
Acknowledgements

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Finally, we would like to thank the staff and volunteers at the Northwest African American Museum as well as Brian Carter, Deputy Director and Director of Education, for welcoming our team into their museum and so enthusiastically participating in this evaluation.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this summative evaluation was to find out how visitors are using and learning from the *East by Northwest* exhibit at the Northwest African American Museum (NAAM) in Seattle, Washington. The exhibit tells the story of Seattle's Ethiopian community, highlighting the continuity of their culture and the contribution to our shared experience.

To do this, three methods were employed: 1) tracking and timing observations, 2) exit surveys, and 3) analysis of guestbook entries. A total of 188 visitors were included in this study. Data collection occurred during January, February, and March, 2010.

Main Findings

1. Where do visitors go and where do they spend their time in the *East by Northwest* exhibit? Do visitors stop at least once in all three “zones” of the exhibit?

- Visitors spent between 4.8 seconds and 35.9 minutes in the exhibit. The mean time in the exhibit was 6.5 minutes.
- The average sweep rate was 261.5 sq. ft./minute, indicating that visitors are moving slowly, stopping often, and spending more than a few seconds at each stop.
- Twenty-two visitors (46%) stopped in all three exhibit zones at least once.
- Thirty-seven visitors (77%) stopped in two exhibit zones at least once.
- Forty-six visitors (96%) stopped in one of the exhibit zones at least once.

2. Are visitors able to identify at least one reason Ethiopians came to the United States?

- Most visitors (76%) were able to identify at least one reason Ethiopians came to the United States.
- Political upheaval, the search for a better life, and opportunity were among the most frequently cited explanations.

3. Are visitors able to describe at least one custom that continues to play a role in the lives of Ethiopians in Seattle today?

- Most survey respondents (82%) were able to describe at least one custom that continues to play a role in the lives of Ethiopians in Seattle today.
- The customs visitors most frequently described were coffee ceremony, religion, and food.

4. Do visitors recognize the impact Ethiopia's geography has had on Ethiopian culture?

- When presented with several choices, the influence on Ethiopian culture visitors most often identified was religion, followed by landscape and coffee.

5. Do visitors see NAAM's attempt at an honest depiction of their experience in the exhibit?

- Because of a very small sample of visitors who identified as Ethiopian on surveys, we were not able to determine whether Ethiopian visitors saw NAAM's attempt at an honest depiction of their experience.
- When rating their opinions of the exhibit on a series of Likert scales, visitors indicated that they felt the exhibit was trustworthy, unbiased, and sincere.

6. Do Ethiopian visitors feel their experiences are valued by others?

- Because of a very small sample of visitors who identified as Ethiopian on either surveys or the guestbook, we were not able to determine whether Ethiopian visitors felt their experiences were valued by others.
- Some respondents who identified as Ethiopian recorded responses in the guestbook, such as: "Proud to be Ethiopian!!! Felt like I'm back home!!!" and "Good experience to see my roots."

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Introduction

This year was the first time the New Directions Project has worked with the Northwest African American Museum (NAAM) in Seattle, WA. Because the museum is so new, the New Directions Project felt it would be an opportunity to lay the foundations for a commitment to future evaluation at NAAM, and to reach out to new members of the museum community.

The Northwest African American Museum

Between 2001 and 2003 the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle helped NAAM develop and purchased the Colman School building, and the museum doors opened in 2008. The 19,000 square foot building currently includes spaces for temporary and permanent exhibitions, as well as education workshops and a heritage research library. The museum shares the building with the Urban League Village Apartments.

The museum houses four galleries. The Journey Gallery showcases the story of how African Americans arrived in the Northwest. The Northwest Gallery highlights African American experiences and culture in this distinct region of the country. The Legacy Gallery hosts a variety of events, exhibits, performances and lectures. Finally, the Café Gallery and foyer display the work of local and regional artists.

The East by Northwest Exhibit

We worked closely with Brian Carter, Deputy Director and Director of Education at NAAM, to design and implement the summative evaluation of *East by Northwest* (November 14, 2009 - October 3, 2010).

This temporary exhibition highlights the large Ethiopian community in Seattle in three zones: the history and native culture of Ethiopia, the journey of Ethiopian individuals to the United States, and the adaptation of the Ethiopian community in Seattle. Exhibit highlights included personal artifacts belonging to Ethiopian American immigrants, multimedia displays featuring cultural performances, and a to-scale replica of a traditional Ethiopian home called a *gojjo*.

NAAM worked with an advisory committee of individuals from the Ethiopian community to build a coherent and honest depiction of Ethiopian Americans. With the success of the *East By Northwest* exhibit, NAAM hopes to work with other community heritage groups to create exhibits that reflect their audience.

Literature Review

Before the evaluation of the *East by Northwest* exhibit was developed and executed, the team conducted a brief literature review in order to seek out best practices, especially in the areas of community-based museums and culturally sensitive evaluation. The annotations below summarize the team's findings.

Meluch, Wendy. *Kachemak Bay, Alaska: An Exploration of People and Places*. Rep. Visitor Studies Services, 2004.

The "Big Idea" of the exhibit *Kachemak Bay, Alaska: An Exploration of People and Place at the Pratt Museum* explored in this summative evaluation, was "the interplay of shaping and being shaped by our environment defines us."

This evaluation used pre- and post-test surveys of both area residents and travelers, as well as in depth questionnaires for community collaborators. Visitors learned about the culture and lives of Alaskan natives, and reflected on their own lives and "the human condition."

This study also showed that visitors gained some knowledge of how the landscape and geography affected aspects of the culture. Residents of the area demonstrated increased knowledge and interest in both the cultures being represented and their own cultures, and were inspired by area residents to increase their participation in community and civic life. Real stories told by real people helped visitors feel a personal connection to both the exhibit content and the community.

Falk, John H. "Factors Influencing African American Leisure Time Utilization of Museums." *Journal of Leisure Research* 27.1 (1995): 41-60.

The purpose of the study was to: 1) determine what variables influence African American family use/non-use of museums, and 2) determine whether these variables fall within the four categories, or factors described in the introduction. Four factors of museum usage were identified: socio-economic, institutional, cultural/ethnic, and regional. Most participants either went to museums occasionally (once or twice a year) or not at all.

African Americans in six Eastern U.S. communities were included in the study. Thirty-three African Americans were interviewed, from low to middle income families, and most were from communities that are predominately African American. Individuals were chosen that lived in small urban areas, inner city neighborhoods, a small city, small urban area, and a suburban area.

Socio-economic variables were important factors, though individuals with higher incomes were not as likely to visit museums as high-income white Americans; other factors were

deemed more important. Some said they did not believe museums “speak to them” although few had said they were uncomfortable when visiting such institutions. Adults are more likely to visit museums if they went when they were younger, and due to word of mouth advertising.

As African Americans have not historically had high visitation rates to museums, they may be less likely to go as adults, and therefore, also likely to not engage in word of mouth advertising, all resulting in low attendance rates for African Americans. Proximity to museums did not seem to affect African American museum utilization, although African Americans were more likely to visit museums if they lived in racially mixed communities than if they lived in racially segregated communities.

Bouman, Katherine. "Past and Present Tense: Understanding the Visitor Experience in the Indigenous Australians Exhibition at the Australian Museum." *Visitors Studies Today* 9.2 (2006): 11-19.

The purpose of this exhibition was to broaden visitors understanding about Aboriginal issues, collaborate with the Aboriginal community, and present the diversity of issues important to Aboriginals today. The evaluator conducted exit interviews with 50 visitors, including native Australians, Aboriginals and tourists.

Six major themes were incorporated in the Indigenous Australians exhibition: spirituality; cultural heritage; family; land; social justice; and future/ reconciliation.

Canning, Ciara, and Kirsten Holmes. "Community Consultation in Developing Museum Projects: A Case Study Using the Repertory Grid Technique." *Cultural Trends* 15.4 (2006): 275-97.

