

ICA-SUV DIVERSITY LABDAY MANUAL



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Authors: Caroline Brown (ICA-SUV and University of Dundee, Scotland, UK), Rosa Cisneros (Coventry University UK) and Ellen Engseth (ICA-SUV and University of Minnesota, Minnesota, USA)-Published May 2024

Introduction

In 2023 the International Council on Archives Section on University (ICA-SUV) and Research Institution Archives were awarded funding from Programme Commission (PCOM) for a project 'What does diversity mean to you?' Our project had three main stages and was based on the 'LabDay' model.

Specifically, the project aimed to do the following:

- 1)** Call for interested participants to take part in an initial online workshop (one in English and one in Spanish). These workshops had a small number of participants from a range of countries and discussed themes around equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 2)** The second workshops were open to everyone and had a large public audience engagement element. The participants of the first workshop briefly presented on their discussion in the first workshop and there was a Q&A and discussion amongst everyone involved.
- 3)** Create an open-access webbased resource for interested persons to use as a tool in the future. (The recordings of the second/Public workshops, and this Manual, comprise this web-based resource).

While the conversations were focused on the university and research institution sector there was an interest to all members from the ICA and the wider

professional sector.



Our Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion

Following on from a very successful project on Archives and Ethics which was also funded by the PCOM funding scheme in 2022, we wanted to use the same model and approach to explore issues of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion in a global context. We wished to engage archivists and recordkeepers, particularly those working in a university and research institution setting, in conversations about Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) issues and challenges in their particular context and to discuss what success in overcoming these challenges means to them. We feel very strongly that one of the benefits of ICA is to foster conversations between international colleagues and find that our members benefit hugely from listening and responding to different perspectives.

As with our previous project we worked with Rosa Cisneros, a consultant and academic with an interest in archives, cultural heritage, ethics and EDI. Rosa comes from outside the world of archives, but this added value to our

discussions. She is bilingual, so the team were able to run the sessions in English and in Spanish.

This manual is an outcome of the project. It is designed to be used in group settings and can be used by individuals or organisations keen to explore questions around Diversity, Equity, Equality and Inclusion (DEEI), in relation to archival practices. It does not have to be led by a professional working in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, although a background in the concepts would only benefit and strengthen outcomes and deepen the sessions. This manual can be used to support thinking around DEEI and hosting a LabDay.

Why we made this LabDay Manual

We know that diversity in cultural heritage is an important area of work that is closely linked with archives and archival practices and institutions. Some of the work undertaken with archives relates to safeguarding, i.e. preserving the activity but not the people, communities and environments in which this heritage takes place. This has the unintended consequence of stripping cultural heritage of its real meaning and purpose, and focussing on the institution. The ICA-SUV 'What Does Diversity Mean to you?' project aimed to raise awareness, understanding and skills in considering how equality, diversity and inclusion are navigated and discussed in varying contexts. This intention required a method that was adaptable and allowed for shared experiences and opposing ones to sit alongside one another. For this reason, the LabDays methodology was employed.

The LabDay Method used in the ICA-SUV 'What does Diversity Mean to you?' project anchored the work and encouraged all participants and the public end users to be included at every step of the way through a series of project 'LabDays' which allowed those participants to convene, discuss the question set provided by the team, develop and challenge the questions and expand on the first and second LabDay. These LabDays were underpinned by Communicative Methodology (CM), a sociological method that travels across social, cultural and linguistic boundaries. CM was employed here in the context of archives and records work; and although the LabDay method is used in the broader cultural heritage scene, we believe this is its first use within archives and records. The LabDay offered direct opportunities to explore the topics and themes and reflect on questions and issues *in the context of archives*. The LabDays also encouraged and made space for individuals to share how they navigate the practical,

emotional and professional aspects of diversity within the archival workforce. We wanted to share this methodology and results with the wider community through this resource.

