

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Are Museum Professionals Happy? Exploring Well-Being Across Domains and in the Workplace**

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Within the museum field, it is widely acknowledged that museums can have a positive influence on public well-being. Little is known, however, about the well-being of the people who staff museums, which may influence museums' overall effectiveness and relationships with the public they serve. This research examines the subjective well-being of a group of museum professionals, particularly their workplace well-being, with the intent to start conversations in the field. Forty-four self-selecting participants from three Seattle museums completed the Happiness Initiative's well-being questionnaire, 13 completed a workweek diary study, and four participated in a facilitated discussion.

Overall, participating museum professionals had higher well-being scores than a large, preexisting opt-in sample, with strengths in intrinsic well-being and a weakness in time balance. Related to their jobs, participants mostly had positive well-being, with purpose-based tasks, free-choice working, and social cohesion particularly influencing their experiences. Finally, participants indicated that they value the topic of well-being and that others in the museum field should pay attention to it.

These findings have positive implications for the sustainability of the museum workforce but suggest the field needs to spend more time reflecting about factors that affect the well-being of museum professionals. In particular, when considering how to sustain and improve professionals' well-being for the long-term, it is recommended that the museum field focus on three commodities of well-being: time, agency, and purpose.

*Keywords:* subjective well-being, workplace well-being, museum professionals, critical museology, organizational psychology

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Andrea Michelbach through <http://mpwellbeing.weebly.com>.***