



MAC COVID-19 SURVEY

Survey on the impact of COVID-19 on Caribbean Museums

Established in 1987, the Museums Association of the Caribbean (MAC; <http://caribbeanmuseums.com/>) works to strengthen links among Caribbean museums, their staff and associates, so that they may foster and promote an appreciation and understanding of their common heritage through education and the development of professional standards of practice. The association serves as a forum for the exchange of information and ideas through meetings, publications and museum exchanges. MAC's main objectives are to develop common policies relative to the role of museums; to act as an advisory board for governments and institutions regarding museum development; and to facilitate relationships with international and other regional museums-related organizations.

Member organizations include a variety of regional cultural organizations, including national museums, art museums, community museums, culture and heritage facilities, and university museums. Individual members are comprised of Caribbean and Caribbean diaspora-based professionals and students of the wider global museum community in its many forms.

This survey was conducted in April 2020¹ to assess how the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the museum sector across the Caribbean.² Survey results will both inform MAC's response to the crisis and be shared with global museum networks as they gather data on the current status of museums around the world.

Executive Summary

Virtually all museums around the Caribbean have temporarily shut their doors in response to regional shelter-at-home requirements and need for physical distancing, although these restrictions differ slightly from country to country. According to the survey, 91.38% of respondents reported that they were in a lockdown situation and 77.59% confirmed that they are currently closed, while 18.97% stated that they were closed to the public with some staff remaining on-site.

Almost three-quarters of respondents, the majority of whom are in leadership positions in their institutions, stated that they were concerned or very concerned about the situations in their countries; another 17.24% were moderately concerned and 8% slightly so. Most museums reported that they have already lost or are at risk of losing funding. The majority indicated that they do not have access to COVID-19 relief funding, with

¹ Deadline of 30 April 2020

² For the purpose of this report, the Caribbean is defined as those countries surrounding the Caribbean basin.

13% of museums fearing that they may have to close permanently and another 34% acknowledging this as a possibility. There are longer-term funding implications for these tourism-dependent countries given the sharp decline in economic activity from tourism.³

In general, museums are concerned about the continuation of programs or special projects. Eighty-eight percent stated that they have had to reduce programming and exhibitions, and 98% reported nation-wide event cancellations, some as far ahead as May 2021. It is anticipated that this will have a significant effect on staffing, with 23% reporting current staff reductions, and 37% anticipating possible layoffs in the future.

Most respondents offer digital programming to keep their museums accessible and their audiences engaged.⁴ Virtual offerings differ and range from online exhibitions and tours, collections online, newsletters, podcasts and virtual workshops, to an extensive uptake in social media. Additionally, several museums were emailing resources directly to their stakeholders. All respondents reported strong interest in training opportunities around digital strategies as well as other professional development related to managing present circumstances.

Looking Ahead

Most respondents reported that they were still developing reopening plans and did not yet have a date for opening to the public. Another third stated they are planning phased reopenings. Others, tied to universities and government departments, noted that they were awaiting instructions for reopening plans. The crisis caused by COVID-19 has demonstrated the need for increased access to digital tools and training to enable Caribbean museum professionals to adapt to the changing, potentially long-term circumstances. It also has challenged these institutions to adopt new forms of educational programming and engagement tools that will help them expand and diversify audiences locally, regionally and beyond. While museums are demonstrating resilience in the face of the current challenge, funding and advocacy for resources remain critically important both in the short term and for longer-term sustainability.

³ The tourism industry, which accounts for 50% to 90% of GDP and employment in some Caribbean countries, is sharply slowing economic activity across the region. <https://blogs.imf.org/2020/04/29/covid-19-pandemic-and-the-caribbean-navigating-uncharted-waters/>
<https://www.caribbean-council.org/covid-19-will-pass-the-economic-impact-could-be-longer-lasting/>
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-april-2020-briefing-no-136/>

⁴ Some MAC members have increased their digital resources as a result of present circumstances, according to anecdotal data collected by MAC: <http://caribbeanmuseums.com/moving-online-a-report-from-mac-member-museums>

Survey Results



Figure 1. Map of the Caribbean Basin; green sections denote the locations of survey respondents

How many museums are represented in the survey?

