

# Bringing *El Museo de Las Conceptas* to the Community: Developing a Youth Outreach Program



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**Bringing *El Museo de Las Conceptas* to the Community: Developing an  
Outreach Program for Children**

An Interactive Qualifying Project  
submitted to the Faculty of  
WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Bachelor of Science

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Date:  
02 March 2018

Report Submitted to:

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*This report represents work of WPI undergraduate students submitted to the faculty as evidence of a degree requirement. WPI routinely publishes these reports on its web site without editorial or peer review. For more information about the projects program at WPI, see <http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/Projects>.*

## **Abstract**

Globally, museums have escalated their outreach endeavors to forge meaningful relationships with their communities. We worked with *El Museo de Las Conceptas*, a museum with religious art work in Cuenca, to create linkages with the local community. To this end, we produced an interactive and creativity-based workbook with an accompanying chaperone guide for school children to promote involvement in the museum. We first gained an understanding of the important aspects of the museum through archival research, free listing, photo solicitation, and expert interviews, and presented preliminary designs of pages for the workbook to local teachers for feedback. Using the workbook and chaperone guide in conjunction with each other as a format for a school program can form beneficial linkages to children within the community. Additionally, we believe that the workbook and guide can be used as marketing materials for the museum to attract the younger generation beyond structured school trips.

## **Abstracto**

Globalmente, los museos han aumentado la cantidad de programas que promueven el alcance a la comunidad. Trabajamos con El Museo de las Conceptas, un museo religioso en Cuenca, cuya meta es establecer vínculos entre el museo y la comunidad. Para lograr esta meta, creábamos un libro de actividades creativas y una guía para mediadores que se pueden usar como el formato de un programa para niños para promover el alcance a la comunidad. Primero, trabajábamos para entender más profundamente el papel del museo en la comunidad Cuencana y completábamos entrevistas con profesionales en otros museos Cuencanos. Después de desarrollar unas actividades, presentamos estas ideas a dos maestras en discusiones interactivas. El libro y la guía pueden ser usados juntos para crear una experiencia del museo completa y educativa para niños, y también atraerán a los jóvenes en general.

## **Acknowledgments**

We would like to thank Dra. Monica Muñoz for allowing us to complete our project in the museum, for helping us organize interviews with museum experts and other professionals, and for aiding us with the development of our ideas. We would also like to thank the staff of *El Museo de Las Conceptas* for participating in some of our methodologies and for creating a supportive space where we completed our work. We would also like to thank all the personell of other Cuenca museums that we had the opportunity to interview. Lastly, we would like to extend our deepest gratitude to our advisors Professors Laureen Elgert and Gary Pollice for offering their complete support and guidance throughout our project.

## **Authorship**

**Mary Davis:** Mary contributed to the writing and editing of the final report. All members of the group helped develop the interview questions and participated in all of the interviews. The development and execution of the free listing and photo solicitation activities were completed by all members, as we always had two members to talk with the participants. All members helped in the development of both the workbook and guide, with the final formatting being completed by Mary.

**Shaun McCoy:** Shaun contributed to the writing and editing of the final report. All members of the group helped develop the interview questions and participated in all of the interviews. The development and execution of the free listing and photo solicitation activities were completed by all members, as we always had two members to talk with the participants. All members helped in the development of both the workbook and guide, with the final Spanish edits of our report, workbook and guide being completed by Shaun.

**Allison O'Neill:** Allison contributed to the writing and editing of our final report. All members of the group helped develop the interview questions and participated in all of the interviews. All of the archival research for these interviews were completed by the group, and Allison condensed the information to bring to the interviews and to put in the report. The development and execution of the free listing and photo solicitation activities were completed by all members, as we always had two members to talk with the participants. All members helped in the development of both the workbook and guide.

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## Executive Summary

*El Museo de Las Conceptas* is a museum in Cuenca, Ecuador with which we worked to create linkages with the community. Although the museum has only been open for 32 years, the associated *Monasterio de Las Conceptas* has functioned since the 16th century and is home to a convent of cloistered nuns. Both the monastery and the museum are rooted in the culture and history of the city, creating a uniquely and culturally immersive experience for its visitors. With this said, the rapidly evolving twenty-first century social landscape prompts a change in the way museums function as institutions, and more specifically, how they interact with their communities (Spiliopoulou, Mahony, Routsis, Kamposiori, & UCL Centre for Digital Humanities, U K, 2014). Museums now actively reach out to the community instead of waiting passively for visitors to enter (Gensler, 2014). As a modern museum, *Las Conceptas* has followed this global trend in electing to implement more community engagement programs to connect with their local community. Our project supports *Las Conceptas* in this role through the goal of bringing the museum to the community by means of an outreach program for children. We achieve this goal via the following objectives:

1. Gain an understanding of the museum's role and historical significance in the community.
2. Collaboratively design and produce a workbook based outreach program for children with teachers and education specialists.

We used archival research and the social science method of free listing to determine important themes in the museum and employed an exercise of photo solicitation to generate specific content related to these themes. With a complete understanding of the themes, we conducted interviews with museum professionals in Cuenca to better understand the characteristics of successful community outreach. Building upon the the principles extracted from our interviews, we began designing activities for children to complete and presented the preliminary designs to teachers for feedback.

Our findings suggest that a creatively-based workbook is the best option for our youth outreach program. Each of the interviewees stressed the importance of outreach programs in the Cuencano museum community, saying that it is the responsibility of museums to ensure the wellbeing of the community (Anonymous, Personal Communication, January 19, 2018).



Additionally, the interviewees all identified children as an important group to engage in such programs, citing specific programs targeting youth and even referencing a guide made specifically for younger visitors which uses simplified language. When working with children, museum professionals also highlighted that there should to be an aspect of creativity in order to keep the children engaged and reinforce the information learned in the museum in a way from which they will benefit most. An educational, creativity-based workbook, accompanied by a chaperone guide to be used in conjunction, could encompass all of the aspects described by the professionals which would create a complete, educational, and successful youth outreach program.

With the goal of creating a workbook for the museum, our methods inspired the workbook's content and format. For the content, we decided that each of the activity pages should relate to one of the three major themes of the museum we identified through archival research and free listing:

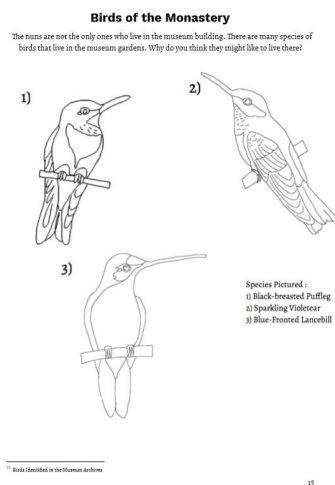
1. Syncretism and religious history: The syncretism evident in Cuencano religion and culture stems from two major historical conquests; the Inca conquest of the Cañari settlement, and the subsequent 16th century Spanish conquest. The mixture of these three cultures has created a unique Cuencano identity, which is exemplified in many of the art pieces in the museum.
2. The role of women in the monastery and the lives of the nuns: The origins of the convent have a feminist theme, as entering the monastery allowed women who lacked the protection of a man to live independently. Today, there is great interest in the lives of the nuns among community members, as their presence creates a sense of mystery within the museum.
3. The museum and its ambiance: Due to its unique colonial architecture, the museum possesses a uniquely peaceful atmosphere within the busy streets of *El Centro*. This peace is exemplified by the beautiful courtyard in the center of the museum, in which traditional medicinal flowers and native Ecuadorian hummingbird species can be seen.

To effectively present these themes, one interviewee explained to us that they use a “before, during, and after” model to create a complete experience for school children. This model employs the use of educational materials which are designed to be used, as the name

implies, before, during, and after the museum visit. This type of program helps to reinforce the information that the children learn and increases the likelihood that they will remember their experience (Anonymous, Personal Communication, January 26, 2018).

On this foundation, supplementing our workbook with a chaperone guide would reinforce our identified learning outcomes and serve as an effective youth program for *Las Conceptas*. The workbook pages are each assigned a designation of before, during, or after. The accompanying chaperone guide is to be used during the visit to provide information on each room in the museum and encourage the children to form connections to the workbook activities.

The workbook activity “The Birds of the Monastery,” as seen in Figure 1, represents the theme of the museum and its ambiance that we found to be significant through our free listing and photo solicitation activities. This activity allows the children creative freedom as they can color the birds in any way they see fit. Additionally, we suggest this activity be completed after the museum visit to reinforce the information learned. More examples of workbook pages can be found in section 4.3.1 of the report.

