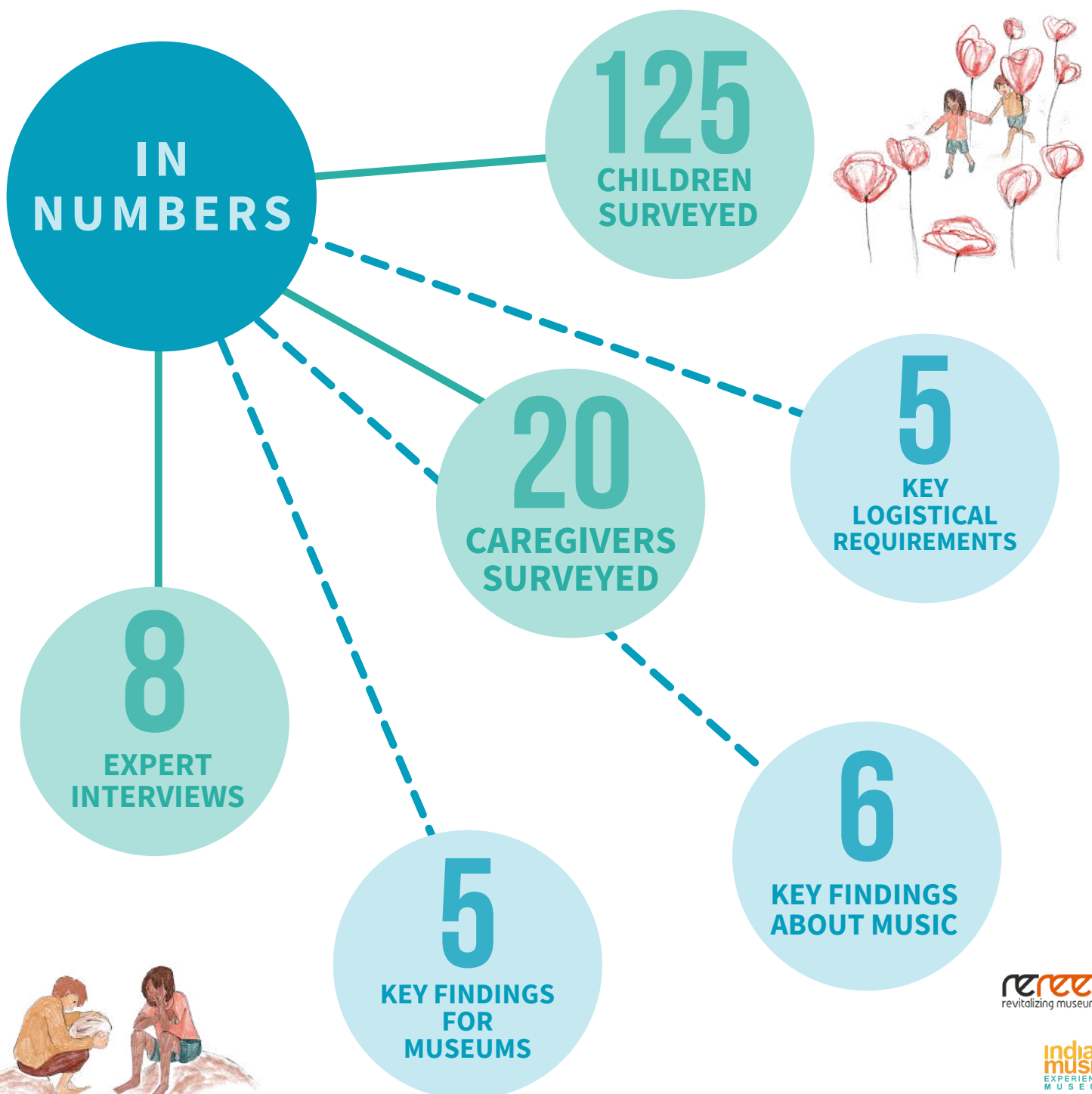


EMPATHETIC MUSEUM SPACES

FOR CHILDREN FROM
SOCIALY DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS IN INDIA



5 KEY FINDINGS FOR MUSEUMS

Through our surveys of children, their caregivers, and conversations with sector experts, we have developed five key findings through which museums can ensure that their spaces are accessible & enjoyable for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

1

FOOD IS A HIGHLIGHT OF ANY VISIT OR OUTING FOR CHILDREN FROM SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS. FAVOURITES INCLUDE:



SAMOSAS



JUICE



BIRYANI



SNACKS



SWEETS

2

CHILDREN VALUE CHOICE AND AGENCY DURING OUTINGS, PREFERRING TO EXPLORE ON THEIR OWN TERMS. THIS MEANS:

LESS
RULES

OPEN-ENDED
QUESTIONS

TIME
FOR PLAY



3

CHILDREN FROM SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS NEED MUSEUMS TO BE INCLUSIVE & EMPATHETIC. TWO WAYS TO DO THIS:



Internal & external communications explicitly declaring the museum is an inclusive space



Effective & regular staff and volunteer training for all, fostering a culture of inclusion & empathy

4

CHILDREN FROM SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS NEED LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY & REPRESENTATION IN MUSEUMS IN:



5

CHILDREN FROM SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS NEED MUSEUMS TO TAKE A TRAUMA AND CLASS-INFORMED APPROACH:



- Recognising that these children have often been exposed to adverse childhood experiences and may never have visited a place like a museum before
- Recognising that anxiety or discomfort may be from class differences that induce a sense of 'I don't belong here'

TO COMBAT THIS:

SENSITIVITY IN APPROACH



REPRESENTATION & RECOGNITION



SPACE TO CONTRIBUTE IN THE MUSEUM



KEY FINDINGS: MUSIC

Through our surveying of children, their caregivers, and conversations with experts in the field, we have developed six key findings around music, and how it can benefit children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds:

MUSIC CAN BE A POWERFUL SOCIAL EQUALIZER

Music is a powerful medium of social exchange and can help to balance, challenge and change established power equations by allowing everyone irrespective of age, gender, roles & educational background to express, emote, participate and perform or just listen and enjoy just like everyone else.