The 58 respondents who answered the survey represent a total of 49 museums.⁵

⁵ An additional six respondents were from institutions in the Caribbean Diaspora (in the United States). These have subsequently been removed for the geographical purposes of this survey (a summary is included in appendix).

From how many countries?

Table 1. Twenty-four countries (including territories) participated in the survey.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Aruba (Constituent kingdom, Netherlands)● Barbados● Bahamas● Belize● Cayman Islands (British overseas territory)● Costa Rica● Cuba● Curaçao (Constituent kingdom, Netherlands)● Dominican Republic● Guatemala● Guadeloupe (Overseas department, France)● Haiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Jamaica● Martinique (Overseas department, France)● Panama● Puerto Rico (Commonwealth, United States)● Saba (Special municipality, Netherlands)● St Kitts and Nevis● Saint Lucia● Saint Martin (Overseas territory, France)● Trinidad and Tobago● Turks and Caicos Islands (British overseas territory)● United States Virgin Islands (Territory, United States)● Federal Dependencies of Venezuela (Territories, Venezuela)
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Museums were represented from four different linguistic regions of the Caribbean: Spanish (26), English (16), French (9) and Dutch (7).

The types of institutions who responded to the survey range from national museums to art museums, university museums, heritage sites, archaeological sites and community museums.

How have museums and their staff been affected?