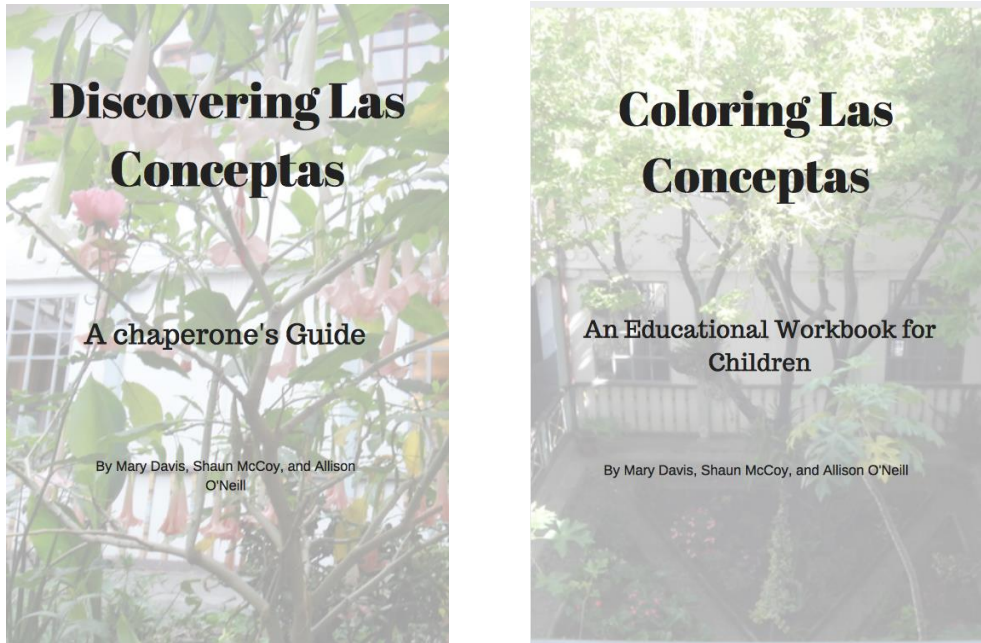


**Figure 1: The Birds of the Monastery Activity**

From our methodologies and analyses, we created the deliverables shown in Figure 2, which *Las Conceptas* can use as the basis for a school outreach program. The development of our deliverables is supported by the following assertions:

1. Categorizing the activities into three general themes ensures a complete educational experience for the students and allows for customization for teachers.

2. Formatting the workbook and guide after the “Before, During, and After” model will create a complete program for schools.
3. The workbook and chaperone guide can be used independently from a school program as marketing materials to attract younger visitors.



**Figure 2: The Workbook and Chaperone Guide**

In the school program, teachers can use the activities in the workbook to supplement their curriculum in the classroom and provide their students with context prior to the museum visit. The content of the workbook also allows for customizability since each of the themes to which the activities correspond are denoted in the table of contents. In this way, teachers can choose to highlight one theme which will supplement their curriculum over another.

The last recommendation is to have the workbook and chaperone guide available to the public as marketing materials. The activities can be made available for download on the museum’s website and for distribution at the main entrance to the museum to encourage visitors to bring their children. Finally, distributing the workbook and guide to local schools and tourist offices can serve as an effective marketing technique outside of the museum walls. We are hopeful that this combination will help *Las Conceptas* in their goal of creating linkages with the community; more specifically, with the younger generation.

## Resumen Ejecutivo

*El Museo de Las Conceptas* es un museo en Cuenca, Ecuador, con lo cual trabajamos para crear vínculos con la comunidad local. Aunque el museo solo ha estado abierto por 32 años, *el Monasterio de Las Conceptas* asociado ha funcionado hasta el siglo 16 y aloja un convento de monjas claustrales. Ambo el monasterio y el museo tienen raíces en la cultura y la historia de la ciudad, creando una experiencia inmersiva únicamente y culturalmente para los visitantes. A pesar de esto, la evolución del paisaje social del siglo XXI solicita un cambio en la forma por la cual los museos funcionan como instituciones y, más concretamente, cómo interactúan con sus comunidades (Spiliopoulou, Mahony, Routsis, Kamposiori, & UCL Centre for Digital Humanities, U K, 2014). Los museos actuales alcanzan a la comunidad frecuentemente en vez de esperar más visitantes (Gensler, 2014). Como un museo moderno, Las Conceptas ha seguido esta tendencia global en la elección de implementar más programas de participación de la comunidad para conectar con su comunidad local. Nuestro proyecto apoya este gol por traer el museo a la comunidad a través de un programa comunitario para los niños. Nosotros logramos este gol por los siguientes objetivos:

1. Obtener una comprensión del papel y significado histórico del museo en la comunidad.
2. Desarrollar y producir colaborativamente un programa basado en un libro de actividades para niños con maestros y profesionales de la educación.

Nosotros usamos investigaciones del archivo y el método de ciencias sociales de “free listing” para determinar temas importantes en el museo y empleamos un ejercicio de “photo solicitation” para crear contenido específico que relaciona a los temas. Con una comprensión completa de los temas, conducimos entrevistas con profesionales de los otros museos en Cuenca para entender más acerca de los aspectos de programas comunitarios exitosos. Construyendo sobre estos principios extraídos de las entrevistas, empezamos diseñando actividades que los niños pueden completar y presentamos nuestras ideas preliminares a maestros para comentarios.

Nuestros hallazgos sugieren que un libro basado en la creatividad sea la mejor opción para nuestro programa de alcance juvenil. Las personas a quienes les entrevistamos nos dijeron que los programas comunitarios tienen un papel de gran importancia en los museos Cuencanos, y es la responsabilidad de los museos para asegurar el bienestar de la comunidad (Anónimo, Comunicación Personal, 19 de enero, 2018). También nos dijeron que es muy importante

involucrar a los niños en los museos; hay muchos programas y materiales educativos diseñados específicamente para los jóvenes. En relación con trabajando con niños, los empleados de los museos nos dijeron que es importante darles a ellos oportunidades para expresarse por la creatividad. Un libro de actividades creativas acompañado por una guía para mediadores podrían utilizar toda de esta información para crear un programa comunitario completo, educativo, y exitoso para niños.

Para diseñar el programa, era necesario llegar a un formato, y también contenido, para el libro. El contenido consiste en actividades que tratan de uno de tres temas centrales acerca del museo:

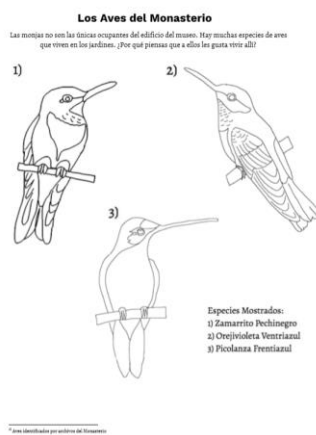
1. El sincretismo y la historia religiosa: El sincretismo que se ve en la religión y cultura Cuencana existe a causa de dos acontecimientos históricos muy importantes: la conquista de la gente indígena Cañari por las Incas, y la conquista de los españoles durante el siglo dieciséis. La mezcla de estas tres culturas ha creado una identidad Cuencana única, la que se puede ver en muchas de las obras del museo.
2. El papel de las mujeres en el monasterio y la vida de las monjas: los principios del monasterio tienen una base en el feminismo; entrar en el monasterio permitió que las mujeres sin protección varonil pudieran llevar una vida independiente. Hoy, hay un gran interés en la vida de las monjas entre los miembros de la comunidad, ya que su presencia crea un sentido de misterio dentro del Museo.
3. El museo y su ambiente: debido a su singular arquitectura colonial, el museo posee un ambiente único y tranquilo en las concurridas calles del centro. Esta paz es ejemplificada por el hermoso patio en el centro del Museo, donde se pueden ver flores medicinales tradicionales y especies nativas de colibríes ecuatorianos.

Para presentar estos temas de una manera efectiva, un entrevistado nos explicó que su museo utiliza un modelo de "antes, durante y después" para crear una experiencia completa para los niños de una escuela. Este modelo emplea el uso de materiales didácticos diseñados para ser utilizados, como su nombre lo indica, antes, durante y después de la visita al museo. Este tipo de programa ayuda a reforzar la información que los niños aprenden y aumenta la probabilidad de que recuerden su experiencia (Anónimo, Comunicación Personal, 26 de enero de 2018).

Sobre esta base, complementar nuestro libro con un acompañante guía podría reforzar nuestros resultados de aprendizaje y servir como un programa eficaz para Las Conceptas. Cada

página es asignada una denominación de antes, durante o después. El acompañamiento guía para mediadores se debe utilizar durante la visita a proporcionar información sobre cada sala en el museo y animar a los niños a formar conexiones con el libro de actividades.