EXPOSURE TO MUSIC AS A CHILD IS BENEFICIAL



Discovering and engaging with music at a young age can be life-changing for a child, particularly one from a socially disadvantaged background. Exercising choice over preferences, and learning by breaking music into different elements like rhythm, or melody.

MUSIC CAN BE USED FOR HEALING, AND AS THERAPY

Music is a potent healing force which must be used as a nurturing tool to enrich the psycho-social well-being of children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds for:



- anger management
- emotional regulation
- managing distress & trauma triggers

- cognitive rehabilitation
- life skills
- teaching impulse control
- motor coordination issues
- letting out pent up energy



MUSIC CAN BE A MEDIUM FOR LEARNING

Music and movement can be key components of a child's learning. Music is a means to teach maths, tables, periodic table, concepts, and vocabulary, making memory pathways stronger. Exposing children to music from an early age helps with language acquisition, memory and key life skills.



MUSIC NEEDS TO BE MADE MORE RELATABLE

Musical programmes with children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds should use popular music genres to build relatability:

FILM & TV



RHYTHMIC



FOLK



CONTINUED ASSOCIATION WITH MUSIC IS BENEFICIAL

This is because children often discover their internal world through music; similarly, music can create opportunities in their external world.

LEARNING INSTRUMENTS

REHEARSAL SPACES

CAREER ORIENTATION

FREE CLASSES

LIVE PERFORMANCES



KEY FINDINGS: LOGISTICAL NEEDS

PLANNING A VISIT FOR CHILDREN WITH SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS

From surveying the parents, caregivers and experts in the social sector, we developed these 6 parameters which can help museums ensure visits and tours for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds are a success.

IDEAL GROUP SIZE

- 10-12 children
- 1 parent or caregiver
- 1 volunteer or staff member



TOUR EXPERIENCE

- 2-3 hours
- Multiple hygiene breaks
- Food & drink provided
- Activity-based



CHILD-FRIENDLY AMENITIES

- Child-height wash basins
- Visual instructions for European toilets
- Empathetic support from guides

FOOD PREFERENCES

- A key part of the visit
- Preferences include: snacks (chips, chaat, kebabs), sweets and lunch (biryani, or noodles)



PROVISION FOR TIME-OUTS

- Calming Techniques: drinking water, rest breaks, giving space
- Facilities: quiet rooms

TO MAKE IT MEMORABLE

- Arrange a goody-bag, photo from the day out, and gift
- Develop exclusive activities for these children to do in the museum
- Create an exhibit which the children can contribute to



THE IMPACT SO FAR



558

children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds have visited IME

from
4
organisations

40
tours were conducted

led by
12
volunteers



TESTIMONIALS

Children from marginalised families rarely get exposed to trends and experiences. The IME experience was truly eye opening for our children. They saw and heard instruments that they never knew about before and were totally absorbed in touching and playing them. Their exposure at home is normally limited to film songs – here they understood that music goes beyond the latest hits! From the joy on their faces we were sure that this was a new and enjoyable experience. And as teachers we are able to draw from this experience in our classrooms.

- Preeti Rao, Co-Founder, Gubbachi Homes

One of the most distinctive moments for me was not just exposing the kids to the instruments and history of Indian music but also giving them the opportunity to be in a museum in general. This was the first time most had ever seen art on display like this. All my tours have absolutely loved the simple things we take for granted like using the elevators or having a washroom with hand dryers. It really puts things in perspective and I'm glad to have been involved.

- Sneha, Project Svaritha Volunteer

ABOUT PROJECT SVARITHA

Project Svaritha, an initiative launched by Indian Music Experience Museum (IME) and funded by a Kotak Mahindra Investments Limited CSR Education and Livelihood Grant, aims to provide children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds with access to a safe, inclusive public space - the museum - to promote in-depth engagement, learning and enjoyment of music.

An enjoyable and educative musical immersion experience was designed to build exposure to different genres of music for the children. In order to develop this experience, primary and secondary audience research was commissioned by IME, and undertaken by ReReeti's project team, and this report highlights the findings of the research study, which is a unique insight into the relationship that children from this group have with a space like a museum.

PROJECT TEAM

Dr. Kalpana Purushottaman

Adjunct Professor at Indian Institute of Psychology and Research (IIPR), Member of the Juvenile Justice Board, Bangalore.

Ms. Sangitha Krishnamurthi

Co-founder of The Teacher Collective, Consultant Special Educator and Teacher Trainer.

Ms. Shivani Shah

Architect, an Anant Fellow, currently pursuing a masters in Clinical Psychology.

Ms. K Nitya Devayya

Undergraduate in History at Ashoka University.

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Undergraduate of History and Economics at Lady Shri Ram College for Women, Delhi.

Ms. Ayadi Mishra

Student from School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal. Ayadi drew the illustrations used in this report.

Ms. Varsha Anand

Art Historian and Freelance Writer.

PROJECT LEAD

Ms. Tiggy Allen

Operations Manager at ReReeti Foundation for Museums, Galleries and Heritage Sites.

OBJECTIVES

- Create awareness about music among children
- Engage with children from underprivileged backgrounds through music based educational activities
- Facilitate music immersion for children with intellectual disabilities like Autism
- Provide non-medical therapeutic support to Autistic Children through music