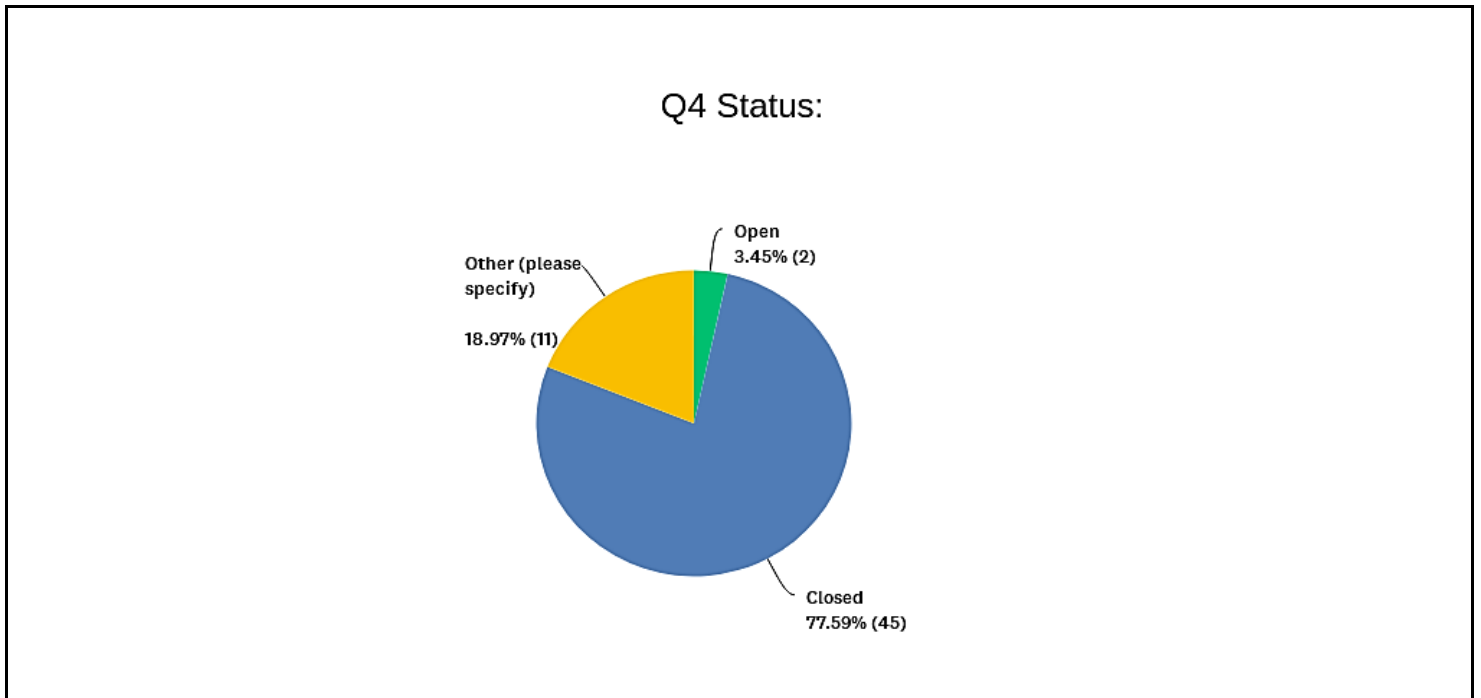


Figure 2. Status of museums (n = 58).

The vast percentage of museums in the Caribbean state that they are currently closed (77.59%) or closed to the public with some staff remaining on-site (18.97%).

Virtually all survey respondents report having been subject to lockdown in their countries (91.38%). Between 56%–66% respondents state that both their public and private lives had been significantly affected as a result, with another 28%–30% reporting feeling somewhat affected by the situation.

Q7 How do you feel about the current situation in your country?

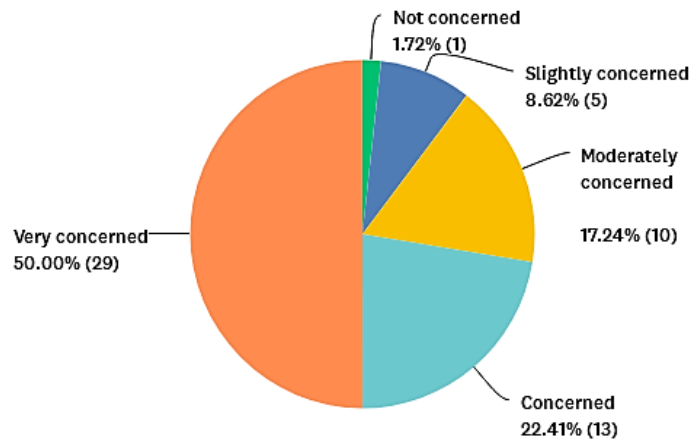


Figure 3. Level of concern about the current situation (n = 58).

Half of the respondents state they are very concerned about the situations in their countries. Another 22.41% are concerned and 17.24% moderately so.

Q11 Number of staff at your organization

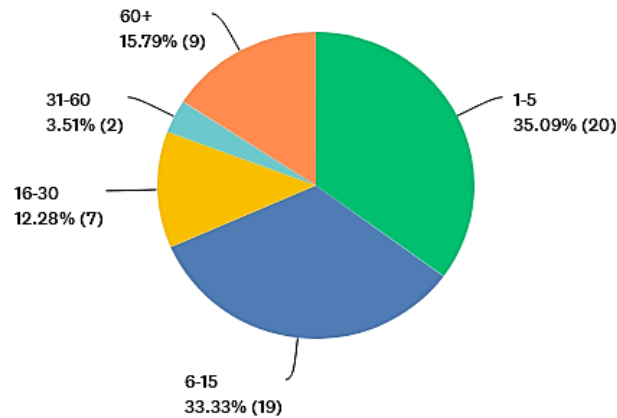


Figure 4. Staff Size (n = 57). *Note: 1 person did not respond to this question.*

Most respondents (68.42%) reported having 16 or fewer employees. Almost 16% worked for institutions with a staff size of 60 or more.