La actividad del libro "los aves del monasterio," como se ve en la Figura 1, representa el tema del museo y su ambiente que nos pareció significativo a través de nuestras actividades de “free listing” y la actividad de fotos. Esta actividad les da a los niños cierta cantidad de libertad creativa, ya que pueden colorear las aves de cualquier manera. Además, sugerimos que esta actividad sea completada después de la visita al museo para reforzar la información aprendida durante la visita.



**Figura 1: Los Aves del Monasterio Actividad**

A partir de nuestras metodologías y análisis, creamos las entregas mostradas en la Figura 2, que Las Conceptas puede usar como la base para un programa de la participación escolar. El desarrollo de nuestras entregas es apoyado por las siguientes aserciones:

1. La categorización de las actividades en tres temas generales asegura resultados concretos de aprendizaje para los estudiantes y permite la personalización para los maestros.
2. El modelo de “antes, durante y después” para el libro y la guía reforzará los resultados del aprendizaje.
3. El libro y la guía puede ser utilizada independientemente de un programa escolar como materiales de publicidad para atraer a los visitantes más jóvenes.



**Figura 2: El libro de actividades y la guía para mediadores**

En el programa escolar, los maestros pueden usar el libro de actividades para suplir sus horarios en las aulas y proporcionar contexto a los estudiantes antes del viaje al museo. El contenido del libro de actividades también permite que los maestros personalicen el programa porque los temas de las actividades son indicados en la tabla de contenido. De esta manera, maestros pueden eligen a destacar un tema que suplirá sus horarios en vez de otro tema.

La última recomendación es tener el libro de actividades y guía para mediadores disponibles al público en la forma de materiales de publicidad. Las actividades podrían ser disponibles a la entrada del museo y para descargar en su sitio Web para atraer a visitantes jóvenes. Por fin, sugerimos que se distribuyan el libro y la guía a escuelas y oficinas de turismo locales. Esperamos que estos recursos ayuden el museo en creando vínculos con la comunidad, y más específicamente, los miembros más jóvenes.

## 1.0 Introduction

*El Museo de Las Conceptas* (hereby referred to as *Las Conceptas*) is a museum located in Cuenca, Ecuador that houses a variety of religious artworks in 21 different exhibits. The museum is a part of a functioning 16th century monastery and is home to a group of cloistered nuns. The museum opened its doors to the public on November 3, 1986, the annually and nationally celebrated independence day of Cuenca, which rooted the museum to the historical integrity of the city. The original goal for the museum was “to communicate the history and importance of religion” to its patrons (*museodelasconceptas.com*). This exemplifies what all museums strive to achieve: to provide reliable information to all visitors and to create a better understanding of history, nature, and the human experience (American Association of Museums Committee on Education, 2002).

The rapidly evolving twenty-first century social landscape has prompted a change in the way museums function as institutions, and more specifically, how they interact with their communities. In the wake of the social media era, the traditional approaches museums take have diminished in success. This shift in communication warrants a shift in museums’ strategies, instead taking an audience-oriented approach (Spiliopoulou, Mahony, Routsis, Kamposiori, & UCL Centre for Digital Humanities, U K, 2014). Modern museums actively reach out to the community instead of waiting passively for visitors to enter (Gensler, 2014). Museums now aim to give their visitors a more active role, with many electing to implement more community engagement programs to connect with locals and more deeply integrate themselves within their communities. A study has shown that museums who employ cultural engagement strategies see an increase in visitation and overall interest (Spiliopoulou, Mahony, Routsis, Kamposiori, & UCL Centre for Digital Humanities, U K, 2014).

The broader goal of *Las Conceptas* is to develop links with the surrounding community. Upon this foundation, we identify our own goal for the project: to bring the museum to the community by means of an outreach program for children to promote community engagement. We achieve this goal via the following objectives:

1. Gain an understanding of the museum’s role and historical significance in the community.



2. Collaboratively design and produce a workbook based outreach program for children with teachers and education specialists.

With these objectives, we are able to catalyze the process of bringing the museum to the community, which will create mutually beneficial linkages between the two.

## **2.0 Background**

In this section we discuss the role of museums today and how community outreach programs support this role. We also provide information that supports our decision to develop a creatively based outreach program with children as the target audience. In addition, we outline the history of *Las Conceptas* and the city of Cuenca to build a context for the major themes we chose to highlight in our program.

### **2.1 Museums and Community Engagement**

Museums today are most often associated with preservation of art and public education, both of which are important functions (Hein, 2004). What is lesser known about museums is that, with an emphasis on community engagement and public education, museums today can create meaningful relationships with the communities they serve as well as with each visitor (Ovenden & Wilkinson, 2004). Communities, by definition, encompass groups of people in a shared space with shared beliefs, interests, and investments (Macdonald, 2010). Museums play an important social and cultural role in their communities, housing the embodiments of heritage, which lends to a unique ability to foster unity among people of varying backgrounds (DSP-Groep, 2011). Through their architecture and exhibits, museums communicate the essence of the heritage of a group of people to the outer public (Crooke, 2008). These links to heritage correlate to community engagement which revolves around routine activities, forging an integral relationship. From these linkages, the heritage of the community becomes intertwined with the museum through its programs (Watson & Waterton, 2010). This connection fosters a trusting relationship between the community and the museums, creating a unique opportunity to establish new connections between groups of people (Garcia, 2012).

### 2.1.1 Youth involvement in museums

One way in which many museums establish these connections is by developing relationships with the youngest members of the community. Ubiquitously, there are efforts to utilize museums' educational value to augment children's knowledge of the world around them, aiding in their appreciation and understanding of science, history, art, and religion, among other topics. Museums have found it particularly beneficial to engage children because of museums' uniquely immersive environments which facilitate an atmosphere that allows for learning and exploration that children may not experience elsewhere. For example, many museums promote inquiry-based learning which stimulates the investigation of individual curiosities. When children are introduced to an art piece or artifact, they are naturally curious and are often able to relate themes to their previous knowledge and experiences. Furthermore, museums can often be used as an educational tool supplemental to traditional academia. Museums present information in a different way than in a typical classroom setting and may introduce children to topics before they learn them from their teachers (Munley 2012).

This supplementarity is also manifested in some outreach programs which see museums and schools partnering; for example, the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton, Virginia offers modular, customizable programs in which teachers can select themes of a large variety that complement their current lesson plans (Frontier Culture Museum, n.d.). Similarly, the Center of Science and Industry (COSI) in Columbus, Ohio works with a local urban school to use field trips to the museum, in-class presentations, school wide assemblies, and after school activities to augment the science curriculum (Wojton, 2009).

### 2.1.2 Why do workbooks work?

One method that museums employ to engage children is the utilization of creative activities for the purposes of education and entertainment. For example, as coloring books have become more popular, a global social media campaign called #ColorOurCollections has entered the museum community (Colman, 2017). Through this initiative, museums create free online coloring books for the community to enjoy. Institutions such as the Smithsonian and Philadelphia's Mutter Museum have participated in this campaign (Colman, 2017).

Studies show that coloring books in particular may be especially beneficial educational tools for children; when children are allowed to color a complex arrangement in a coloring book

it leads to increased novelty in subsequent free drawing activities (Randall, 1981). Additionally, coloring books can help children develop fine motor skills and an increased attention span, as well as increased self esteem (DLTK, 2018).

Beyond employing exclusively coloring exercises, many institutions have elected to use workbooks with a variety of activities with the specific goal of community engagement and educating children. Aggregates Manager, a quarry management company based in the midwestern United States, utilizes both a coloring book and a workbook in a community outreach program directed towards children. Through these interactive activities, children learn about the complex processes of construction material manufacturing in the region in a way that draws connections to their daily lives (Aggregates Manager, 2018). Additionally, The Field Museum in Chicago, Illinois utilizes worksheets and other activities to improve the quality of students' experiences at the museum. They also offer online worksheets which are available to teachers and can be used for any of the exhibits at the museum and to supplement any curriculum (The Field Museum, n.d.). The Museum of Science and Industry, also in Chicago, offers online resources to help the students better understand the exhibits in the museum. The museum offers "exploration guides" for both the chaperones and the students, as well as classroom lessons that students complete before or after the visit, as to make the most of the experience. The guides for the chaperones give important talking points to enhance the museum experience for the children, and the student exercises include hands on activities to help the students think critically about the exhibits (Museum of Science and Industry Chicago, n.d.).