In this article, Canning and Holmes describe and evaluate the use of Kelly’s repertory grid technique in a front-end study designed to understand community members’ practical and perceived barriers to participation in the Burngreave Voices Project, a series of events hosted by the Sheffield Galleries and Museums trust in the United Kingdom.

The repertory grid technique is a “conversational technology” meant for use as part of an interview process, and is particularly well suited to simultaneously collecting quantitative and qualitative data from respondents who may have a low level of English language ability.

The authors of the article report that use of the technique with diverse community members (including White British, Pakistani, Yemeni, Somali, Afro/Caribbean, and Chinese individuals) allowed researchers to establish community members’ “needs and perceptions,” an essential step in achieving the project’s goal of helping to “create a tangible legacy and a personal sense of ownership of the area which could then be passed on to future generations.”

Scott, Carol. "Advocating the Value of Museums." Proc. of INTERCOM/ICOM, Austria, Vienna. 2007.

At the INTERCOM/ICOM conference in August, 2007, Carol Scott delivered a paper called "Advocating the value of museums." During her presentation, Scott acknowledged that government reforms and funding restrictions have recently forced museums to justify their existence and the value they serve for the community. Scott aims to develop a common "typology" to describe the variety of ways in which a museum provides "value" to visitors, museum professionals, and even non-visitors.

Scott uses four overarching terms to describe the different types of "value" that are relevant when talking about museums: Instrumental, Intrinsic, Use and non-use, and Institutional value. For Scott, Instrumental value "describes the utilitarian and instrumental benefits that culture can provide for individuals, the economy and for society." Intrinsic value relates to the "intangibles of museum experiences." Thus, intrinsic value includes the pleasure and/or sense of unity with a certain group that could arise from a museum visit.

Use and non-use value can be drawn from figures, such as attendance, which are one way of indicating that the public values a museum, since they spend time, energy, and money to go there. Scott describes Institutional value as "the concept of Public Value and the role of public institutions in its creation and maintenance."

Scott performed open-ended interviews in Australia with people from both within and outside of the museum world to better understand the various ways people value museums. Terminology and themes from these interviews are organized into charts throughout the paper that refer back to Scott's four main types of value. These charts stress that the term value can mean different things from the perspective of an individual, community, or the economy.

For example, Intrinsic value from the perspective an individual will have aspects of cognitive, empathetic, and well-being categories. Whereas when experienced collectively Intrinsic value will have historical, social, symbolic, and spiritual value. Scott's research provides a starting point from which to consider the many different ways a museum and museum experience can be valued.

Lee, Kien. The Importance of Culture in Evaluation: A Practical Guide for Evaluators. Rep. Colorado Trust.

Cross-cultural competency is essential in evaluation because the gathering of good data and the ability to make sound conclusions and suggestions is contingent upon information and interpretation, which are in turn influenced by the cultures of those involved in the evaluation. However, this report emphasizes that established practices like collaborating with group stakeholders and using a culturally diverse evaluation team do not guarantee cross-cultural competency.

Kien argues that three essential elements - culture, social identity or group membership, and privilege and power - must be considered in a cross-culturally competent evaluation. In order to conduct a cross-culturally competent evaluation, the article suggests that evaluators must ask questions respectfully, acknowledge differences in thinking and behaving among cultures, and must not make assumptions. It also suggests that evaluators work with cultural and expert translators, review past and similar studies, pilot test instruments, and avoid the assumption that a given term has a uniform meaning,

The issues of social identity and group membership are also addressed in the article. The article warns that the multiple and shifting nature of the social identities of both the stakeholders and the evaluator can produce dynamics that hinder evaluation. It notes that successful cross-culturally competent evaluators dedicate time and resources to building trust and understanding the context of the evaluation, as well as to fostering collaboration among stakeholders. It also notes that collaboration among stakeholders is essential in ensuring multicultural validity, the condition wherein "multiple cultural perspectives are captured accurately, appropriately, and comprehensively."

Finally, the article broaches the issues of privilege and power in evaluation. Privilege and power in evaluation are derived from three sources: relations between evaluator and stakeholders; contextual conditions and structural inequities; and use of findings. Rather than trying to eliminate all power imbalances - an impossible and not necessarily desirable goal - the article advises evaluators to accept the existence of status differences. It also suggests that the demystification of evaluation and collaboration with other experts is important when addressing power and privilege in evaluation, as is striving to provide participants with a comfortable setting.

Evaluation Plan

Exhibit Goals

After a full-day planning session with Randi Korn, Founding Director of the evaluation firm Randi Korn & Associates, the New Directions team and NAAM Deputy Director and Director of Education Brian Carter solidified two specific goals that the *East by Northwest* exhibit was trying to accomplish:

- 1. This exhibition will tell the story of Seattle's Ethiopian community, highlighting the continuity of their culture and the contribution to our shared experience.**
- 2. By interacting with the exhibition elements, visitors (members of Seattle's Ethiopian community) will value their cultural continuity and feel that their experiences are valued by others.**

Evaluation Goals

From these exhibit goals the team designed six evaluation goals that would be measurable and attainable within our time schedule and resources. The team chose to record both content and opinion responses to get a broad sense of visitors' reaction to the exhibit.

These goals were:

- 1. Visitors will be able to identify at least one reason Ethiopians came to the United States.**
- 2. Visitors describe at least one custom that continues to play a role in the lives of Ethiopians in Seattle today.**
- 3. Visitors will stop in front of at least 1 element in each of the 3 zones of the exhibit.**
- 4. Visitors recognize the impact Ethiopia's geography has had on Ethiopian culture.**
- 5. Ethiopian visitors see NAAM's attempt at an honest depiction of their experience in the exhibit.**
- 6. Ethiopian visitors will feel their experiences are valued by others.**

The team used these criteria for developing instruments and crafting questions for the interview and survey. We focused on the key issues of “honesty” and “value” within the Ethiopian community that NAAM was striving to achieve through their exhibit. The museum wanted to present the influences the Ethiopian community has in the lives of all individuals living in Seattle, and the ways in which that community has evolved since moving to the city.

We also worked with the Introduction to Audience Research and Evaluation class within the Museology Graduate Program at the University of Washington. Our team trained a group of students regarding our methodology and data collection protocols, and the students completed over 60 hours of data collection. This was critical to the success of our evaluation.

Overview: Methods

Tracking & Timing Observations

Tracking and timing was used in the evaluation of *East by Northwest* exhibit to assess how visitors moved throughout the exhibit space, and to gauge the relative use of the three different “zones” (Ethiopia/History, Journey, Seattle) of the exhibit.

New Directions evaluators tracked and timed adult visitors entering the gallery space. Evaluators noted: 1) the path taken through the hall; 2) where visitors stopped for more than three seconds; 3) the door visitors used to enter and exit the gallery.

Exit Surveys

Exit surveys were used to measure visitors’ engagement with the exhibit, general perceptions and opinions about the exhibit, and knowledge and understanding of the content presented.

Evaluators approached every second adult visitor to cross an imaginary line representing the boundary of the exhibit space. Visitors were compensated for their time with a complimentary NAAM pencil or pin.

Guestbook

NAAM provided visitors with a guestbook, where visitors could voluntarily record their comments about the *East by Northwest* exhibit. Evaluators analyzed guestbook entries made November 14, 2009 to April 3, 2010.

Limitations

Interviews

The original evaluation plan included interviews with Ethiopian community members that had experienced the exhibit. However, due to difficulty in finding participants and time constraints, the team was unable to conduct any interviews.

In an effort to complete the interviews, evaluators asked Brian Carter, Deputy Director and Education Director, to contact members of the Ethiopian community. The team also met with members of the African Student Association at the University of Washington to ask young Ethiopian Americans for feedback about the exhibit. There were no affirmative responses from either group within a two-month time frame.

The team created an interview instrument that the museum can use in the future for evaluating the *East by Northwest* exhibit, if they are able to find participants (see Appendix A). This interview could be used either for individual interviews or during a focus group of 4 to 8 individuals.