Goals and objectives

The goals of the LabDay are to:

1. Exchange Knowledge.
2. Gain experience and learn first-hand from various individuals and experts.
3. Allow representatives from institutions to come together and discuss and explore a specific set of questions.
4. Bring people from various backgrounds and profiles together to discuss lived-experiences and problem-solve a solution to a “problem” in the sector.
5. Encourage participants to be more conscious about EDI-related questions, tensions, and themes in relation to Archival studies and practices.
6. Feel more comfortable to talk about EDI work and reflect on case studies and best practices taking place in other spaces and countries.
7. Connect community members to engage on questions and create space to move between the macro and micro aspects of the conversation.

Workshop- LabDay details

- Total workshop duration: 90 - 120 minutes
Participants: 5-25 people
- Best to have 3-6 individuals (guests and guide/host)
- Private LabDay is needed to discuss the questions, and then 3-6 people decide on the questions to be used during the the public LabDay

Public LabDays Preparations

The preparations needed for the Public LabDay are:

1. Agreed-upon set of questions to pose to participants.
2. Discussion guidelines and criteria; these provided to all participants to ensure that there is clear understanding of the rules for engagement and entering the space that has the potential to discuss charged topics.

3. Prepare a holding slide (See below) and decide if having music at the start and/or end of the LabDay is appropriate. The advantage of having gentle music bookending the conversation creates an ease to enter and exit the conversation.
4. Ask for any presentation material from guests/participants ahead of time.



Other requirements

1. An online or offline meeting place.
2. Physical or digital breakout rooms.
3. One facilitator for each breakout room (optional).

Your role as facilitator is to guide the conversation during the workshop. Experience in working on EDI is advised, but not required. Be open about your level of knowledge and experience with your participants.

Preparing the LabDay

Take the following steps to prepare your workshop:

1. Read this entire document and try to learn as much as possible about the participants and their local/national contexts.
2. Set a date in advance and reserve your meeting space, either physical or digital.
3. Send an invitation to the participants (see annex for an example).
4. Share the question set with the participants ahead of time, if appropriate.
5. Gather input from the preparatory exercises and questions from your participants.

Running the LabDay

The advised timeline for running the LabDay is given in the sample agenda below. You are free to adjust the times. The most important part of the LabDay is the discussion and the facilitation ensuring that the various topics are covered. You can allow breakout groups to discuss more cases and go in-depth with the questions.

Sample Agenda:

- (5-8 min) Caroline/Ellen Introduction and Protocol [Rosa, Caroline, Ellen]
- (13 min) Introduction to each participant (2 min each person) [all]
- (40 min) Conversation going through the question set- see Questions used in our LabDays, below [all]
- (10 min) Questions from the public and open up discussion [all + public]
- (5 min) Conclusions and goodbyes [Rosa]

Questions used in our LabDays:

1. How is diversity or EDI defined or understood in the countries you are most familiar with?
2. Are they [Diversity and EDI] crystalized terms and concepts?
3. How does diversity [or EDI] affect you personally? Or how does it relate to your job?
4. What are the hot topics in archival work in your area of the world?
5. As an archivist, what is an example of an intercultural success or joy that you have experienced? Challenge?
6. What is the role of a more established archivist to the younger generation?



Getting to know each other

1. Present different ways of looking at communities (gender, belief, values).
2. Present ways of identifying with a community compared to past ways (the family or country you are born in) because of the developments of digital and other communication technologies.
3. Creating awareness of other identifiers that persist.

Navigating these conversations and allowing space for the participants to get to know each other is important. Therefore, ensure the language and modes of presentation are respectful to all involved. This will investment in better understanding who is in the room will build trust and encourage deeper conversations.

Why are we talking about this

Address the following questions in the group discussion:

1. Why are we talking about this today?

Ask participants why it is important to talk about this topic in general and also why it is important to them professionally. This can also be from a personal perspective.