## **2.2 *Las Conceptas* in the Cuencano Community**

Both *Las Conceptas* and the city of Cuenca have rich histories to draw from when determining educational themes to engage children. *Las Conceptas* has its foundations in *el Monasterio de Las Conceptas*, whose nuns are a part of the Order of the Immaculate Conception, established in Cuenca in 1599 (Cuenca High Life, 2015). The museum occupies what was once an attached infirmary which served the monastery (Cuenca Dispatch, 2017). The museum today still houses cloistered nuns, who actively participate in the museum despite living in solitude ([museodelasconceptas.com](http://museodelasconceptas.com)). For as long as the monastery has functioned, the nuns have created religiously themed art pieces, which are now displayed throughout the 21 exhibits in the museum ([museodelasconceptas.com](http://museodelasconceptas.com)). The continued presence of nuns on the premises preserves the

vitality of a uniquely feminist agenda which has its roots in an era where it was considered ahead of its time. Upon the foundation of the monastery, the convent was seen as a refuge for women who lacked masculine protection. The cloistered nature of the nuns also adds to a certain air of mystery which lingers within the museum walls.

From its rich cultural history, Cuenca has developed an identity comprised of a unique combination of three distinct cultures, the Cañari, the Inca, and the Spanish, a legacy partially preserved in the exhibits at *Las Conceptas* ([museodelasconceptas.com](http://museodelasconceptas.com)). The city has history dating back to 500 AD with the Cañari settlement of Guapondelig. During the subsequent centuries, the rule of the indigenous peoples fell under Inca, and later Spanish, control (Sills, 2004). Cuenca achieved independence from Spain on November 3rd, 1820 and *Las Conceptas* opened its doors on this same day in 1986 (Castleman, 2011 and [museodelasconceptas.com](http://museodelasconceptas.com)).

The city of Cuenca became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1999, partially due to its historical architecture, which is exemplified in the monastery. Cuenca preserves many examples of neo-classical Greek and Roman structures from its past. Recently, there have been efforts on the part of the city to make readily available to its resident's historical analyses of each of Cuenca's *barrios* (neighborhoods) in order to promote a better understanding of the city's historical significance (Fiorini, 2017).

### **3.0 Methods**

The goal of this project is to bring *Las Conceptas* to the community by means of an outreach program to promote community engagement which teaches children about major themes present throughout the museum. We used human centered design (HCD) when formulating our methods. Within this framework there are three integral phases; inspiration, ideation, and implementation (IDEO, 2015). This framework is the best way to achieve our goal since we want to create a community outreach program that caters to the desires of the target audience (children), a principle which lies at the very core of the HCD model. To achieve our goal we identified two objectives:

1. Gain an understanding of the museum's role and historical significance in the community.

2. Collaboratively design and produce a workbook based outreach program for children with teachers and education specialists.

Our methods span the first two phases of the HCD framework, and it is our hope that the museum will proceed with implementation after our departure, utilizing our deliverables.

### **3.1 Understand the Museums Role in the Community**

To better understand which aspects of the museum its attendees find most meaningful, we used a free listing exercise with visitors upon exit from the museum. We asked participants to write down everything that came to mind when they thought of their experience at *Las Conceptas* (see Appendix A). The frequency of words or phrases in the lists and how early in the list it was mentioned were the two factors we used to analyze this data.

To extract more information, and create content for the workbook, we conducted an exercise of photo solicitation within the museum (see Appendix B). We decided that this activity would yield the best results if completed by the museum employees, since they have a vast body of knowledge of the artwork *Las Conceptas* houses. We provided the employees with a camera and asked them to take pictures of art pieces or other aspects of the museum and its scenery which they felt well represent major themes; syncretism, the role of women, and the peaceful atmosphere of the museum. We then asked participants to explain their choices.

These methods are both related to the overarching method of immersion, which was a dynamic and continuous process during which we gained an understanding of the museum itself and its place within the city of Cuenca to be able to move forward in creating an effective workbook.

### **3.2 Collaboratively Design a Program**

Through the methods of objective one, we developed a deeper understanding of the role of *Las Conceptas* in relation to the city and community. To create an effective and engaging workbook, we identified major motifs within *Las Conceptas* which could serve as unifying themes for our workbook through speaking with our sponsor and archival research (Schmidt, n.d.). We developed preliminary ideas about the major themes of syncretism and the role of

women within the museum, and then researched the topics in the archives of the museum, as well as in the library at the University of Cuenca.

The information gained in the archival research phase prepared us for our next method; expert interviews. We used structured interviews with professionals in four other Cuencano museums to better understand the attributes of successful community outreach programs and the role of *Las Conceptas* in the city of Cuenca (IDEO, 2015). In these interviews, we focused on the museums' community outreach programs and what the interviewees defined as success in these programs (see Appendix C). We also asked them how they viewed the role of *Las Conceptas* within the Cuencano museum community and to describe the aspects of the museum which they thought could be highlighted in our workbook.

From the information gained through all our previous methods, we began creating preliminary designs for the workbook pages. To aid in our design of the workbook pages, we consulted a graphic design student at the University of Cuenca. We then brought these pages to interviews with teachers from the surrounding area (see Appendix D). This method consisted of conversations with the teachers regarding their thoughts on the effectiveness of the workbook materials in relation to the goals of educating and engaging children. Figure 3: shows an example of a preliminary design for an activity that we presented to the teachers for conceptual feedback and the final rendering of the activity by the graphic design student.



**Figure 3: Preliminary and Final Design Example**

## **4.0 Results and Analysis**

This section discusses the findings of our methodologies and their respective analyses, which affirm the benefits of creating an interactive workbook for the museum as well as solidified major themes for the organization of the workbook.

### **4.1 Developing an Interactive Workbook for Children**

Our idea to create an interactive workbook for children as a community outreach endeavor was well-received in discussions and interviews with museum professionals. In this section, we outline the progression of results which led us to this specific format for a community outreach program. We also discuss justifications for the recommended organization of the workbook activities in relation to each other.

#### 4.1.1 Cuencano museums represent the Cuencano community

In many of our interviews, we gained a deeper understanding of what exactly being an active and contributing member of the community means to museums as institutions. One museum director emphasized museums' responsibility to contribute to the cultural and overall well-being of the city. They want people to feel not just that they are visitors to the physical space the museum occupies, but that they are a part of the cultural legacy that the institution preserves. This notion creates a complete museum experience that is more profound than simply contemplating the exhibits it houses (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 19 January 2018).

Education is a duty of museums, defined as the sharing of each person's unique knowledge. Additionally, museum programs completed outside of its walls are invaluable because learning can take place anywhere; museums can function as schools and vice-versa. In these partnerships, the community, collectively, plays the role of the teacher, and the museum and its surrounding neighborhood are synonymous, indistinguishable entities (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 22 January 2018).

#### 4.1.2 Educating youth is a priority

The expert interview results indicate that children are a desirable audience for many community outreach endeavors. For example, in one museum, children are the biggest priority in

terms of demographics of engagement. This museum utilizes a specific informational guide about its exhibits geared towards a younger audience which is less fact-heavy than the guide typically distributed to adult visitors (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 26 January 2018). Another museum professional said that the children's programs are the "stars" of the museum's community outreach ventures (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 22 January 2018).

There are specific concerns which must be kept in mind when designing for children. In all community outreach programs, but especially in those aimed at children, it is important to give participants something to remember to ensure that they take something that they perceive as valuable away from the experience (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 26 January 2018). One interviewee commented that, when designing programs, we cannot expect things to fit into specific guidelines and it is necessary to use trial and error and the scientific method to arrive at what works best to accomplish the overarching goal. Having rigid expectations does not lend well to youth-targeted endeavors, as children will often "go off-script," and do as they see fit rather than what the activity or situation originally intended (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 22 January 2018). Similarly, it is important to design activities with children in mind, attempting to maintain an air of excitement around the museum as opposed to creating material which will cause children to view their visit as a chore or assignment that they reluctantly complete out of obligation (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 26 January 2018).

It is also necessary to give children creative freedom to benefit fully from the activities they are doing; when they are able to create something themselves, it gives them a sense of security which can be reinforced by praising their efforts. It is imperative to include themes relevant to the present in programs to keep children's interest despite the subject of museum education frequently being the past (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 26 January 2018).

#### 4.1.3 Creativity is key

In addition to educating children through outreach programs, many museums emphasize creativity as an enticing and culturally immersive medium for accomplishing their pedagogical motives. In learning about other museums' past community outreach endeavors, we found examples of salsa and hip-hop dance, choral music, and the crafting of graffiti and murals all as central instruments to accomplish the programs' cultural learning outcomes. In another program,



children could color renderings of art pieces which were part of a temporary exhibition (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 19 January 2018).