Respondents noted that some staff remain on-site, more than 54% of which are security personnel and 25.4% of which are in leadership positions; 32.73% reported other types of staff that remained on-site, including administrative and facilities staff such as groundskeepers and cleaning crew. Some respondents stated that on-site work is being conducted in shifts.

Q15 Percentage of Annual Budget from Public Funds

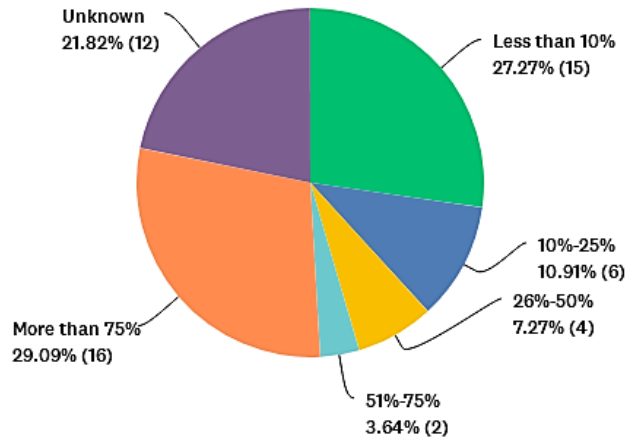


Figure 5. Public funding for the annual budget (n = 55). *Note: 3 people did not respond to this question.*

A total of 29.09% of respondents reported that more than 75% of the funding for their annual budget comes from public sources, and 27.27% reported that less than 10% of their funding comes from this source.

Q19 Have you lost public funding?

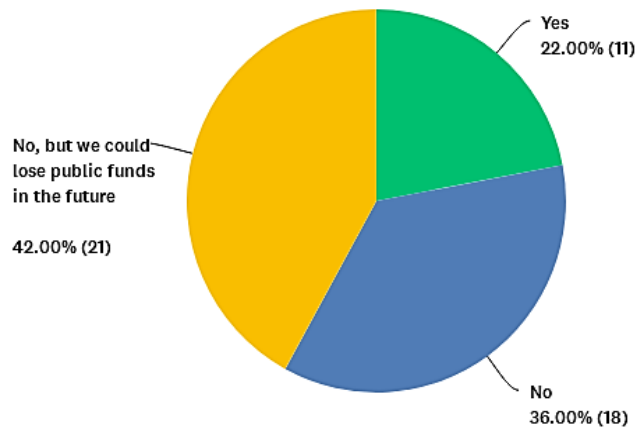


Figure 6. Perceptions about loss of public funds (n = 50). *Note: 8 people did not respond to this question.*

Sixty-four percent of respondents reported that they have either lost public funding or that they are concerned about losing public funds in the future, while 36% reported that they have not lost public funding.

Almost 60% of respondents stated that they have had to reduce staff, or may need to in the future, and 40.38% have not yet had to make changes to the size of their staff.

Q18 Have you had to reduce your programming and exhibitions?

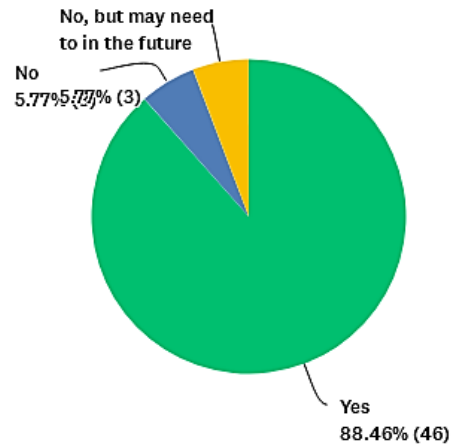


Figure 7. Program and exhibition reductions (n = 52). *Note: 6 people did not respond to this question.*

A total of 88.46% of respondents reported experiencing reduced programming. Only 5.77% reported otherwise.

Q21 Are you at risk of permanent closure?