Time

Evaluators collected data almost everyday over two and a half months (February, 2010 - April, 2010), with the help of students from the UW Museology Audience Research and Evaluation class; data collection occurred throughout business hours in order to obtain representative results.

It is possible that with more time our team would have been able to collect more data, and possibly conduct interviews, for the *East by Northwest* exhibit. It is also possible that these were months of lower attendance compared to other months. It would be beneficial to conduct research during all months of the year to record a variety of visitation patterns.

Small Sample Size

During the time allowed for data collection, the team tracked a total of 49 visitors and conducted 47 exit surveys. Due to a small sample size, it is difficult to generalize the findings to the entire population of visitors to NAAM, let alone the general population of museum visitors. The data does show certain trends within the sample population, but would be significantly strengthened with further time and data collection.

Multiple Data Collectors

Though the team is indebted to the Audience Research and Evaluation students who helped immensely throughout data collection, it is possible that, despite training, the methods for tracking and timing and conducting surveys differed with each individual.

Timing & Tracking Observations

Purpose & Design of the Study

Timing and Tracking was primarily used in the evaluation of *East by Northwest* in order to collect basic demographic information and to assess the following goal:

- Visitors will stop in front of at least 1 element in each of the 3 zones of the exhibit.

Method

Timing and tracking observations were recorded over a total of 15 days during February and March, 2010. Visitors to the *East by Northwest* exhibit were observed and their movements through the gallery were recorded on a tracking map (see Appendix B).

Arrows were used to indicate directionality and x's marked stops at exhibit elements that lasted longer than 3 seconds. The date and the time the visitor both entered and exited the exhibit were recorded on the tracking map, along with basic demographic information including sex, age, and group type. If evaluators saw a visitor re-enter the exhibit they were instructed to void their current observation and track the re-entry. This does not account for all re-entries, just those that were observed entering the exhibit space.

By tracking visitors' movements it was possible to find out if they were stopping in front of at least one element from each of the three zones of the exhibit. Once the tracking and timing of one visitor ended and the tracking map was completely filled out, the data collector tracked the next visitor observed entering the exhibit.

Results & Discussion

Timing & Tracking

- Forty-nine visitors were tracked although one of these observations was void and not included in the results. Thus, n=48.
- The average time in the exhibit was 6 minutes 30 seconds.

- Visitors spent between .08 minutes (4.8 seconds) to 35.9 minutes in the exhibit.
- The results showed that 28 of the visitors (58%) spent between 0-5 minutes in the exhibit while 12 of the visitors (25%) spent 5-10 minutes in the exhibit. Finally, eight visitors (17%) spent 10 or more minutes in the exhibit. See Figure 1.

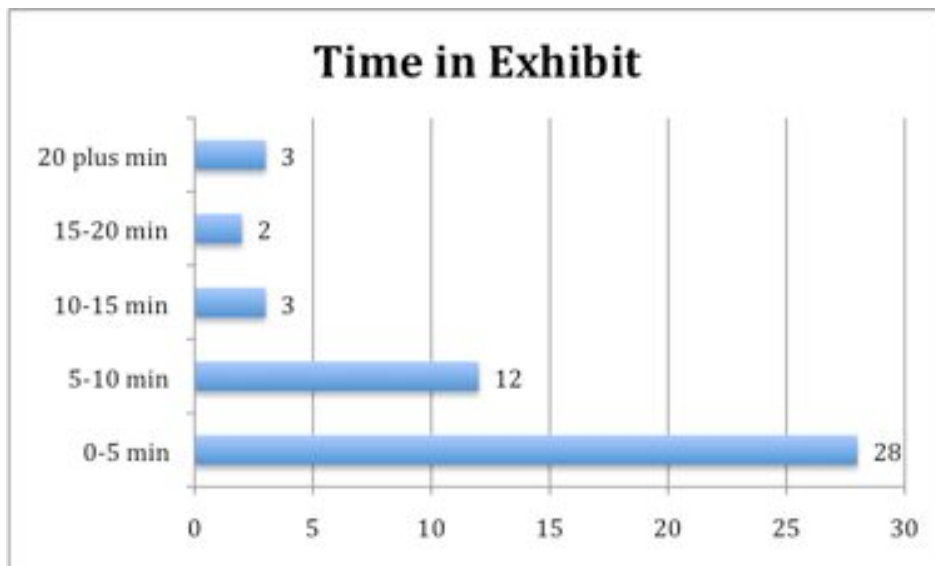


Figure 1: Time visitors spent in exhibit.

- The overall sweep rate for the exhibit was 261.5 sq ft per minute. Sweep rate index (SRI), created by Beverly Serrell, was calculated by dividing the exhibit square footage (1,700) by the mean visit time (6 minutes 30 seconds). Sweep rates of less than 300 sq ft per minute indicate that visitors are moving slowly, stopping often, or spending more than a few seconds at each stop.
- There were five recorded and tracked re-entry visitors.

Demographics of Tracked Individuals

- Of the 48 tracked visitors, 30 (62%) were female while 17 (35%) were male. Data reporting gender was missing for one person (3%).
- Thirty-five (73%) of the visitors who were tracked were adults. Six (13%) of the visitors were young adults. Five (10%) were seniors. Data for the person's age group was missing from two observations (4%). See Figure 2.

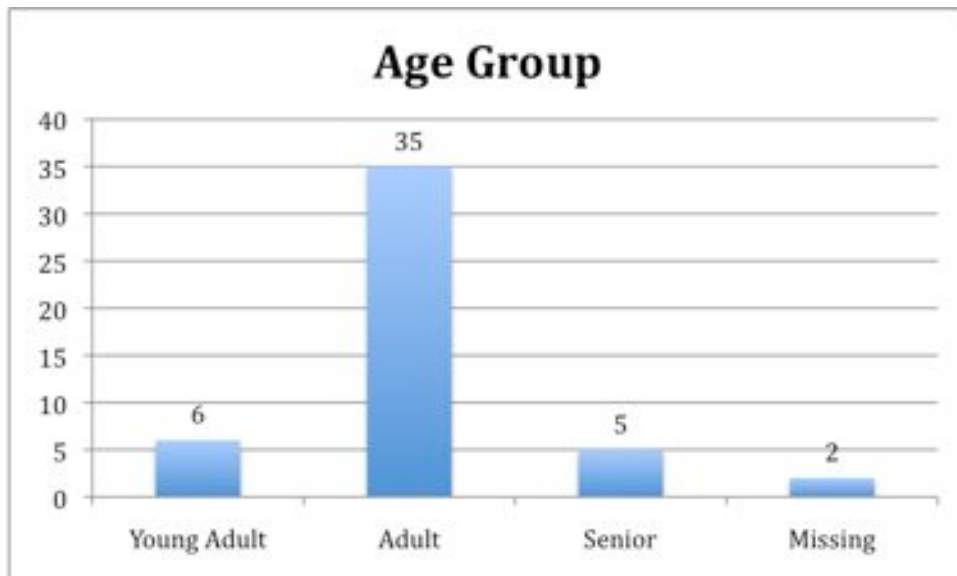


Figure 2: Age group of tracked visitors.

- Although individual visitors were tracked, the composition of their group was also noted. There were 16 adults (33%) who went through the exhibit by themselves. There were 14 visitors (29%) who were in a group of adults. Nine visitors (19%) were adults with kids. Four visitors (8%) were in a group of young adults. Three visitors (6%) were in groups that did not fit these categories. Data for two of the visitors' group composition was missing (5%). Refer to Figure 3.