#### 4.1.4 The “before, during and after” model

During one of our interviews with a museum professional, we also received inspiration in relation to a format we could follow to create a complete program experience as opposed to a standalone workbook. The interviewee explained that their museum uses a model which utilizes educational materials for children which are designed to be completed before, during, and after a visit to the museum. This model has had great success in reinforcing museum learning outcomes and the format can be applied to almost any outreach endeavor (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 26 January 2018).

## **4.2 Highlighting Themes Present Throughout *Las Conceptas***

It is necessary to draw on the unique elements of a museum in its community outreach programs. In interviews with museums directors, many emphasized that *Las Conceptas* is a unique environment serving to preserve the strong religious tradition within the city and is thus very well-positioned to relate cultural history effectively (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 19 January 2018). In addition to religious history, the building preserves colonial architecture and the plants in its gardens keep alive the tradition of the utilization of herbal medicine. One interviewee stated that *Las Conceptas* is already very well connected to the community, but those under the age of 40 or so are much less likely to be aware of its influence or pay it a visit (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 26 January 2018). Another said that, in general, the quality of a museum visit matters more than the quantity of visitors it receives, and it follows that the “delicate” history and architecture found at *Las Conceptas* are not necessarily meant to draw in or handle a large visitation volume as a main goal. One experiences a unique environment when visiting *Las Conceptas* due to the beauty of its silence and the consequent contemplative sentiment it invokes (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 26 January 2018).

During a guided museum tour with our sponsor, she highlighted the major themes of the syncretism of the Cañari, Inca, and Spanish cultures to create a unique Cuencano identity as well as the feminist nature of the monastery. Our subsequent free listing activity with museum visitors revealed that participants most often remembered and cared to comment on the peaceful

atmosphere one experiences within the walls of *Las Conceptas*. We extracted three major themes of the museum, which will be explained in the subsequent sections; syncretism and religious history, the role of women in the monastery and the lives of the nuns, and the peaceful atmosphere of the museum.

#### 4.2.1 Syncretism and religious history

One of the questions asked in the interviews with museum professionals was “How do you highlight the union of the three cultures of Cuenca: the Cañari, the Inca, and the Spanish?” (see Appendix C). One interviewee emphasized that the mixture of the three cultures is “very personal,” as it is an integral component of the Cuencano identity (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 22 January 2018). From her emotional response to the question, we believe that this theme is very important.

Our archival research indicates that the indigenous Cañari people were the first to occupy the region which comprises modern-day Cuenca (Halberstadt, 2015). It is important to consider the cultural evolution of Ecuador’s indigenous people during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the period prior to the establishment of the foundations of *Las Conceptas* (Sills, 2004). Historically, the livelihood of the indigenous people drew from agriculture and their religion consisted of worshipping the earth goddess, *Pachamama*, and the “spirits of the land.” The indigenous people found themselves under Inca control during the fifteenth century, and assumed the status of the working class within the complex socioeconomic workings of the vast Incan empire. This surrender of self-autonomy also extended to religious beliefs, as they began to worship the Inca rulers as physical manifestations of the sun god (Sills, 2004).

The Spanish arrived on the South American continent in 1532 and overthrew the Inca ruler, Atahualpa, and assumed control of his people. Along with Spanish rule came Roman Catholic missionaries and ideologies, a process which began “Christianization” of the indigenous people (Sills, 2004). This melding of indigenous religion and Christianity is an example of the religious syncretism which is seen today as part of the unique Cuencano identity and is exemplified in many of the exhibits in *Las Conceptas* ([museodelasconceptas.com](http://museodelasconceptas.com)).

Through our photo solicitation, the employees of the museum explained the cultural significance of many details within the artwork in the museum. For example, in *Risco*, seen in Figure 4, a depiction of the nativity scene, above Jesus is a sun, which is traditionally an Inca

symbol; however, in the Spanish tradition, Joseph and Mary followed a star to Bethlehem. Additionally, in the painting *El Buen Pastor (con Donante)*, seen in Figure 4, the style in which Jesus’s face is rendered is traditionally Spanish, but the manner in which Jesus holds the lamb over his shoulders is distinctly Inca. Finally, in the painting *La Virgen de la Merced*, seen in Figure 4, painted by a nun of the monastery, the Ecuadorian hummingbird represents the indigenous cultures, among many Spanish details.



**Figure 4: Photo Solicitation Responses for Syncretism**

*El Buen Pastor (con Donante), El Risco y La Virgen de la Merced*

#### 4.2.2 Femininity in the monastery and the lives of the nuns

Although the idea of having cloistered nuns does not at first seem to be in line with feminist ideology at its core, the history of the museum and the convent have feminist foundations. By means of their role in the convent, the nuns of *Las Conceptas* “were able to create a space that was simultaneously detached from the patriarchy of colonial society and ingrained in the social, ethnic, and religious ideals of that society” (Nimmo, 2003). Many of the women who entered the convent in its early years were unwed or otherwise lacked the protection of a male figure. By entering the convent, these women could live a fulfilled life without the obligations that would be brought onto them by marriage.

One of the museum professionals advised that we highlight the mysterious feel of the museum by teaching about the cloistered nuns of *Las Conceptas*, and indicated that the people of Cuenca tend to be unaware of the existence of the cloistered convent (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 26 January 2018). In general, the lives of the nuns today is a topic of interest for many people in the Cuencano community.

During our photo solicitation activity, we determined which specific pieces of artwork and aspects of the museum we could highlight in our program to emphasize this theme. One museum employee took a picture of the painting “*La Virgen de La Merced*,” explaining that this work represents the role of women in the monastery because the painting was created by a nun of the *Las Conceptas* convent centuries ago. Additionally, Mary is one of the patron saints of the monastery. Another participant took a picture of a photograph depicting a nun sitting solemnly, and explained that the work represents this theme because it evokes the uniquely peaceful and contemplative life the nuns lead within the convent. Both responses can be seen in Figure 5.



**Figure 5: Photo Solicitation Responses for The Role of Women**

*La Virgen de la Merced y Fotorafo por Gustavo Landivar*

#### 4.2.3 Peace and tranquillity: *el ambiente del Las Conceptas*

*Las Conceptas* has a very unique environment, partially due to its several medicinal and herbal gardens, which create a peaceful and almost meditational atmosphere for visitors. The museum fosters a profoundly silent ambience, even though its central location within the city would lead one to believe otherwise. These are just a few things that we noticed during our initial tour of *Las Conceptas*, but it appears we are not the only ones to take note of this.

Through our free list exit activity, we saw a common theme among almost all responses was “*la paz*” or “*tranquilidad*,” meaning peace and tranquility. Figure 6 shows all of the responses that we received during our free-listing activity. In the word cloud shown in Figure 6,

the words get larger with increasing frequency in the lists. “Paz” is the largest word because it had the most frequent response.



**Figure 6: Free Listing Responses**

*Word Cloud and Statistical Analysis*

Although we only received a total of seven responses, the data demonstrated a definite pattern and thus solidified that the museum’s environment is an important theme. These results demonstrate that when people visit *Las Conceptas*, the environment as a whole proves perhaps more remarkable than any singular art piece or strictly visual stimuli. In addition to the frequency of these words, they were often towards the top of the list, with the median rank of “*la paz*” being number one (see Appendix A). This suggests that, not only is the tranquil and peaceful environment captivating, but it also the most prominent and memorable aspect of *Las Conceptas* in the eyes of many of its visitors.

To help us discern what aspects of the museum elicit such responses, we employed a photo solicitation activity with several of the museum’s workers (see Appendix B). Many participants chose to take pictures of the gardens as a representation of what engenders this peaceful environment, as seen in Figure 7. One employee told our group that the gardens in the museum reminded him of home. Many Ecuadorian homes have a central patio with a garden that is similar to the gardens in the museum. The gardens allow for a contact with nature that is unique to *Las Conceptas*.



**Figure 7: Photo Solicitation Responses for the Peaceful Environment**

*Los Jardines*

### 4.3 Creating a Workbook and Program

We entitled our workbook “Coloring *Las Conceptas*: An Educational Workbook for Children.” The justifications for the suggested time periods during which the activities are designed to be completed are outlined in Table 1. The theme to which each activity corresponds are indicated next to the title of the activity. Those denoted with (S) correspond to syncretism and religious history, (N) the role of women in the monastery and the lives of the nuns, and (A) to the ambiance of the museum.