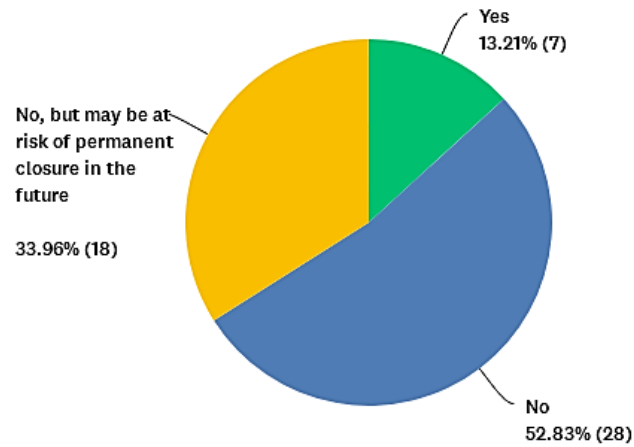


Figure 8. Risk of permanent closure (n = 53). *Note: 5 people did not respond to this question.*

Nearly 53% of respondents reported that they are not at risk for permanent closure. However, 13.21% stated that they are at risk of closure and 33.96% noted that this is a possibility for the future.

Q28 Have major regional events/festivals in your country been cancelled?

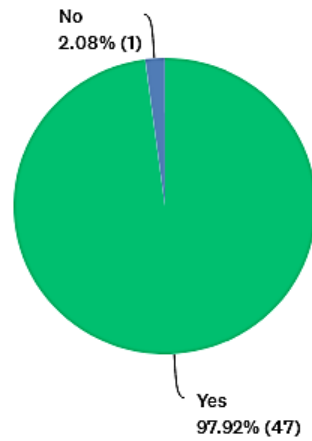


Figure 9. Cancellation of major regional events/festivals (n = 48). *Note: 10 people did not respond to this question.*

Most respondents (97.92%) stated that major events and festivals in their country have been canceled. The majority of these cancellations have been through June and July 2020, but a smaller number of respondents also reported cancellations between August and December 2020. An even smaller group reported cancellations through March to May 2021.

Q22 Which of the following digital resources are offered by your Institution (check all that apply)?

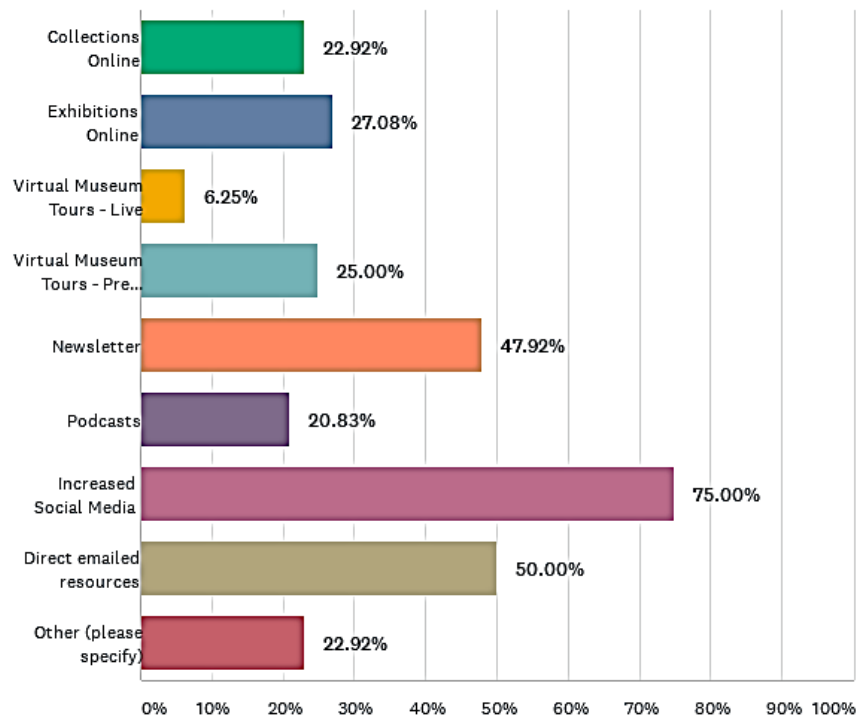


Figure 10. Digital resources offered by institutions (n = 48). *Note: 10 people did not respond to this question.*

More than 80% of respondents indicated the existence of digital resources to offer information and relevant programming.