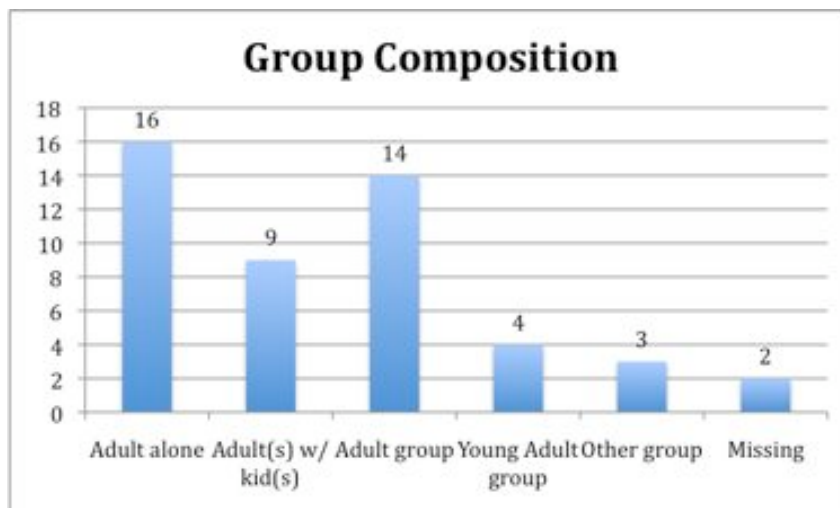


Figure 3: Group composition of tracked visitors.

Exhibit Zone Analysis

- Stops longer than three seconds were recorded on the tracking map. The *East by Northwest* exhibit was divided into three zones. See Figure 4 for a visual representation of these zones. The Ethiopia/History zone is depicted in orange. The Journey zone is in blue. The Seattle zone is shown in green.

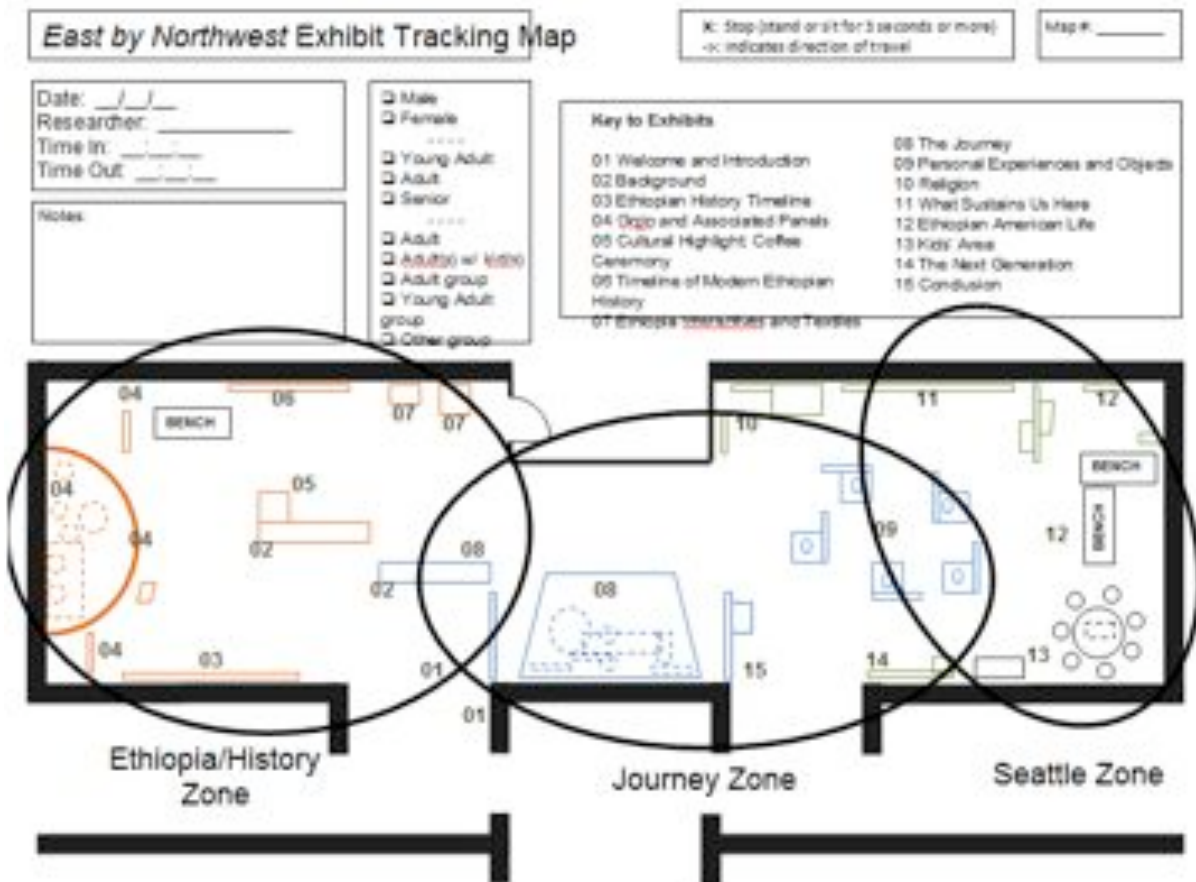


Figure 4: Tracking and timing map showing exhibit zones.

- The number of visitors who stopped in each exhibit zone was analyzed. Forty visitors (83%) stopped at least once in the Ethiopia/History exhibit zone. Thirty-seven visitors (77%) stopped at least once in the Journey exhibit zone. Thirty-three visitors (69%) stopped at least once in the Seattle exhibit zone. See Figure 5.

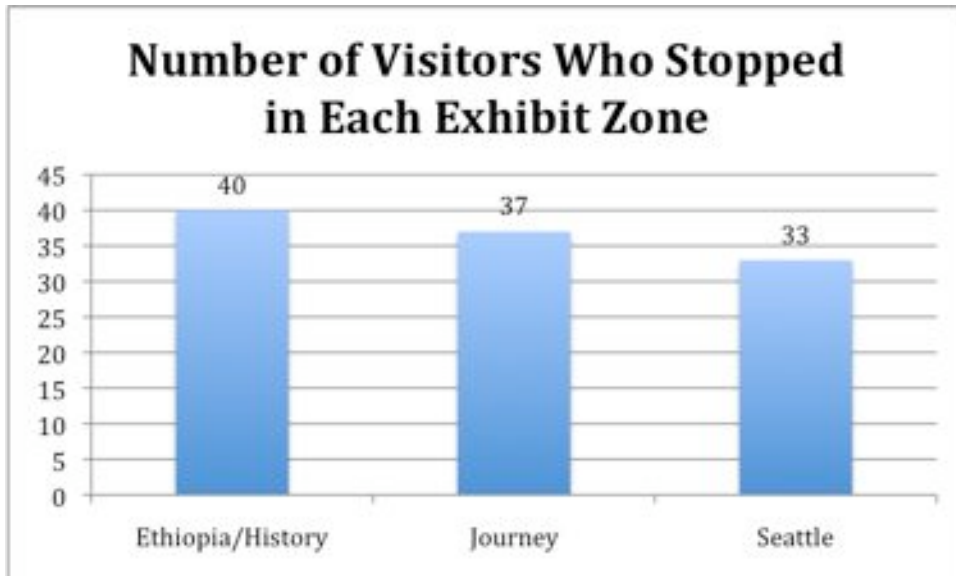


Figure 5: Number of visitors who stopped in each exhibit zone at least once.

- The observations showed that 46 visitors (96%) stopped in one of the exhibit zones at least once. Thirty-seven visitors (77%) stopped in two zones at least once. Twenty-two (46%) of the visitors stopped in all three zones at least once. See Figure 6.

