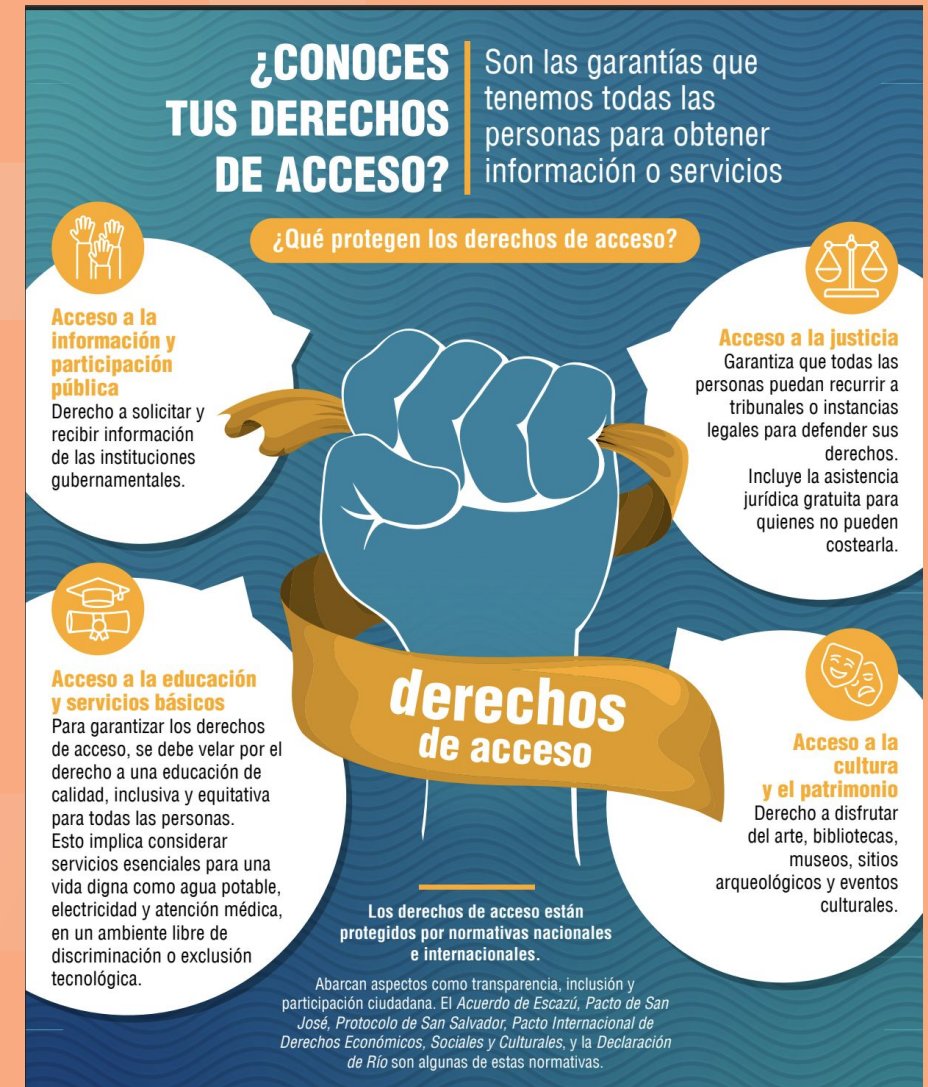
02

› CHALLENGES

THE FUTURE OF MUSEUMS IN RAPIDLY CHANGING COMMUNITIES

Museums and Access Rights

Access rights are 'principles and guarantees that enable people to access information, services, resources, education and culture, ensuring transparency, inclusion and citizen participation. They are applied in various sectors, including environmental management, education, culture and justice.' (MarViva Foundation, 2025a)- *MarViva Foundation, 2025.*

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The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities
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Digital & Cultural Challenges for marine governance

Distrust in government and increasing poverty indicators.

Lack of Foundational Infrastructure: Many remote coastal communities have limited or no access to reliable electricity and affordable high-speed internet, creating a fundamental barrier to any digital initiative.

