

*Museu do Samba*  
Research & Evaluation  
Report Summary

---

*Training in Audience and Visitor Research  
Methodologies applied to Museum Planning Process,  
Museu do Samba & RCMG*

---

May 2016 – May 2017



UNIVERSITY OF  
LEICESTER

**MUSEU DO SAMBA**

***Board of Trustees***

Neuzo Sebastião de Amorim Tavares

Aloy Jupiara

Rachel Valença

***Staff***

Nilcemar Nogueira

Nilcéa Freire

Desirree Reis Santos

Janaína Reis

Vanessa Alves

Álea Almeida

João Victor Martins

Fabício Cruz

Ione de Moura

Georgie Echeverri

**Consultants**

***Much Mídia e Cultura***

Gegê Leme Joseph

**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER**

***Research Centre for Museums  
and Galleries – RCMG  
University of Leicester, UK***

Jocelyn Dodd

Ceri Jones

# 1 Index

|            |  |           |
|------------|--|-----------|
| <b>1</b>   | <b>INDEX</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>2</b>   | <b>INTRODUCTION</b>                                      | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>2.1</b> | <b>BACKGROUND</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>2.2</b> | <b>NEEDS INFORMING THE RESEARCH</b>                      | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>2.3</b> | <b>WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED - RESULTS</b>                   | <b>4</b>  |
| 2.3.1      | MOTIVATIONS, EXPECTATIONS AND DESIRES                    | 5         |
| 2.3.2      | THE DESIRED EXPERIENCE                                   | 5         |
| 2.3.3      | IDENTITY, SAMBA AND 'BRAZILITY'                          | 7         |
| 2.3.4      | BARRIERS TO VISITATION                                   | 8         |
| 2.3.5      | EDUCATIONAL IMPACT AND SELF-ESTEEM                       | 8         |
| 2.3.6      | LONGITUDINAL IMPACT AND PERSONAL AGENCY                  | 8         |
| 2.3.7      | OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS                               | 9         |
| <b>2.4</b> | <b>RESULTS APPLIED TO <i>MUSEU DO SAMBA</i> PLANNING</b> | <b>10</b> |
| 2.4.1      | ESSENTIAL CULTURAL RESOURCE                              | 10        |
| 2.4.1.1    | The transformational power of samba                      | 10        |
| 2.4.1.2    | "Exerting influence for transformation"                  | 11        |
| 2.4.2      | MISSION  | 12        |
| 2.4.3      | VISION   | 12        |
| 2.4.4      | VALUES   | 12        |
| 2.4.5      | MANDATE  | 13        |
| <b>2.5</b> | <b>CONTEXTUAL CHANGES 2016-2017</b>                      | <b>14</b> |
| <b>2.6</b> | <b>CONTINUED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION</b>                 | <b>14</b> |

## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Background

In March 2016, *Museu do Samba*, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was awarded the *British Council Brazil – Newton Fund Institutional Skills Grant*, for the development of a training and capacity building project for its staff together with its United Kingdom partner – the *Research Centre for Museums and Galleries – RCMG*, based within the Museum Studies School at the University of Leicester.

The project objective was to promote collaboration between *Museu do Samba* and the RCMG at a time when the museum was undergoing planning for its transformation from a cultural centre (*Centro Cultural Cartola*) into a museum, focusing on training and building capacity on the processes and application of results of audience and visitor research and evaluation to the development of a socially responsible, ethical and inclusive museum.

*Museu do Samba*, located at *Mangueira Favela* (slum), is committed to playing a socially relevant role within its communities, valuing the contribution of African descendants to the Brazilian identity through the legacy of samba and its agents, who in its majority, stem from neglected and vulnerable Afro-Brazilian communities.

### 2.2 Needs informing the research

Besides the training, exposure to the research processes and results, which we describe in detail over the long format research report chapters, *Museu do Samba* sought to meet two urgent needs through this research project:

- Support to planning: corroborate or question the vision pre-established for the future *Museu do Samba*: To re-evaluate what it means to be Brazilian through the legacy of samba and its agents, and empower Afro-Brazilian communities in society.
- Support to museum advocacy efforts: raise, through qualitative research, data illustrating the impact of *Museu do Samba's* activities for its communities, strengthening advocacy and raising the profile of the museum's work and achievements with possible sponsors and financiers.