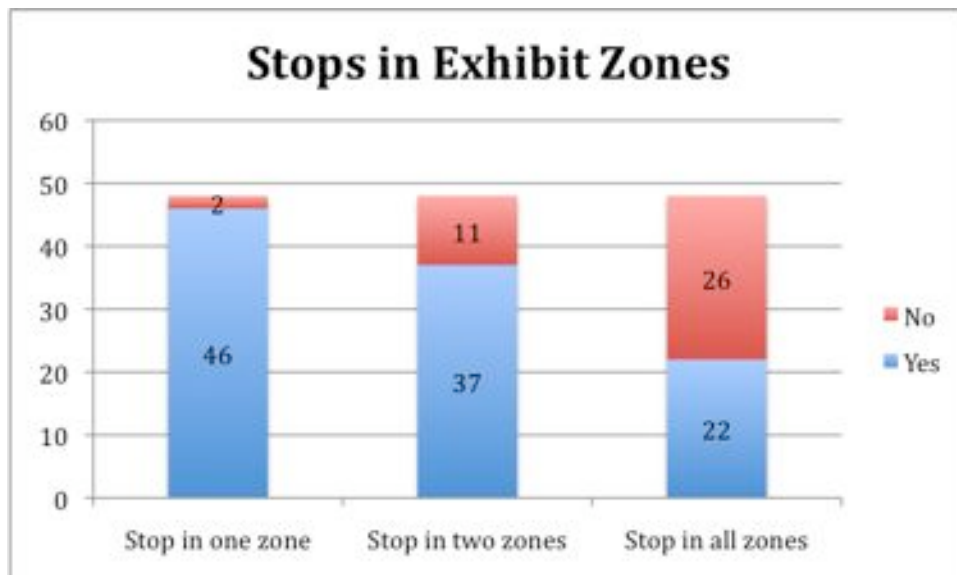


Figure 6: Visitors' stops in exhibit zones.

Entrance Door Analysis

- Visitors' entrance into the exhibit was recorded on the tracking and timing map. Figure 7 shows how the two doors were coded as either "Left Door" or "Right Door."

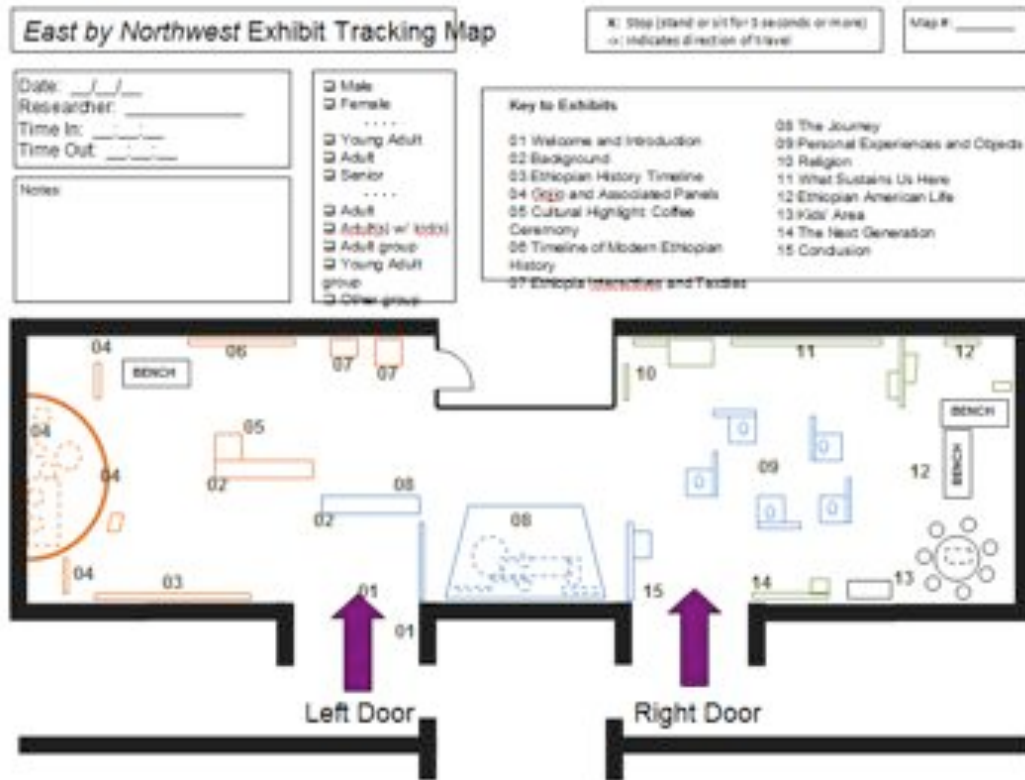


Figure 7: Tracking and timing map highlighting entry doors.

- Each entrance door was used equally. Twenty-four people (50%) entered the exhibit from the left door on the tracking and timing map. Twenty-four people (50%) entered the exhibit from the right door on the map.
- The visitors' choice of entrance door was compared with the number of stops made in each exhibit zone. For the visitors who entered the exhibit from the left entry door: 20 (83%) stopped in the Ethiopia/History exhibit zone at least once, 18 (75%) stopped in the Journey exhibit zone at least once, and 14 (58%) stopped in the Seattle exhibit zone at least once. See Figure 8.

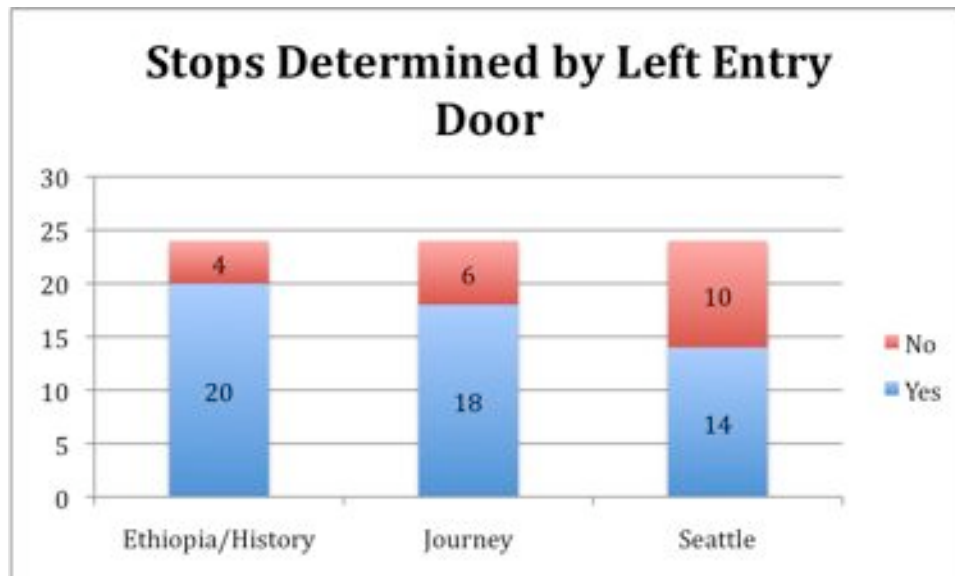


Figure 8: Stops in exhibit zones determined by left entry door.

- For the visitors who entered the exhibit from the right entry door: 15 (63%) stopped in the Ethiopia/History exhibit zone at least once, 19 (79%) stopped in the Journey exhibit zone at least once, and 19 (79%) stopped in Seattle the exhibit zone at least once. See Figure 9.

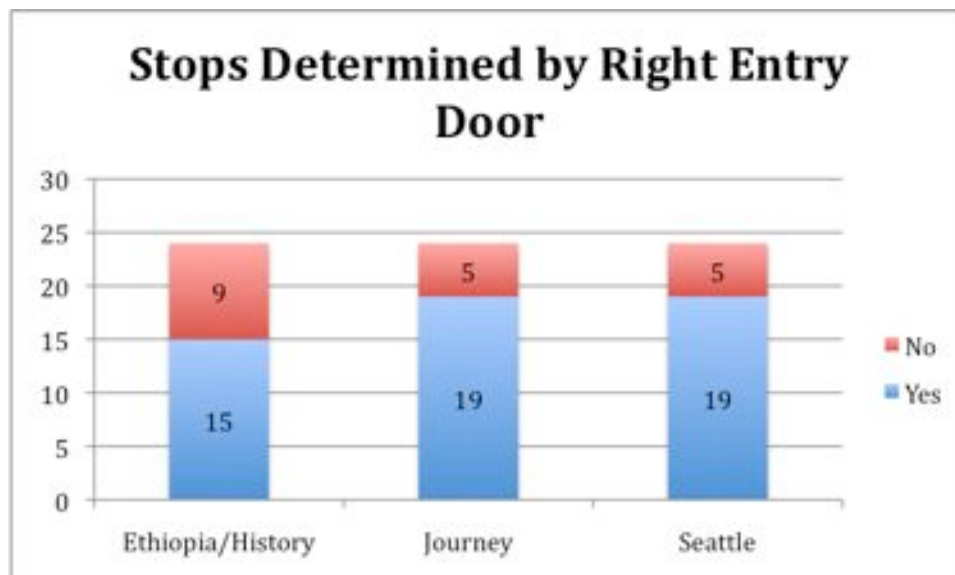


Figure 9: Stops in exhibit zones determined by right entry door.