Resource Constraints of Local Partners: Local museums and cultural centers often lack the funding, hardware, and technical staff to develop and sustain technology-driven projects, mirroring the communities' own limitations.

ALFABETIZACIÓN DIGITAL Y SU ROL EN COMUNIDADES COSTERAS

01 ¿QUÉ ES LA ALFABETIZACIÓN DIGITAL?
No es solo saber usar un celular o entrar a Internet. Es la capacidad de utilizar la tecnología digital de forma crítica, segura y creativa para lograr objetivos personales, laborales y comunitarios.

SE COMPONE DE COMPETENCIAS CLAVE (SEGÚN DOUG BELSHAW):

CRÍTICA — Evaluar la veracidad de la información en línea.
CREATIVA — Crear y compartir contenido digital propio.
CÍVICA — Participar en la vida comunitaria y política de forma digital.
COLABORATIVA — Usar herramientas digitales para trabajar con otros.

UNESCO la define como la habilidad para acceder, gestionar, comprender, integrar, comunicar, evaluar y crear información de forma segura y apropiada.

CONSTRUYENDO RESILIENCIA EN COMUNIDADES COSTERAS 03
La resiliencia es adaptarse y superar adversidades.

LA ALFABETIZACIÓN DIGITAL AYUDA FRENTE A:

RIESGOS CLIMÁTICOS Y OCEÁNICOS
• Acceder a alertas meteorológicas.
• Consultar estado del mar.
• Conectar con instituciones de socorro.

DESINFORMACIÓN Y RIESGOS LEGALES
• Detectar noticias falsas.
• Evitar sanciones por malas prácticas digitales.
• Proteger datos personales y financieros.

GOBERNANZA Y ORGANIZACIÓN COMUNITARIA
• Comunicarse entre líderes y socios.
• Elaborar informes/propuestas digitales.
• Defender derechos y territorios con herramientas digitales.

02 IMPACTO EN LA SOCIEDAD
LA ALFABETIZACIÓN DIGITAL IMPULSA:

INCLUSIÓN — Reduce la brecha digital.
DEMOCRACIA — Favorece la participación ciudadana.
ECONOMÍA — Abre oportunidades de empleo y mercado.
EDUCACIÓN — Facilita el aprendizaje continuo.

EJEMPLOS REALES
○ Pescador usa una app para decidir si salir a pescar.
○ Comunidad frena una cadena falsa sobre cierre portuario.
○ Asociación coordina un proyecto marino en Google Workspace.

CONCLUSIÓN
La alfabetización digital es una herramienta de inclusión y empoderamiento.

Invertir en ella es construir comunidades más fuertes, informadas y resilientes.

¡CERREMOS LA BRECHA DIGITAL PARA NO DEJAR A NADIE ATRÁS!

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Panka, S. (2015). Digital literacy: an interview with Doug Belshaw. Innovate Learning Review. Retrieved May, 28, 2017.
UNESCO (2025). Qué debe saber sobre la alfabetización. https://www.unesco.org/es/literacy/need-know

MarViva

Challenges for marine governance

The "Cinderella Effect" in Engagement: Without long-term investment, tech projects risk being short-term and superficial, disappearing after the initial funding and potentially increasing community distrust in institutions.

The Need for Hybrid & Low-Tech Solutions: A reliance on high-tech tools (e.g., VR, complex apps) can exclude the most vulnerable. Successful strategies must integrate low-tech bridges (e.g., SMS, offline digital archives) to ensure inclusivity

Digital Literacy as a Prerequisite, Not a Goal: Projects often assume a baseline of digital skills. Comprehensive digital literacy training is a necessary first step before communities can engage with online museum content or advocacy tools.

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LESSONS AND PURPOSE

THE FUTURE OF MUSEUMS IN RAPIDLY CHANGING COMMUNITIES

MarViva's Initiative

Mission & Collaborative Approach: MarViva launched a project to strengthen marine governance in Costa Rica by establishing a multi-stakeholder Think Tank, uniting NGOs, academia, community representatives, ICOM Costa Rica, and museums.