2. Explore questions around “Diversity” building on the questions that were offered above.
3. What role do the archives and institutions play in discussing representation and Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)? Discussion point?
4. Why is Diversity important to the marginalised groups in our communities? (cultural differences in the approach to heritage and archives)



Planning Checklist

The following checklist is useful for both the Private and Public LabDay. Allow enough time to plan each LabDay.

Week	1	2	3-5	6-8	8-10
Invite participants to LabDay	X				
Share preparatory exercises and question set with participants		X			
Prepare any additional collaborative technical tools to incorporate into workshops (e.g Padlet site) and set up registration and online platform/technology needs.		X			
Pre-meeting with participants to discuss LabDay			X		
LabDay Event				X	
Send recording and feedback form to Participants					X

Background information

[ICA-SUV](#), the Section on University and Research Institution Archives, is a section of the ICA and was founded in 1992 at the ICA Congress in Montreal. ICA-SUV is open to current and former archivists working in universities, colleges, academies of science and letters, learned societies and research institutions. The section's business is conducted by a Section Bureau committee consisting of twelve members including the Section's Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and up to twelve regular members. All are elected from the members of the Section for four-year

staggered terms, with elections being held every second year.

Goals

The goals of SUV, within the general objectives of ICA as set out in Chapter III of the Constitution, are:

- to promote professional and scholarly co-operation and communication between archives and archivists of universities, colleges, academies of science and letters, learned societies and research institutions;
- to gather, disseminate and exchange information relating to the creation and administration of such archives;
- to assist the development and strengthening of such archives through symposia, publications and the exchange of information;
- to cooperate with other bodies of the ICA.

Our project that used a similar methodology was run in 2022 and the resources and videos to the public LabDays are in English and Spanish and available open-access at the links (see below).

ANNEX:

Sample Email:

Dear XXX

I hope you are well.

I am writing to invite your participation in a future conversation regarding diversity, equality, and inclusion in the global archival profession led by the International Council on Archives Section on University and Research Institution Archives.

Growing out of the conversation during our conferences and our recent project on Archives and Ethics, we plan to next explore issues of equality, diversity and inclusion within the global context. We wish to engage archivists and recordkeepers in conversations about these concepts and provide a supportive venue to explore work-based experiences. As a component group within the International Council on Archives (ICA), we believe that a benefit of ICA is fostering conversations between international colleagues; we know that our members benefit from both listening and contributing to varied global perspectives. For this project, entitled “What does diversity mean to you?,” our

goals are to generate constructive dialogue of global scope about the concepts, and to connect them to archival and records work. As with the Archives and Ethics project, we expect to create from these conversations a digital scrapbook of resources on the ICA-SUV website, open to all.

We are working again with bilingual (English and Spanish) consultant Rosa Cisneros, who will host the virtual conversations. Our discussions will take the form of two semi-structured workshops, the first to take place in late June 2023 and the second in mid-September 2023. If you are available during those time frames and this project is of interest to you, we would very much appreciate your participation! The first workshop will consist of a small group of invited colleagues who will present their discussions to a wider audience during the second. The workshops will be recorded and available to a wider audience.

I am happy to provide more details and to answer any questions. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Best wishes,

Caroline

(ICA-SUV Chair)

Useful Resources and Links:

- ICA-SUV 2023 Diversity LabDay recording in English: [LINK](#)
- ICA-SUV 2022 Ethics LabDay recording in Spanish: [LINK](#)
- ICA-SUV 2022 Project: [LINK](#)
- EU-Funded Project WEAVE LabDays: [LINK](#)
- A scholarly publication which expands on LabDays Methodology: “*Moving, annotating, learning: MotionNotes LabDays - a case study*” in Routledge: [LINK](#)
- Conference Proceedings in Research Methodology Conference 2022 Proceedings: “*Venturing into new territories: WEAVE, a case study for connecting minoritised cultural communities and digital collections*” [LINK](#)

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