What digital resources do these institutions have?

According to respondents, their institutions report that increased social media (75%), their newsletter (47.92%) and direct emailed resources (50%) are their primary digital resources and communication channels with their public. Online exhibitions (27.08%), prerecorded virtual museum tours (25%) and collections information (22.92%) are also sources for generating digital content.⁶

⁶ Respondents could select more than one answer. Though inconclusive, note that the answer choice “increased social media” suggests that respondents have currently increased their use of this digital resource.

Table 2. Digital resources submitted by respondents

Examples of Digital Resources			
1	@FundacionPhelps	16	FB @icppr TWEETER INSTAGRAM
2	See flassef on Facebook	17	www.diquis.go.cr ecobiosis.museocostarica.go.cr
3	https://www.facebook.com/museopopolvuh/	18	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7CMvDYI7bg
4	http://www.lesfruitsdemer.com/category/athome/	19	https://www.facebook.com/ScnTrust/
5	www.mapr.org	20	https://nagb.org.bs/covid19-resources
6	http://museocoleccion.uprrp.edu/collections	21	Facebook Fundación Museo Arubano
7	Facebook.com/mhisapr	22	https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=3501382249878843&set=pcb.3501383366545398
8	https://www.naic.edu/ao/visitor-center/overview	23	www.facebook.com/cmcart.org
9	www.reyesdejuanadiaz.com	24	http://www.patrimoines-martinique.org/
10	www.samaap.org	25	maceduca-pr.org
11	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdle534e2FN_g0aCpLTpvjQ	26	https://www.instagram.com/garveylh/
12	#centroleonencasa	27	https://www.nationalgallery.org.ky/see/virtual-tours/
13	En IG Museo Alcázar de Colón : las salas del museo en cuarentena, las piezas más importantes del. Museo en cuarentena etc,	28	http://www.lesfruitsdemer.com/category/athome/
14	@MuseoOlimpicodePuertoRico	29	https://www.facebook.com/chenzirakahina/videos/1205844022942959/
15	http://www.museodeartedebayamon.com/paginas-de-colorear/#color	30	www.uprm.edu/musa/inicio

How are museums dealing with the new reality brought on by the pandemic?

Q25 Does your museum have access to COVID-19 relief funds?

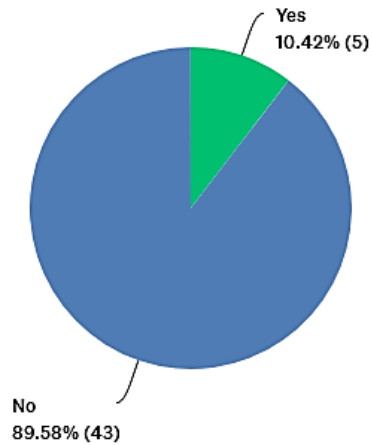


Figure 11. Access to COVID-19 relief funds (n = 48). *Note: 10 people did not respond to this question.*

The majority of respondents (84%) reported that they were receiving daily national updates on the COVID-19 situation in their countries, with others (8.77%) receiving information weekly. However, some respondents reported difficulty receiving regular information.

A total of 89.58% of respondents stated that they do not have current access to COVID-19 relief funds.

Q26 Are museums in your region being included in national conversations about COVID-19 relief?