### 2.3 What we have achieved - results

The findings of the qualitative research were organised thematically, listed under the two main research needs described above. We understand that these findings are interconnected and inform each other across themes. For the purposes of this report, they are organised in the following manner:

- Support to planning:
  - Motivations, expectations and desires
  - The desired experience
  - Identity, samba and 'Brazility'

- Barriers to visitation
- Support to museum advocacy efforts:
  - Educational impact and self-esteem
  - Longitudinal impact and personal agency
  - Operational considerations

Below is a summary of the main points raised.

### 2.3.1 Motivations, expectations and desires

1. Museu do samba as a place to value and acknowledge samba as a cultural, identity-bound and transforming phenomenon: strong expectation that the museum valorises samba as a cultural and identity-bound phenomenon, rooted firmly in Black culture, which was and still is an agent for social and human transformation.
2. Museu do samba as a place of belonging – to samba, to the museum, to the samba community and the museum community: a need to belong and be active participants in *Museu do Samba* and in samba.
3. Museu do samba as a space for socialization and interaction: a desire for the museum to become a place for socialization between samba agents, between community residents, families and youth, with interactions of personal, physical and digital nature. *Museu do Samba* must be a place for socializing and meeting, recreating the spirit of the old ‘terreiros do samba’ (places where samba musicians and agents gather to socialize, interact, create and play music), alive and full of children.
4. Museu do Samba as a leader in the preservation of samba memory: there is a strong perception that perpetuating the work of the museum is very important for the preservation of the memory and legacy of samba, and a belief that established samba musicians shall help preserve the museum.
5. Museu do Samba as a place to acquire and disseminate knowledge about samba: its history, legacy, life stories of its agents, Afro-Brazilian culture.

### 2.3.2 The desired experience

1. What type of content and representations are expected?
  - Sharing the culture of samba
  - Access to samba archives and collections
  - Deepening and broadening knowledge about samba
  - ‘True history’ of samba
  - Memory of samba people and agents
  - Unforgettable carnival moments
  - Samba schools key moments
  - Traditional samba
  - Samba as a party
  - Music and dance
  - Samba at *Mangueira Favela* and community

- Historical images, videos, ‘sculptures’ (3D objects, busts etc), costumes, personal objects from famous samba people, sounds of samba, musical instruments: a clear desire is expressed to have access to more objects and artefacts in the exhibitions and activities, accompanied by more photos, videos and sounds – this was a general comment among participants
2. What type of programmes must *Museu do Samba* offer?
- Educational, cultural, immersive and leisure-filled activities, promoting access and participation in the various expressions of samba. Some activities mentioned:
    - More exhibitions
    - Samba classes
    - Lectures and debates
    - Conferences
    - Festivals
    - Samba Jam Sessions
    - Traditional samba shows
    - Meetings with established samba musicians
    - More programmes for families
    - Activities for leisure and relaxing
3. What type of environment must *Museu do Samba* create?
- An environment that promotes and values the positive and inspiring emotions that emanate from the legacy of samba: happiness, unity, the joy of being a ‘sambista’ (samba musician/agent), the energy of samba, to feel well, a feeling of community, a feeling of longing for samba. Other important themes also emerge, such as respect for others and the possibility that the museum becomes an egalitarian place for leisure/fun.
  - Non-judgemental, welcoming environment: a place for positive emotions, where one feels a sense of comfort that is different from the general idea of museums as oppressive and uninspiring places – “*I want to feel all things that I don’t feel in other museums*” – Jorge<sup>1</sup>, 14 years-old
  - An environment that expresses the dynamism of samba and carnival: the museum must be felt as dynamic and alive at every point of the experience, from arrival to departure, and beyond.
4. What must *Museu do Samba* provide access to?
- To important personalities of samba – promote lateral access
  - To archives and collections of samba
  - To knowledge linked to samba
  - To participation: ‘participate actively’ in the activities of the museum and in its collective construction and in the construction of collective and shared narratives

---

<sup>1</sup> All names of participants in this report have been modified to preserve their privacy and identity.

