



**E**very year since 1977, International Museum Day is organized worldwide around the 18<sup>th</sup> of May. The day is a time to raise awareness about how important museums are in the development of society. ICOM, the International Council of Museums, organizes the theme of the event that can last a day, a weekend, a week or even sometimes a month. From America to Oceania, including Africa, Europe and Asia, the international event is extremely popular. Participation in International Museum Day is growing among museums all over the world. In 2014, more than 35,000 museums participated in the event in over 140 countries. The International Council of Museums' aim is to get the world to recognize the importance of natural and cultural heritage. On this day, participating museums plan creative events and activities related to the International Museum Day theme. They engage with the public and highlight the importance of the role of museums in helping society and its development. The objective of International Museum Day is to raise awareness of the fact that 'museums are an important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of cultures and development of mutual understanding, cooperation and peace among peoples'. The International Museum Day theme is a way to explore how the world is changing and an opportunity for museums of all kinds to showcase their best achievements and newest innovations. The theme encourages us all to think about how museums will serve as a voice of reason regarding the world's most important issues.

## International Museum Day timeline so far

- 1977** In 1977, the museum community decided to create a special event, marking the official beginning of International Museum Day. The special day was adopted in 1977 during the General Assembly of ICOM in Moscow.
- 1992** Responding to increased participation in the event, ICOM suggested a theme for the first time in 1992. This first theme was *Museums and environment*.
- 2007** Museums in approximately 70 countries participated in the event in 2007. The theme for that year was *We are all responsible for universal heritage*.
- 2008** Twenty thousand museums in 90 countries participated in IMD in 2008.
- 2011** The theme was *Museums as agents of social change and development* and the first virtual museum event took place.
- 2012** About 30,000 museums in 110 countries participated in the celebration of International Museum Day.
- 2013** IMD celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> year and for the second time they held the European Night of Museums, an event which saw museums open all day and all night over the weekend.
- 2014** The theme was *Museum collections make connections*. The aim was to show how museum exhibitions not only have the ability to tell a story, but also to connect with the community through shared memory.

## 1 In pairs, discuss these questions.

- Would you like to take part in International Museum Day?
- What activities could people do to get involved?
- Do you think it's important to have a day dedicated to museums? Why / Why not?

## 2 Read the article and answer the questions.

- 1 Why was a day dedicated to museums created?
- 2 Who organizes the event's theme each year?
- 3 How does the article describe how museums are important?
- 4 How has the event grown over the years?

## 3 Write a short description about a museum in your town or city and the impact it has on society where you live.