**Table 1: The “before, during and after” Model as Applied to our Workbook**

<b>Time to be Completed</b>	<b>Example Pages (see Appendix E)</b>	<b>Justification</b>
Before the Visit	The Daily Routines of the Nuns (N) The Location of the Museum (A) Who can Enter? (S)	Provides context for and get students thinking about the history of the museum. Provides a basis of knowledge to build upon after arriving at the museum.
During the Visit	The Role of the Monastery (N) Search and Find in Risco (S) The Plants in the Museum Gardens (A)	Encourages attentive observation of important museum exhibits and aspects and provide entertaining opportunities for creative freedom during the tour.
After the Visit	Birds of the Monastery (A) Dress Saint Michael (S) Typical Treats in the Monastery (N)	Reminds students of what they learned at the museum. Encourage critical analysis of learning outcomes in relation to the central themes.

Following the “before, during and after” program model we learned about in our interviews, we created a chaperone guide to supplement our workbook and enhance the children’s museum experience (see Appendix F). Though there are materials currently available to help explain the exhibits in the museum, many are not suitable for children; much of the language is complex and the material the museum presents is too mature for children to understand (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 26 January 2018). The guide can be used in conjunction with the workbook or stand alone. Its main purpose is to highlight important information about each of the exhibits in the museum. It also functions to draw connections between exhibits and workbook activities through the included workbook suggestions.

#### 4.3.1 Designing workbook activities

During many of our interviews, museum professionals emphasized the community’s interest in the cloistered nuns of *Las Conceptas*, and we saw fit to include information about their lives in the workbook as part of the role of women theme. This is most strongly reflected in the activity page “Daily Routine of the Nuns,” which asks children to write out their own daily routine, guess how the nuns spend their time in the convent from day to day, and then compare their work to the actual schedule of the nuns, as seen in Figure 8. We saw this as a way to make more accessible to the public, and specifically children, an aspect of the museum that may have previously seemed intimidating or confusing due to a lack of information. This also highlights the importance of the nuns and hopefully provides a new appreciation for them and their unique lifestyle to those who complete the activity. This activity is suggested to be completed before a visit to the museum in the context of a school outreach program. Having this context and background knowledge about the convent and how it functions is essential before fully appreciating the exhibits in the museum that are themed to convey the essence of the sacred cloister. The children will also be able to make connections between the information learned in this activity and the exhibits.

**The Daily Routine of the Nuns**

In the column on the left, write your daily routine.  
Now, imagine that you have just entered the monastery for the rest of your life to dedicate yourself to god.  
Write what you think your daily routine would be in the monastery in the column on the right.

<p>Your daily routine:</p> <p>In the morning</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>In the Afternoon</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>At Night</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>The Nuns' Daily Routine:</p> <p>In the Morning</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>In the Afternoon</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>At Night</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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<sup>2</sup> Information taken from *Historia del Monasterio por el Arquitecto Llover*

This is the daily routine of the nuns

**In the Morning :**  
 4:30 Wake up  
 5:00 Mental prayer  
 6:00 Prayer of the Liturgy  
 7:00 Mass  
 7:30 Breakfast  
 9:00 Prayer of the Liturgy  
 Work  
 11:30 Prayer of the Liturgy  
 12:00 Lunch  
 Visit the Most Holy

**In the Afternoon**  
 1:00 Free time  
 1:30 Silent Time  
 2:00 Prayer of the Liturgy  
 3:00 Manual Labor  
 5:30 Prayer of the Liturgy  
 6:30 Dinner  
 7-7:30 Recreation  
 Prayers and Rosary,  
 9:00 Go to Bed

How is the routine of the nuns different from what you thought? How is it different from your daily routine?

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<sup>4</sup> Drawing by Juan José Luján Rodríguez

**Figure 8: The Daily Routine of the Nuns Activity**

During a guided tour of the museum, our sponsor highlighted a large display of the nativity scene called “*Risco*” as an important art piece within the museum. This same piece was again mentioned during the photo solicitation as representing the syncretism of the Inca, Canari, and Spanish cultures, as discussed previously in section 4.2.1, syncretism and religious history. The elaborate design and the symbolism behind many of the details of the work inspired the creation of the “Search and Find in *Risco*” activity for the workbook, as seen in Figure 9. In this activity the children are asked to find various aspects within the work, such as eleven angels with bodies and wings. At the bottom of the page, there is a creative writing activity in which the children are asked to write a short story about the scene. This workbook page was designed to be completed during the trip to the museum since the piece is so elaborate that finding the small details in a picture would be difficult. Additionally, completing this activity during the visit would ensure that the students pay close attention to a very important piece in the museum and think about the theme of syncretism.



### Search and Find in “Risco”



This art piece is called Risco. It was made by various anonymous artists in the 17th century. Look at it while you are in the museum and try to find the following things:

- 2 Mirrors with Sun Crowns
- 11 Cherubs
- 6 Angels with Bodies and Wings
- 6 Angels with Dresses and no Wings
- 7 Buildings with a Red Roof
- 6 Donkeys
- 2 Birds
- 1 Sun

Now, write a short story about what you think this scene represents.

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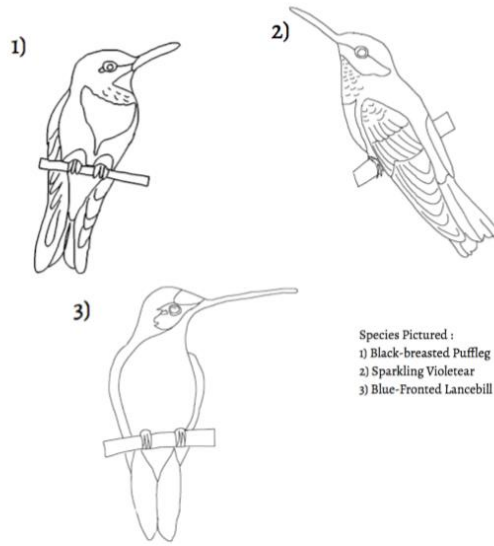
\* Information taken from Guía del Museo de las Conceptas 2009

### Figure 9: Search and Find in *el Risco* Activity

During our photo solicitation activity, we learned that the gardens and its natural elements are what create the peaceful environment of the museum. To represent the theme of the peaceful environment we decided to have a page that depicts the three types of hummingbirds that frequent the museum’s gardens. This page is called “Birds of the Monastery”, as seen in Figure 10, and is a creative coloring activity that allows the children to color the birds in any way they please. This activity is designed to be completed after the visit to the museum since ideally, the children would have seen the birds during their visit, and the coloring activity would prompt them to think about what they saw and reinforce the information.

### Birds of the Monastery

The nuns are not the only ones who live in the museum building. There are many species of birds that live in the museum gardens. Why do you think they might like to live there?



<sup>11</sup> Birds Identified in the Museum Archives

15

**Figure 10: Birds of the Monastery Activity**

## 5.0 Key Findings

Through our interviews with museum experts we solidified our idea of creating an interactive workbook for children as well as learned more about how children’s programs function. Museums have a cultural legacy that they want to share with each of their visitors. This environment allows for a unique learning experience for all, but especially for children. Additionally, the younger members of the community are less likely to be aware of *Las Conceptas* and its significance, making children an exceedingly important demographic to engage.

Museums allow more creative freedom than a normal classroom, and it is important to tap into this opportunity in museum’s community outreach endeavors. Children often do not want to follow a structured path, but instead like to follow their own path and “go off script” (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 22 January 2018). This is important to understand in the design of our workbook because we do not want it to feel like a chore or a task, but rather a fun

experience. Beyond providing entertainment, it is the hope of museums to create a continuously engaging experience which is often achieved through educational materials utilized before, during, and after the museum visit. An outline of the incorporation of these educational principles in the workbook is featured in Table 2.

**Table 2: Educational Principles in Action in the Workbook**

Educational Principles	Incorporation into the Workbook
Education is a priority	On each of the pages of the workbook will be either an educational activity or a short educational blurb about the museum or the monastery.
Activities done outside of the museum are valuable	The activities of the workbook should be done before, during, and after the visit to the museum.
Children must be allowed to have creative freedom	The prompts for the pages are not concrete, and many allow for creative responses. Additionally, the coloring pages will allow for artistic freedom.

The Cuencano community has a unique identity, described as *mestiza*, which refers to a mix of Cañari, Inca and Spanish cultural identities. The mixing of these cultures can be seen in many exhibits, which creates a deeply rooted connection between the community and *Las Conceptas*. In addition to syncretism, the unique feminist nature of the monastery was also a theme that emerged as significant. By entering the monastery, the women became free of any societal obligations and took charge of their own well being, which was not common during the era of the establishment of the monastery. This theme may not be exceedingly evident in the exhibits in *Las Conceptas*, but it emphasizes the unique social and cultural importance of the monastery and its nuns in a different light. Finally, through our free listing activity, we found that the peaceful and silent environment that the museum offers is alluring to its visitors. This is exemplified through the medicinal gardens as well as the unique architecture that allows for this silence despite the location of *Las Conceptas* in the busy city center.