- Access to the internet and to interactivity (digital, with objects, social) to learn, research, participate and co-create (objects, music, dance)

### 2.3.3 Identity, samba and 'Brazility'

The relationship between identity, samba and 'Brazility' is a central theme for the vision proposed by *Museu do Samba*. Here are some points raised:

1. Identity and 'Brazility': what does it mean to be Brazilian to you?
  - A Mix: of cultures and races
  - Diversity: *"Many Brazils", "to live in a very rich place"* (culturally, naturally, socially), *"lots of natural beauty"*
  - Unity / One people: a single language, one people, an identity in common, with many differences within
  - Paradox: Brazilians live 'well' with diversity but have problems dealing with differences between people – which means – Brazilians have challenges with the real acceptance of its own diversity
  - Negative aspects: Brazilians are too complacent; accept too much
  - Positive aspects: immense potential; persistent, fighters, resilient; hardworking people, solidarity; lots of happiness, always smiling; open to people, always 'ready' to embrace other cultures; want to help others; know how to roll with the punches
  - Other points: to be Brazilian is a complicated thing to define
2. Identity and Brazility: what does it mean to be afro-descendant to you? How do afro-descendants fit with the idea of being Brazilian?
  - "I hadn't thought about this, but" ... those who live closer to the reality of favelas, concluded that "we are all afro-descendants", and that this impression is based on cultural identity, not racial.
  - On the other hand, most of those living more distant from the reality of favelas did not consider themselves as afro-descendants, and believe that afro-descendants must have African roots. They also believe that being afro-descendant means that you descend from slaves – a reality they do not see as their own.
  - Positive aspects – raised mostly by those living close to favela reality: being afro-descendant means that your joy for life surpasses the pains of living.
  - All those who participated agree that being afro-descendant means facing constant racism.
  - The paradoxes and differing views of this topic are central to establishing a mission for *Museu do Samba*.
3. Identity and Brazility: What does being a favela dweller mean to you? How do favela dwellers fit with the idea of being Brazilian?
  - Mangueira Favela youth: happiness, to play soccer, pride in their community and to feel that they live in a happy community – and at the same time, it means to live with violence and to be resilient.

- Youth from the south zone of Rio (upmarket neighbourhoods, with little contact with favelas' daily life): to be Brazilians like us; to be more resilient; to have lots of musicality and musical culture, funk, samba, etc; to suffer a lot of prejudice but at the same time to progressively exchange with communities outside favelas; to be less prejudiced.
4. Samba and Brazility: What does samba mean to you? How does samba fit with the idea of being Brazilian?
- Samba comes from Brazil – it is a national symbol, very Brazilian, directly associated to the idea of Brazil
  - Culture, love, passion, happiness, to have 'samba in your feet', unity
  - Very associated with family life, bringing together different people
  - By some lines of Christian religion, mostly Evangelicals, samba is often negatively associated with 'evil' African religious practices

#### 2.3.4 Barriers to visitation

This theme was mostly explored with groups of people living in the south zone of Rio de Janeiro, a region considered socially and culturally severed from the central and north zones, where a great number of favelas and poorer neighbourhoods are located.

It was identified that all people contacted had a complete lack of awareness about the existence of *Museu do Samba*, where it is located and how to get there. All respondents had never set foot in a favela in Rio de Janeiro before, and recognise there is a psychological barrier of fear and prejudice linked to visiting favelas in the city. They recognise, nevertheless, that they would like to visit the museum if given the opportunity, and believe that many other people from their area would feel the same. They believe that more conservative sectors of society could be more resistant to visiting a museum in a favela, and that a good communication strategy could help address this problem.

#### 2.3.5 Educational impact and self-esteem

1. *Museu do Samba* as an agent of self-esteem – it was said by a significant number of respondents from schools (pupils and teachers) that the work done and the relationships established with *Museu do Samba* positively impacted the way they view their environment and their culture, and that this affected learners and lecturers by: rescuing memories; strengthening knowledge; fighting and unpacking prejudices; creating a feeling of belonging for learners; being itself an example of resistance.
2. Impact in the classroom and for education: the works developed with *Museu do Samba* positively affected activities done in the classroom, helping unpack preconceptions associated with African-based culture; students are more open and less resistant; it brought learners and lecturers closer, creating personal and cultural bonds.