Tracking and Timings Discussion

Data suggest that visitors entering the *East by Northwest* exhibit were as likely to go in from the left door as they were from the right door. Because the introduction panel to the exhibit was located directly after the left entry door, visitors entering from the right may not have been as familiar with the exhibit's purpose to focus specifically on the Ethiopian community and their immigration experiences in Seattle.

Furthermore, the data suggest that depending on which entrance door a visitor used, the visitor was less likely to stop in the exhibit zone on the opposite side of the room. This was especially noted for people who entered in the left door. Only 14 (58%) of the 24 visitors who entered from the left door stopped in the Seattle exhibit zone, which was on the right side of the room.

Although 46 visitors (96%) stopped in one of the exhibit zones at least once, only 22 (46%) of the visitors stopped in all three zones. This data suggests that the exhibit goal of having visitors stop in front of at least one exhibit element in each of the three zones was not met. These results may imply that visitors did not have the opportunity to grasp the overarching theme of the exhibit, which was to highlight the continuity of the Ethiopian culture as immigrants moved to Seattle.

Overall, the Ethiopia/History zone was the area in the exhibit where the most visitors stopped at least once (83%). However, it is necessary to point out that this was roughly the largest exhibit zone on our tracking map and had the most text and exhibit elements.

Finally, it is important to note that at least five of the visitors were recorded as being repeat visitors. This suggests that some visitors return to the *East by Northwest* exhibit more than once during their time at the museum.

Exit Surveys

Purpose & Design of the Study

Exit surveys were used in the evaluation of the *East by Northwest* exhibit in order to determine visitors' attitudes toward the exhibit, their perceptions of the Northwest Ethiopian-American community, and their understanding of the exhibit.

These surveys were designed to determine whether the following evaluation goals were met:

- 1. Visitors will be able to identify at least one reason Ethiopians came to the United States.**
- 2. Visitors will be able to describe at least one custom that continues to play a role in the lives of Ethiopians in Seattle today.**
- 3. Visitors will recognize the impact Ethiopia's geography has had on Ethiopian culture.**
- 4. Ethiopian visitors will see NAAM's attempt at an honest depiction of their experience in the exhibit.**
- 5. Ethiopian visitors will feel their experiences are valued by others.**

Method

Visitors were approached by a *New Directions* evaluator as they were leaving the exhibit and were asked to complete a survey. The survey (Appendix C) featured questions designed to record: 1) visitors' perceptions of Ethiopian and Ethiopian-American culture based on their visit to the exhibit, 2) visitors' feelings about the exhibit itself, and 3) demographic information about visitors.

Surveys were conducted over 15 days in February and March, 2010. Evaluators approached every second adult visitor to cross an imaginary line representing the boundary of the exhibit space. Visitors were compensated for their time with a complimentary NAAM pencil or pin. A refusal log was kept with a total of 14 refusals out of 47 total surveys (30%).

Results & Discussion

Survey Demographics

- A total of 47 visitors were approached; however only 33 surveys were completed. Therefore, n=33.
- Slightly less than half of survey respondents (42%) visited the exhibit with family, while 7 respondents (21%) came with friends. See Figure 10.

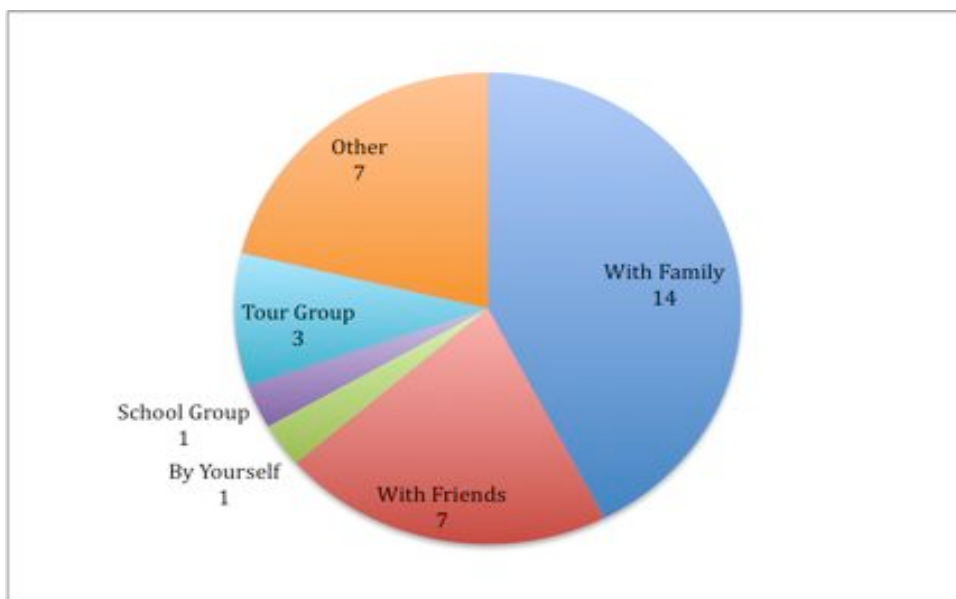


Figure 10: Group composition of survey respondents.

- Of survey respondents *and* the groups they came with, most visitors were in the 0-10 years and 40-49 years age brackets. See Figure 11.

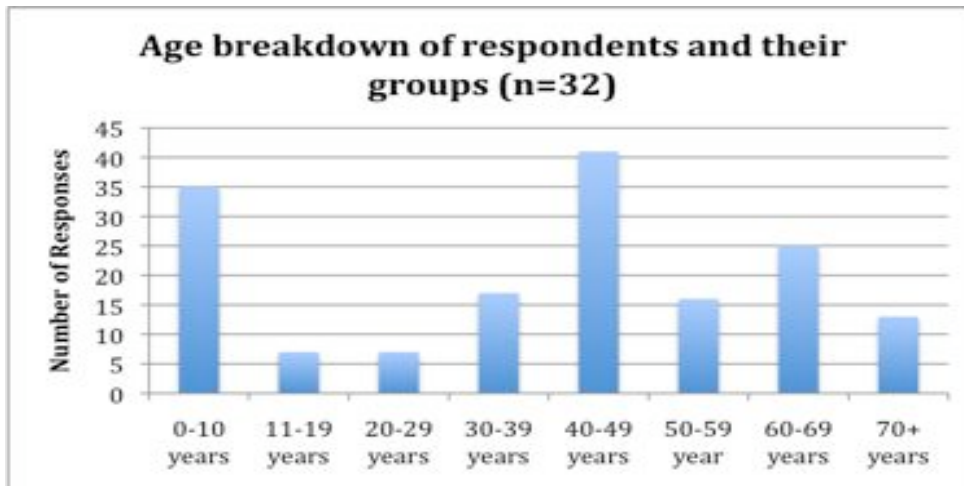


Figure 11: Age breakdown of survey respondents and their groups.

- Slightly more than half (58%) of survey respondents identified as white, about half (48%) identified as African American. Two respondents (6%) identified as Ethiopian. See Figure 12.