Empowering Communities via Culture: The initiative uses cultural assets like shell middens and local art in community workshops, co-developed with museums and museological experts, to bridge cultural heritage with environmental sustainability and spark policy proposals from the ground up.
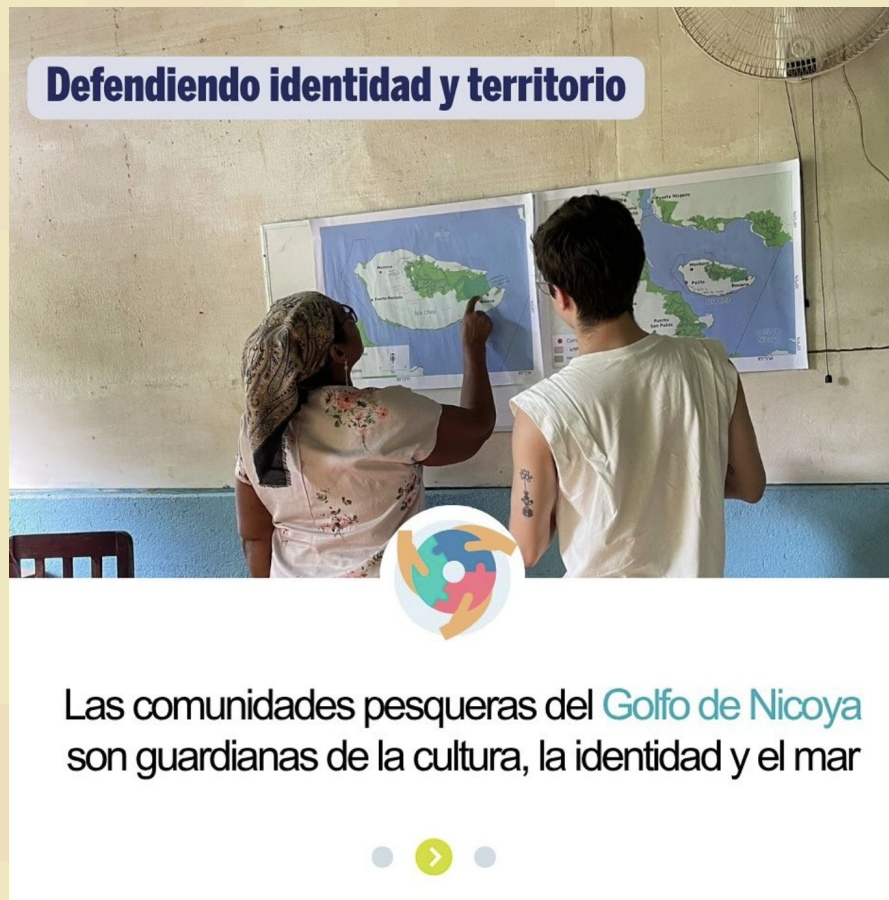
MarViva's Initiative

Building Digital Capacity: Practical, participatory digital literacy workshops were successfully conducted in coastal communities, equipping residents, especially women and youth, with skills for transparency, advocacy, and livelihood improvement.

Museums as Strategic Partners: Museums are key allies for preserving cultural heritage, facilitating community dialogue, and integrating local voices into policy-making, thereby strengthening both cultural identity and environmental governance.

Future-Focused Impact: The project is creating a scalable model that empowers coastal communities, advocates for culture and youth in policy, and fosters intergenerational resilience for both people and marine ecosystems.

Defendiendo identidad y territorio

Las comunidades pesqueras del Golfo de Nicoya son guardianas de la cultura, la identidad y el mar

CONCLUSION

While technology offers powerful new avenues for engagement, its application in underserved communities must be critically examined. Closing the digital gap requires a long-term commitment to building both infrastructure and human capacity, ensuring that technological tools do not become a new barrier but truly serve as a bridge to cultural sustainability and

THANK YOU

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Proposal
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