#### 2.3.6 Longitudinal impact and personal agency

Our research team sought to interview young people who had a continued relationship with activities at *Museu do Samba* during teenage years, and who today are adults.



Nathan Amaral was raised at Mangueira favela and started studying music and violin at *Museu do Samba* (formerly *Centro Cultural Cartola*), and is on his second undergraduate year of violin studies at the prestigious University of Salzburg, Austria, where he was admitted in first place. Below are parts of his testimonial:

*"I don't know if I would have followed the path of music were it not for this [Museu do Samba] project, hadn't I started there, and I am very grateful for this. ... So, one can say that the struggle is valid if at least one, two or three students follow a different life, it will have already been worth it because it changed this person's life, do you understand? I think this is crucial, the most important thing is for us not to lose hope that we can change someone's future. ... Thanks to this start at Centro Cultural Cartola, I could have contact, my first contact with a violin, isn't it, in my life, so I believe without this opportunity I would have never had means to follow this career, ever, isn't it ... I am very grateful for having been a part of this initiative, of such a beautiful project dedicated to taking children off the streets and doing something useful with them, for the lives of those children, of those people ... I am really grateful for this, it really changed my life."*

#### 2.3.7 Operational considerations

##### 1. Museu do Samba unique characteristics

- Attractiveness of samba; success of the museum's activities with its communities; good relationships with agents of various forms of samba and its agents; and with communities of interest.
- Location at the favela – it is a unique museum situation in Rio – and a strong, but also challenging point. At the same time, there is lack of interest from public and private sponsors to support projects in favelas: *Museu do Samba* needs to sensitise public and private sponsors about the importance of samba as a form of expression and a tool for social transformation.

##### 2. Operational situation

- Becoming a museum requires the institution to implement operational, experience and programme changes, putting direct pressure on the sustainability of operations (financial, structural, personnel)

##### 3. Staff, their roles and focuses

- The team has a good pool of expertise for their current roles but needs to broaden specific expertise to attend to new operational demands – there are too few staff for too many demands, leading to burn-out. This hinders capacity building and the ability to deal with new audiences and perform new specialised tasks.

##### 4. Programmes and projects

- Socio-educational activities are praised, with a history of social and educational impact
- Visitor experience needs improvements: bigger number of and more regular activities, more dynamism, better welcoming space, improved environment and exhibitions

- Relevant archives and collections, with great research potential, but not enough researched and documented, and requires improved preservation and management methods
  - Audience numbers below and less diverse than desired to realise museum’s ambitions – requires ongoing audience development programme
  - Needs to improve communication and dissemination of its activities
  - Needs to increase networking
5. Financial circumstances
- The needs imposed by becoming a museum put strain on financial matters and demands continued sustained financing strategies.
  - The museum must strengthen and stabilise its fundraising and income generating strategies, based on a solid and continued fundraising programme and efforts

## 2.4 Results applied to *Museu do Samba* planning

The results above reinforced the vision established for the future of *Museu do Samba* and helped map the following conceptual considerations for the institution:

### 2.4.1 Essential Cultural Resource

#### 2.4.1.1 *The transformational power of samba*

***Museu do Samba* believes that samba is an agent for transforming relations of power between individuals and communities, and between communities and society, in search of a more equitable society.**

According to this view, samba acts as a bridge, a cultural connector between samba and afro-descendant communities, the bearers of the cultural matrix of samba, and society as a whole, which has samba within its collective identity and ‘Brazility’.

By understanding samba as a ‘relational space’ for connecting these communities and society, *Museu do Samba* wants to be a place for dialogue between the official narratives and the visible city, or the “asfalto<sup>2</sup>”, and the invisible city, of which many contested histories remain silenced: the “morro<sup>3</sup>”.

This social power imbues *Museu do Samba*, located at the physical frontier between “morro” and “asfalto”, with a special mandate, filled with *ubuntu*, to stimulate:

- Unity in diversity
- Collaboration and solidarity of ecosystems

---

<sup>2</sup> Popular expression used in Rio de Janeiro to designate the official city, or that expressed through maps and registered addresses, or everything that is not a favela.

<sup>3</sup> Popular expression used in Rio de Janeiro to designate favelas.