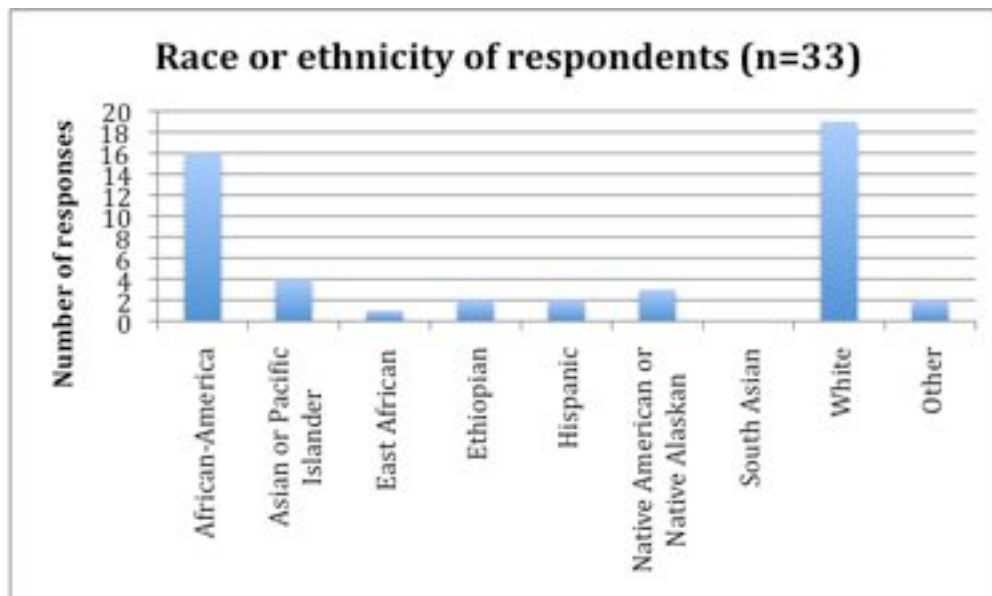


Figure 12: Race or ethnicity of survey respondents.

- Eighteen respondents (55%) had heard about the *East by Northwest* exhibit before visiting, and 15 (45%) had not. Visitors who had heard of the exhibit most often reported that they heard of it through word of mouth (25%), and/or newspaper weeklies (25%). See Figure 13.

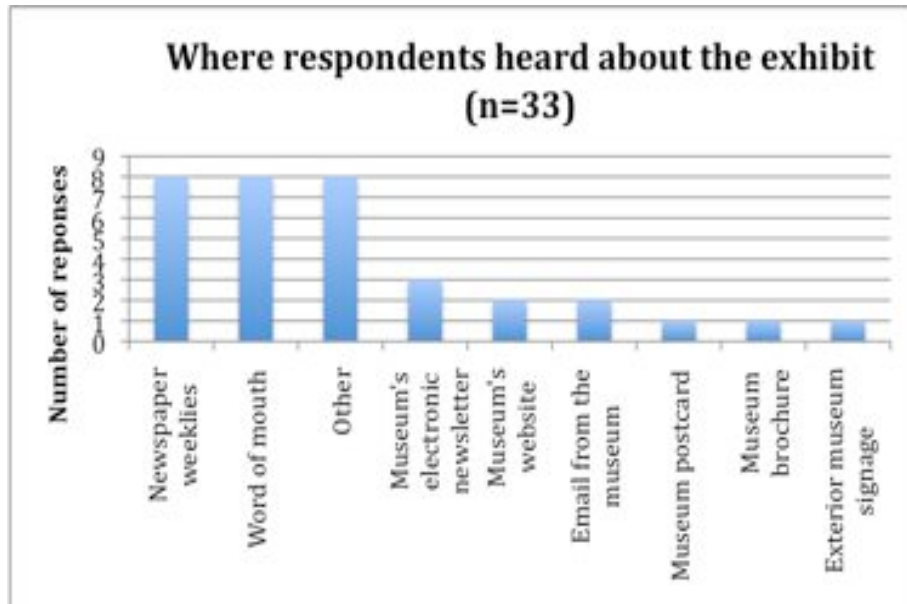


Figure 13: Where respondents heard about the exhibit.

- Most respondents (67%), had not visited NAAM within the past two years, although some (15%) had visited the museum three or more times within the past two years. See Figure 14.

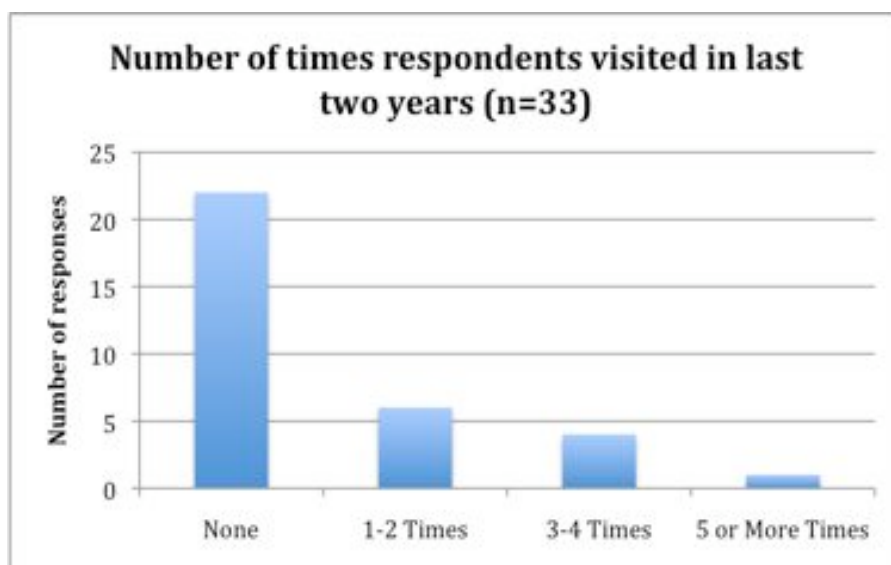


Figure 14: Number of times respondents visited NAAM in the last two years.

- Most respondents (85%) were not members of the museum, and most respondents (91%) were not involved in the development of exhibit.

Results & Discussion by Evaluation Goal

Findings for this portion of the evaluation are organized according to the evaluation goals outlined at the beginning of this section.

1. Visitors will be able to identify at least one reason Ethiopians came to the United States.

Most respondents (76%) were able to identify at least one reason Ethiopians came to the United States.

When visitors completed the survey prompt, “Some Ethiopians came to the United States because...” the reasons most frequently reported by respondents were: political turmoil/unrest/upheaval, the search for a better life, and opportunity. See Figure 13.

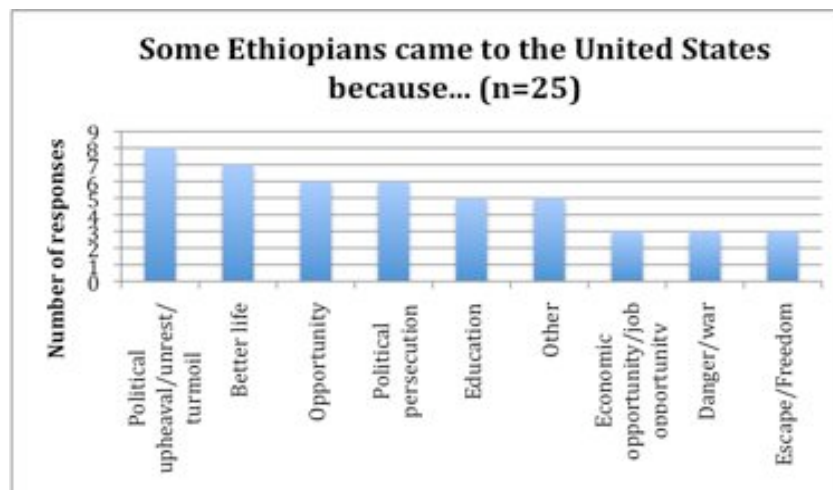


Figure 15: Categories of reasons visitors gave that Ethiopian's came to the United States.

2. Visitors will be able to describe at least one custom that continues to play a role in the lives of Ethiopians in Seattle today.

Most respondents (82%) were able to describe at least one custom that continues to play a role in the lives of Ethiopians in Seattle today.

When visitors completed the survey prompt “Customs that some Ethiopian-Americans continue to practice today include...” the customs they most frequently described were coffee ceremony, religion, food, and wedding ceremony. See Figure 14.