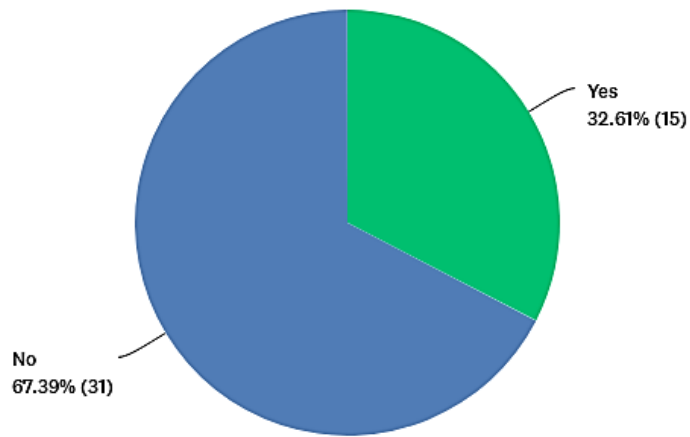


Figure 12. Inclusion of museums in national conversations about COVID-19 relief (n = 46).

Note: 12 people did not respond to this question.

Most respondents who answered this question (67.39%) stated that their museums are not included in national conversations about COVID-19 relief.

Q27 What plans do you have in place for re-opening?

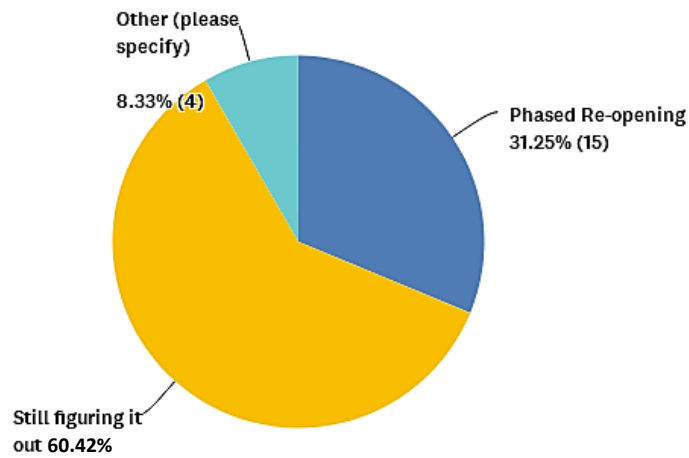


Figure 13. Plans for reopening (n = 48). *Note: 10 people did not respond to this question.*

Most respondents (60.42%) stated that they are still figuring out their plans for reopening. Slightly more than 30% are planning a phased reopening. Less than 10% of respondents shared other plans, including waiting for government- or university-led decisions, and the slowing down of summer activities and conferences.

Q31 If so, what topics would you like to be included (check all that apply):

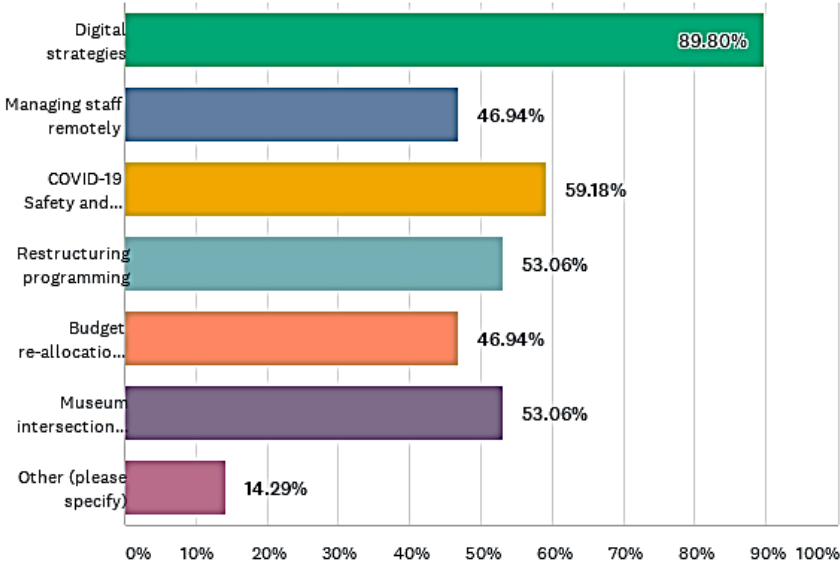


Figure 14. Professional development training requested (n = 49) *Note: 9 people did not respond to this question.*