## 6.0 Deliverables and Recommendations

Our project culminates in two deliverables: “Coloring *Las Conceptas*: An Interactive Workbook for Children” and “Discovering *Las Conceptas*: A Chaperone Guide,” both of which we produced in English and Spanish. As a result of our findings, we recommend that *Las Conceptas* adopt our designed program utilizing the workbook and supplementary chaperone guide as a format to coordinate class field trips to the museum. The following assertions support this broader recommendation:

1. Grouping workbook activities into major educational themes creates overarching learning outcomes which may act to supplement pre-existing school curriculums and allows for customization
2. Designating activities within the workbook to be done at specific points during the program process will reinforce museum learning outcomes throughout the experience
3. Making the workbook and chaperone guide available both on the museum’s website and at the museum entrance will generate interest in and increase the likelihood of visitation from families with young children

In our proposed program, a school would schedule a visit to the museum, and use both the workbook and the chaperone guide to ensure an educational experience. We make suggestions for which workbook pages should be done before, during, and after the museum visit. Completing activities before the visit to the museum will allow the students to have prior knowledge to draw upon when they arrive at the museum. Interactive activities to be completed during the museum visit prompt students to think critically about vital aspects of *Las Conceptas* while also maintaining a sense of creativity. It is also important to keep in mind that the students will only be in the museum for a short period, and not all of the activities can realistically be completed in that time frame. Completing activities after the visit will fortify the information learned while at *Las Conceptas* about the museum’s most important aspects.

We ensure that the three major themes are represented in each of these time periods. However, teachers can emphasize one theme to directly relate to their curriculum by having the students complete only select workbook pages if they so wish. The teachers can utilize the materials to be completed before and after the visit to supplement their curriculum in the

classroom. During the visit to the museum, the chaperone guide may also be utilized to point out important facts about the different exhibits within the museum, and the “during” activities are suggested to be completed at opportune moments in the museum tour.

We recommend that the museum utilize these deliverables as effective marketing techniques. Having both the guide and the workbook available in local tourist offices and schools could draw more parents and children to the museum. Additionally, following the same strategy as the #ColorOurCollections campaign, *Las Conceptas* could have some of the activities and coloring pages available on the museum’s website.

There is strong evidence to suggest that the combination of our workbook and guide will succeed. Other museums that have implemented analogous programs have become more involved in their communities, leading us to believe that *Las Conceptas* will have similar success. We are hopeful that this combination will help *Las Conceptas* in their goal of creating linkages with *el barrio* (the neighborhood) of which it is a part; more specifically, the younger generation of the Cuencano community.

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## **Appendix A: Free Listing**

### **Free Listing Prompt**

We are a group of college students from the United States and we are working on a project in conjunction with El Museo de Las Conceptas to develop a community outreach program. To help us better understand which aspects of the museum stand out most to its visitors, we ask that you please make a list below of words and/or themes that you may think of when contemplating your experience here today. Thank you for your participation!

## **Appendix B: Photo Solicitation Prompt**

In order to help us decide which aspects of the museum should be included in our program, please take some photos of various aspects of the museum. Each of these photos should show things that you believe well represent the themes of syncretism, the role of women, and the museum's peaceful and tranquil atmosphere.

## Appendix C: Interviews with Museum Professionals

Below is a list of the museums in Cuenca, with whose staff we conducted our expert interviews. Due to a confidentiality agreement, we are not able to disclose the names of those we interviewed.

Museo de Artes Modernas, 19 January 2018

Museo de Pumapungo, 22 January 2018

Museo de Remigio Crespo Toral, 26 January 2018

Museo de las Culturas Aborigenes, 26 January 2018

### Questions

Since we recorded the interviews in order to listen and translate the interviews we first read the following disclaimer:

This is an interview in order to help WPI students develop a school program for *El Museo de Las Conceptas*. We are going to ask you questions about your museum, your community outreach programs, and your thoughts about *El Museo de Las conceptas*. We do not see any risks associated with participating in this interview. The benefit of participating in this interview is that you will help us to create a community outreach program. This interview should take about thirty minutes. We are going to record this interview so that we are able to listen to your responses again at a later time. Only we will have access to the recording and we will keep the recording on our computers protected with a password. Records of your participation in this study will be held confidential so far as permitted by law. However, the study investigators, the sponsor or it's designee and, under certain circumstances, the Worcester Polytechnic Institute Institutional Review Board (WPI IRB) will be able to inspect and have access to confidential data that identify you by name. Any publication or presentation of the data will not identify you. It is important that you understand that this interview is voluntary and if you do not want to answer any question, it is not a problem. If you would like to stop the interview at any time, it is not a problem. Is everything clear?

1. What community outreach programs have you had in the past?
2. Which of these programs were most successful?
3. Do you have programs in which you work with kids?
4. What role do you think your museum has within the museum community in Cuenca?
5. What role do you think *Las Conceptas* has within the museum community in Cuenca?
6. Which aspects of *Las Conceptas* do you think could be highlighted in a community outreach program?
7. How do you highlight the union of the three cultures of Cuenca: the Cañari, the Inca, and the Spanish?
8. Can you explain the history of the building and how you integrate the history of the building into the museum?
9. Does religion play any role in your museum?
10. What do you see as the importance of the influence of the different cultures?

## **Appendix D: Interviews with Educational Specialist**

5 February 2018

7 February 2018

Since we recorded our interviews in order to listen and translate the interviews we first read the following disclaimer:

This is an interview in order to help WPI students develop a school program for *El Museo de Las Conceptas*. We are going to ask you questions about your museum, your community outreach programs, and your thoughts about *El Museo de Las conceptas*. We do not see any risks associated with participating in this interview. The benefit of participating in this interview is that you will help us to create a community outreach program. This interview should take about thirty minutes. We are going to record this interview so that we are able to listen to your responses again at a later time. Only we will have access to the recording and we will keep the recording on our computers protected with a password. Records of your participation in this study will be held confidential so far as permitted by law. However, the study investigators, the sponsor or it's designee and, under certain circumstances, the Worcester Polytechnic Institute Institutional Review Board (WPI IRB) will be able to inspect and have access to confidential data that identify you by name. Any publication or presentation of the data will not identify you. It is important that you understand that this interview is voluntary and if you do not want to answer any question, it is not a problem. If you would like to stop the interview at any time, it is not a problem. Is everything clear?

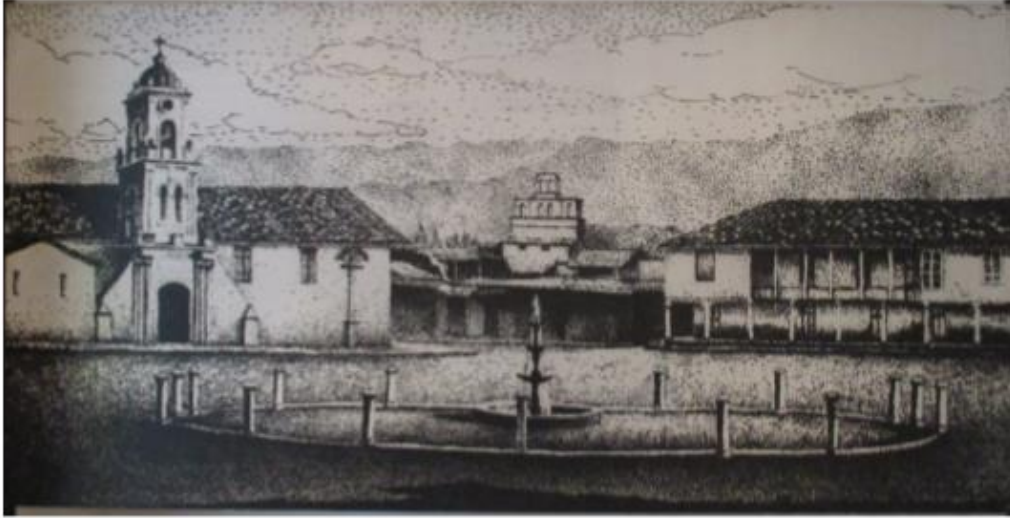
### **Questions**

1. Could you please describe your job and how you have worked with museums in the past?
2. How is working with children different from working with adults?
3. What are the best ways to engage children?
4. Do you think that an workbook to be completed before after and during the visit to the museum would be beneficial?
5. Which aspects of the museum do you think should be highlighted in our book?
6. Would you mind looking at the pages that we have designed and provide us feedback?

## Appendix E: Sample Workbook Pages

Full workbook, English and Spanish, submitted as a separate file with report.