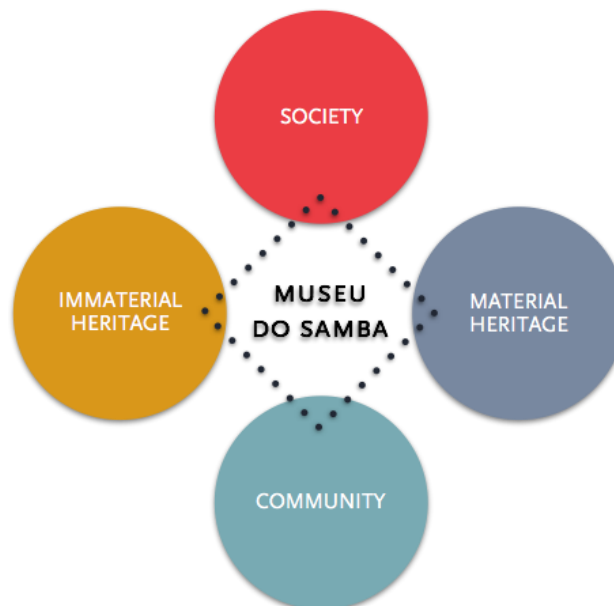
- Acknowledgement of Brazil as a syncretism of cultures

The history and legacy of samba, with strong protagonism of the afro-descendant communities, is seen here as a history and legacy that affects all Brazilians equally, regardless of colour, creed or origin.

#### 2.4.1.2 “Exerting influence for transformation”

*Museu do Samba* acts within the relational spaces of influence between:

- Community – of samba, local neighbourhoods, Afro-Brazilian
- Society – carioca (Rio de Janeiro) and Brazilian
- Immaterial heritage – practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and technologies
- Material heritage – instruments, objects, artefacts, territories and cultural places



We propose to structure the activities of *Museu do Samba* according to the following roadmap of social transformation:

- 1) Safeguard history and legacy, memory and origins of samba (material and immaterial heritage):
  - a) Collect
  - b) Preserve
  - c) Research
  - d) Communicate
- 2) Value our African ancestry within society through the importance of samba:
  - a) Promote
  - b) Advocate
  - c) Give access

- 3) Alter perceptions and power relations, transforming lives:
  - a) Empower:
    - i) ‘Sambistas’ (samba musicians/agents) – to understand their importance within Brazilian culture
    - ii) Communities of interest – by enhancing self-esteem and personal agency
    - iii) Make people reflect about their rights and the rights of others within society
    - iv) Members of society to advocate for the museum causes, and to undertake transforming roles for social inclusion, equality, fighting racism and empowering for personal agency
  - b) Alter perceptions:
    - i) Of ‘sambistas’ and their communities about their place in society
    - ii) Make people reflect about their rights and the rights of others within society
    - iii) Of society in relation to the importance of African-base culture for their own culture and identity
    - iv) Of what it means ‘to be Brazilian’
    - v) Of the role of samba in one’s ‘Brazility’

Transformations sought by *Museu do Samba*:

- 1) Alter perceptions and power relations between society, samba communities and communities of interest to *Museu do Samba* about what it means “to be Brazilian”, reinforcing belonging and empowering individuals and communities through the legacy and history of samba.
- 2) Social development through education and culture, building citizenry, enhancing self-esteem, dignity, social and physical well-being, financial independence and social mobility.
- 3) Economic development for the region through entrepreneurship, new businesses and valuing the economy of favelas.
- 4) Urban impact through the creation of a high level public equipment (museum), broadening access to the cultural samba’s territory, impacting positively on the transport networks to the region, valuing the culture of favelas, stimulating local development and the connection of the “morro–asfalto” axis.

#### 2.4.2 Mission

Contribute to the re-evaluation of what it means to be Brazilian through the dissemination, promotion and multiplication of the legacy and history of samba and empower its agents and communities, valuing the African ancestry within society.

#### 2.4.3 Vision

Become a world reference on the memory of samba and as a museum service of social impact and relevance.