All respondents expressed interest in virtual webinars or symposiums on the impact of COVID-19 on museums and cultural organizations (49 respondents answered this question). Of the topics listed, most respondents expressed interest in more than one topic including: digital strategies (89.80%); COVID-19 safety and health practices upon reopening (59.18%); restructuring programming (53.06%); museum intersections with internet access as a human right (53.06%); managing staff remotely (46.94%); and budget reallocation and restructuring (46.94%).

Appendix

Participating Institutions

1. Amuseum Naturalis, St. Martin
2. Barbados Museum & Historical Society, Barbados
3. Cap Nord, Martinique
4. Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts, USVI*
5. Casa Museo de los Santos Reyes, Puerto Rico
6. Casa Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier, Puerto Rico
7. Central Bank Museum, Trinidad and Tobago
8. Centro de la Imagen/Fundación Imagen, Dominican Republic
9. Centro Leon, Dominican Republic
10. Colección Ornitológica Phelps, Venezuela
11. Culture Division, Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts, Trinidad and Tobago
12. Domaine de Fonds Saint-Jacques, Martinique
13. Domaine de La Pagerie, Martinique
14. Fondation Françoise Canez Auguste/Parc Historique de la Canne a Sucre, Haiti
15. Fundacion 1403, Aruba
16. Fundación Ángel Ramos Centro de Ciencias y Visitantes del Observatorio de Arecibo, Puerto Rico
17. Fundacion Museo Arubano, Aruba
18. Gallery Alma Blou, Curaçao
19. Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, Puerto Rico
20. Kura Hulanda Museum, Curaçao
21. Le Centre d'Art, Haiti
22. Liberty Hall: The Legacy of Marcus Garvey, Jamaica
23. MUSA - Museo de Arte UPRM, Puerto Rico
24. Musée départemental Edgar Clerc, Guadeloupe
25. Musée du Panthéon National Haïtien, Haiti
26. Musée Ogier-Fombrun, Haiti
27. Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico
28. Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, Puerto Rico
29. Museo de Historia, Antropología y Arte, Universidad de Puerto Rico*
30. Museo de la Historia de San Germán Inc, Puerto Rico
31. Museo Fernando Peña Defilló, Dominican Republic
32. Museo La Periquera, Cuba
33. Museo Nacional de Costa Rica
34. Museo Olímpico, Puerto Rico
35. Museo Popol Vuh, Guatemala
36. Museum kas di pal'i maishi, Curaçao
37. Museum of Belize, Belize
38. National Archaeological Museum Aruba, Aruba
39. National Art Gallery of The Bahamas, Bahamas
40. National Gallery of the Cayman Islands, Cayman Islands
41. Palacio Virreinal Museo Alcázar de Colón, Dominican Republic
42. Saba Archaeological Center, Saba

43. Sociedad de Amigos del Museo Afroantillano de Panamá (SAMAAP), Panama*
 44. St. Christopher National Trust, Saint Kitts
 45. Turks & Caicos National Museum, Turks & Caicos*
 46. Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico
 47. University of the West Indies Museum, Jamaica
 48. VI Caribbean Cultural Center at the University of the Virgin Islands
 49. Walcott House, Saint Lucia*
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50. African American Research Library and Cultural Center, United States
51. Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator, United States
52. Haitian American Museum of Chicago, United States
53. James E. Lewis Museum of Art, United States
54. Pérez Art Museum Miami, United States
55. Vizcaya Museums and Gardens, United States

**Submitted more than one response*