### The Location of the Monastery



Before *el Museo de Las Conceptas* was created, *el Monasterio de las Conceptas* was established in the 16th century and has been home to many nuns. This painting in the museum shows the location of the monastery in relation to other significant buildings in Cuenca. Do you see the monastery? What buildings or features do you recognize?

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<sup>1</sup> Information taken from *Historia del Monasterio por el Arquitectura Lloret*

## The Daily Routine of the Nuns

In the column on the left, write your daily routine.

Now, imagine that you have just entered the monastery for the rest of your life to dedicate yourself to god.

Write what you think your daily routine would be in the monastery in the column on the right.

Your daily routine:

In the morning

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In the Afternoon

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At Night

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The Nuns' Daily Routine:

In the Morning

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In the Afternoon

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At Night

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<sup>2</sup> Information taken from *Historia del Monasterio por el Arquitectura Lloret*



## Who Can Enter?

The monastery is a sacred place, and in the past only religious figures and those that contributed to the building's and nuns' well-being were allowed to enter. Match the following descriptions to the drawings below, and after, circle those that you think were able to enter the monastery.

~Doctor~Museum Director~Grave Digger~  
Priest~Nun's Family~Baker~Handyman~Lawyer~Mason~



<sup>8</sup> Information taken from *Historia del Monasterio por el Arquitectura Lloret*



## The Role of the Monastery



This work is significant in relation to the founding of the monastery, as it represents a central theme, the role of women. Why do you think convents were established?

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<sup>4</sup> Information taken from *Guión del Museo de las Concepciones 2017*

## Search and Find in “Risco”



This art piece is called Risco. It was made by various anonymous artists in the 17th century. Look at it while you are in the museum and try to find the following things:

- 2 Mirrors with Sun Crowns
- 11 Cherubs
- 6 Angels with Bodies and Wings
- 6 Angels with Dresses and no Wings
- 7 Buildings with a Red Roof
- 6 Donkeys
- 2 Birds
- 1 Sun

Now, write a short story about what you think this scene represents.

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<sup>9</sup> Information taken from *Guía del Museo de las Concepciones 2017*

## Plants in the Gardens



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<sup>10</sup> Information taken from *Historia del Monasterio por el Arquitecto Lloret*  
Drawing by Elisa Gutiérrez

## Birds of the Monastery

The nuns are not the only ones who live in the museum building. There are many species of birds that live in the museum gardens. Why do you think they might like to live there?

1)



2)



3)



Species Pictured :

- 1) Black-breasted Puffleg
- 2) Sparkling Violetear
- 3) Blue-fronted Lancebill

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<sup>11</sup> Birds Identified in the Museum Archives

## Dress Saint Michael

Every year, the nuns who live in the monastery change the clothes on the statue of the Archangel Saint Michael. Now it is your turn! Color in his clothes and then put them on the drawing so he resembles the statue you saw in the museum.





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<sup>13</sup> Information taken from *Guión del Museo de las Conceptas 2017*.  
Drawing by Juan José Loja Rodríguez

## Typical Treats in the Monastery



This is a traditional kitchen which was used when this building was an infirmary for sick nuns. How is it similar to your kitchen? How is it different?

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<sup>17</sup> Information taken from *Historia del Monasterio por el Arquitecto Llovet*

Match the words with the pictures of the following treats that the nuns still make today!

Quesadilla



Merengue



Cookies



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<sup>18</sup> Information taken from *Historia del Monasterio por el Arquitectora Llovet*



## Appendix F: Sample Chaperone Guide Pages

This guide is designed to help chaperones bringing children to *El Museo de Las Conceptas* ensure that they have a fun, informative, and interactive visit to the museum. This guide has a companion workbook called “Coloring *Las Conceptas*” to create a complete experience. The authors of the guide and workbook have suggested activities that should be completed before, during, and after the visit to the museum. Although we provide these recommendations, the activities can be completed in any order and may be changed by temporary exhibitions. The guide can be used to provide the children with the most important information in each room of the museum. Use the “Suggested Activities” to reflect and discuss the works of art in each room and the activities in the workbook “Coloring *Las Conceptas*.” Each workbook page corresponds to one of three themes (with a letter shown at the end of each activity): syncretism and religious history (S), the role of women in the monastery (M), and the unique ambiance of the museum (A). Important talking points can be found throughout this guide corresponding to each theme, as well as workbook suggestions to reinforce these points.



## **Summary of Pages**

### **Pages to be Done Before the Visit**

- Museum Location (A)
- Toys (M)
- Daily Routine of the Nuns (M)
- La Virgen Legardiana (M)
- Who Can Enter the Monastery? (S)
- El Buen Pastor (con donante) (S)

### **Pages to be Done During the Visit**

- The Role of the Monastery (M)
- Search and Find in Risco (S)
- Plants (A)

### **Pages to be Done After the Visit**

- Birds (A)
- Encoded Messages (S)
- San Miguel (S)
- La Virgen del Merced (S)
- Word Search (S)
- La Virgen de la Anunciación (S)
- Treats (M)
- Make your Own Nativity Box (S)

## Overview of the Three Themes

### Syncretism

The city of Cuenca has history dating back to 500 AD with the Cañari settlement of Guapondelig. During the following centuries, the rule of the indigenous peoples fell under Inca control. The Inca culture did not completely eliminate the Cañari culture, but instead absorbed elements of it. Following the Inca, came the Spanish, who arrived in Cuenca in 1577. Cuenca achieved independence from Spain on November 3rd, 1820, a day celebrated each year as Independence Day. Interestingly enough, *Las Conceptas* opened its doors on this same day in 1986, almost 190 years later. From this rich cultural history, Cuenca has developed an identity comprised of a unique combination of three distinct cultures, the Cañari, the Inca, and the Spanish, also known as “Mestizo,” a legacy partially preserved in the exhibits at *Las Conceptas*. The “mixing” of the three cultures is the syncretism that can be seen throughout the museum. In several artworks, you can see aspects that represent the Cañari, Inca, and Spanish cultures.

### The Role of Women in the Monastery

When a woman wanted to enter the monastery, she had to be at least twelve years old and willing to spend the rest of her life dedicated to silence, prayer and contemplation, and chastity to Lord her God. Women brought their dowries; either in the form of money or property that was meant for their marriage, and this helped the financial flow of the monastery. Often, women would enter the monastery due to lack of masculine protection, which created an almost feminist nature of the monastery because women could take control of their own lives and not be dependent on anyone else. The role of women in the monastery and their daily lives is discussed more throughout this guide.

### Ambiance of the Museum

One of the unique aspects of *el Museo de Las Conceptas* is the unique medicinal gardens. These gardens are home to many medicinal plants and flowers as well as several different types of birds. The garden and the architecture of the building creates a peaceful and silent environment that is unique to the busy city center in which it is located.

## A Walk through the Rooms

### *Room 1: History of the Monastery*

*El Monasterio de Las Conceptas* was founded in 1599. It began with a single house and through years of construction in different phases, became the group of buildings it is today! The buildings of *El Monasterio* take up a whole city block! The building the museum is now in was once the infirmary for sick nuns. The museum opened its doors on November 3rd, 1986, the nationally celebrated Independence Day of Cuenca.

### **Workbook Suggestion**

Remind your students about the location of the museum in the city which they learned about in the **Location of the Monastery** activity page. Have them take a moment to be silent and listen, and they will hear the silence that exists within the walls of the museum even though it is in the middle of the city.

### *Room 2: Story of the Museum*

A wealthy Cuencana Woman, Doña Leonor, left her house to the monastery after she died. At the time, her house was considered the most beautiful in the city. The house still stands and is one of the oldest buildings in the city. The three daughters of Doña Leonor were also the first three nuns in the Convent! While in the monastery the nuns helped the monastery make money through baking and selling sweets, breads, and quesadillas.

### *Room 3: Religious Life*

In order to enter the monastery, women had to be at least twelve years old and would have to pass tests about their Christian faith, as well as tests for their physical and spiritual health. Once they had entered, they dedicated their lives to silence, fasting, confession, communion, prayer, and chastity to become consecrated in the Lord her God.

### *Room 4: The Virgin Mary*

This room contains various representations of the Virgin Mary and the different roles she played. It contains art created by nuns in the museum many years ago and serves as an example of how they viewed her as a model Catholic who deserved to be commemorated through art. In *La Virgen de la Anunciación*, she is being told by an angel that she has been chosen to be the mother of God's child. Our Lady of Mount Carmel shows Mary as a nun in the Carmelite order. Although she is an important figure in the Catholic religion, she was once a normal woman who had dedicated herself to God like the nuns of *Las Conceptas*. This room shows other depictions of the Virgin Mary, and her unique role in the Catholic religion is related mainly through the use of subtle symbolism in the art pieces.