#### 2.4.4 Values

#### Ambitions:

- Empowerment = of communities through the individual

- Bottom-up = by communities, for communities and society
- Inclusion = of all communities, groups, tribes, ages and genders
- *Ubuntu*: “I am because you are” = there is no individual well-being without collective well-being
- Empathy = drive narratives and discussions taking the points of view of others to heart

#### Principles:

- Social responsibility = our *raison d’etre*
- Collective participation = our *modus operandi*
- Democracy – for all = our structuring value
- Welcoming = all visitors

#### Ethics:

- Excellence = in all activities
- Transparency = in all actions
- Ethics = at all times

#### 2.4.5 Mandate

##### The individual and the ‘samba circle’:

*Museu do Samba* works towards safeguarding the memory, legacy and cultural territories of samba through its archives and collections, education, communication, access, audience development, social impact, based on values of social responsibility and inclusion.

*Museu do Samba* works towards the empowerment of ‘sambistas’ and valuing of African ancestry in society through advocacy and protection of the rights of samba and afro-descendant communities, altering perceptions and relations of power between communities and society, and transforming lives.

*Museu do Samba* is dedicated to the research, collection, preservation, education and communication of the social history, memory, artistic expression and legacy of ‘samba carioca’ (samba of Rio de Janeiro) and its safeguarding as immaterial heritage, articulating relationships with other forms of Brazilian samba through collaboration in networks with other specialists and institutions.

##### The Network

*Museu do Samba* wants to act as a central HUB for various initiatives and centres of memory of ‘samba carioca’, as well as for centres of memory dedicated to researching other Brazilian forms of samba, articulating its relations through a network of access to information, positioning itself as a Centre of Reference and Preservation of Samba.

*Museu do Samba* wants to be a “social-cultural-educational common”, claiming a position of relevance and legitimacy within its communities through the execution of joint and participatory

projects and programmes, creating a space for participation and public engagement, as well as access and the wide sharing of knowledge and practices.

## 2.5 Contextual changes 2016-2017

It is important to highlight that during the process of this training programme, Brazil has delved into a political and economic crisis of unprecedented proportions. This crisis affected stability in the country and greatly impacted on the sustainability of the cultural sector as a whole.

The crisis which started in 2016, has deepened in 2017, imposing economic restrictions and threatening the survival of many cultural initiatives.

*Museu do Samba*, as a private entity without direct public finance, is not immune to this situation, having suffered profound financial impacts over the last two years. In face of all difficulties in the sector, big local financiers, that used to support *Museu do Samba* in the past, concentrated their reduced efforts on institutions of greater national visibility, also facing financial threats.

In parallel to this desolating scenario, the Director and founder of *Museu do Samba*, Nilcemar Nogueira, was nominated Municipal Secretary of Culture for Rio de Janeiro, leaving her post after more than a decade. This reality imposed restrictions for the museum to seek municipal funding due to ethical reasons, hindering an important source of financial support and partnership for the museum in the past. The new Director, Nilcéa Freire, was a member of the museum board and had deep knowledge of its history, leaving the museum in very competent hands in the field of fundraising (Nilcéa Freire is the former head of Ford Foundation Brazil).

At the moment we conclude this report, and after a very prolific 2016 for activities and raising visibility and profile of *Museu do Samba* in the media, as well as intense efforts by the museum staff and management to plan the future of the institution, the museum finds itself uncertain of the immediate continuity of its activities due to financial reasons.

It is important, nevertheless, to counter this tough reality with the positive data presented in this report, in the urgency to indicate that, even in the face of the toughest economic scenario ever faced by the museum, it must be acknowledged that its relevance goes far beyond the activities developed within the confines of its walls. This report firmly concludes that the strength of *Museu do Samba* lies in the solidity of the activities developed and methodologies applied, independently of being carried out at the museum building, or having to temporarily be thought for a dispersed delivery through a network of partner institutions and places of relevance.

Therefore, if faced with the need to temporarily close the doors of its current home, *Museu do Samba* must keep acting through its networks and relations, offering support, training and activities to other institutions and thus perpetuating its work, regardless of its physical home.

## 2.6 Continued research and evaluation

We also strongly advise that the research carried out through this project becomes a continued programme, so that:

- Comparative data can be raised on a year-on-year basis, and findings applied to improve existing programmes and develop new ones.
- Number of participants is broadened to include more target audiences – to support audience development programmes.
- Number of participants is broadened to include more participants and bigger research samples – so that in future, qualitative data can also be backed up by quantitative data, strengthening support to advocacy.