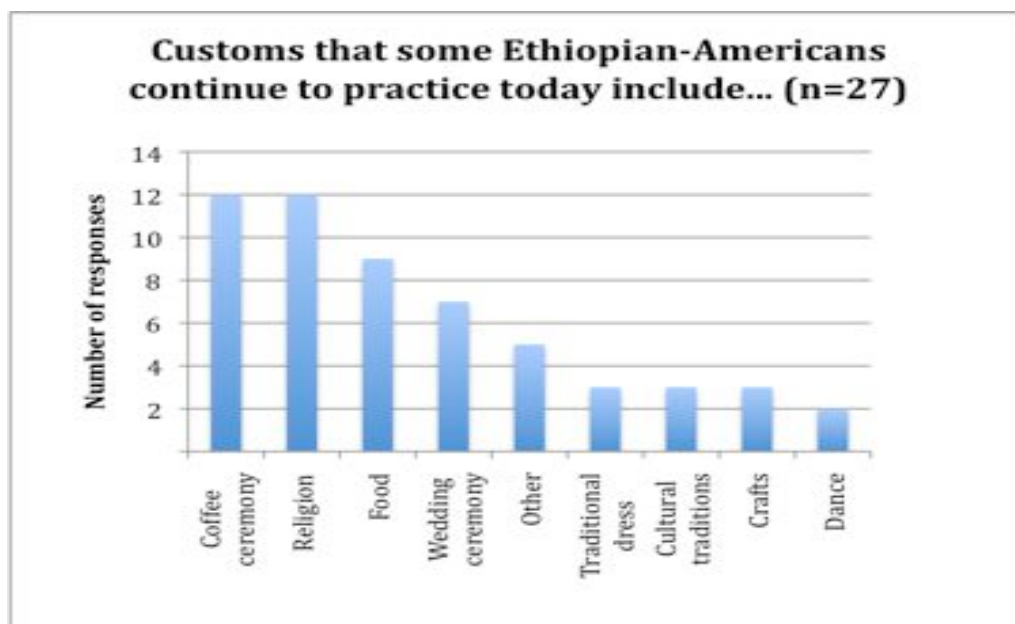


Figure 16: Categories of examples visitors gave of customs some Ethiopian Americans continue to practice today.

3. Visitors will recognize the impact Ethiopia’s geography has had on Ethiopian culture.

When visitors were asked to select two influences on Ethiopian culture they recalled based on their visit to the exhibit, the influences they most often selected were religion, followed by landscape and coffee. See Figure 16.

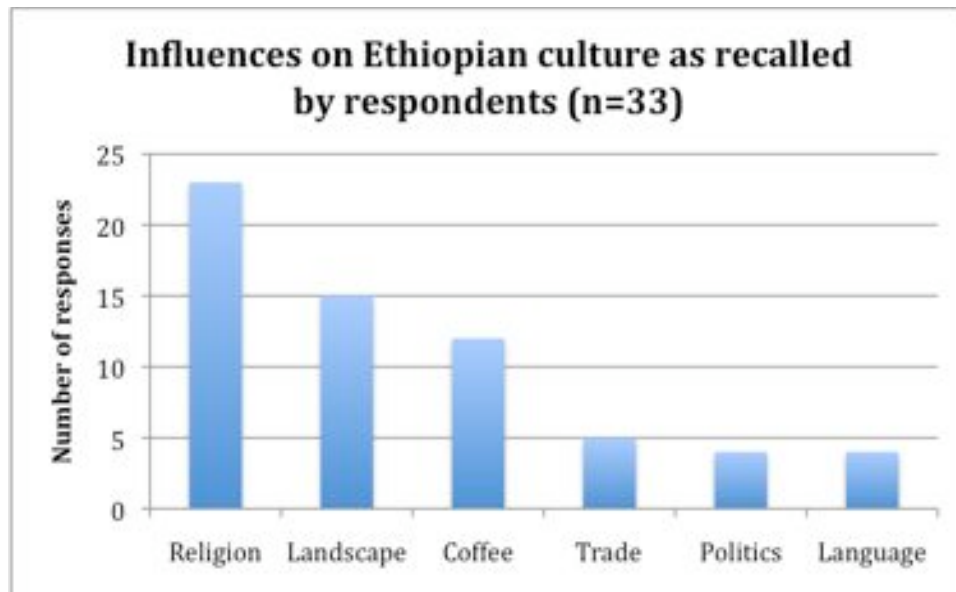


Figure 17: Categories of influences on Ethiopian culture as recalled by respondents.

4. Ethiopian visitors will see NAAM’s attempt at an honest depiction of their experience in the exhibit.

Visitors were presented with three Likert scales and were asked to indicate the rating that best represented their opinion of the *East by Northwest* exhibit for each of three terms: trustworthy, unbiased, and sincere. The ratings ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Respondents had the option of indicating “not applicable.”

Most visitors seemed to feel that the exhibit was trustworthy, unbiased, and sincere, with respondents most often checking either the “Agree” or “Strongly agree” ratings for each term. See Figure 18.

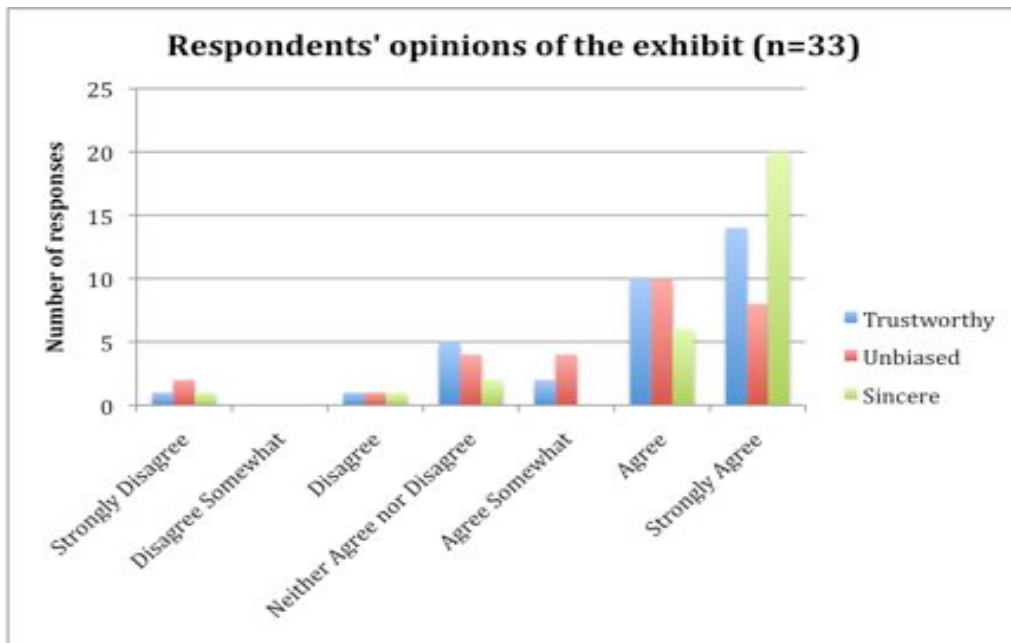


Figure 18: Respondents' rating of exhibit's trustworthiness, bias, and sincerity.

Visitors were also asked to explain why they gave the ratings that they indicated. Only some (n=18) respondents opted to provide an explanation.

Responses included:

- The religious section glossed over conflicts. I've heard Muslim Ethiopians complain that they are marginalized, and I've seen more complex and skeptical descriptions of Ethiopian Judaism.
- I haven't much to base my perception of the trustworthiness and bias. I do believe the effort was sincere.
- There was no reason I saw to believe otherwise.
- I don't feel qualified to make this assessment as I am not Ethiopian and came here to learn.
- Because the exhibit showed actual statements from Ethiopian immigrants.

When visitors completed the survey prompt, "I think the main idea of the *East by Northwest* is..." visitors most often said the main idea of the exhibit was to: inform visitors, present Ethiopian culture, and share stories of Ethiopian immigration. See Figure 19.

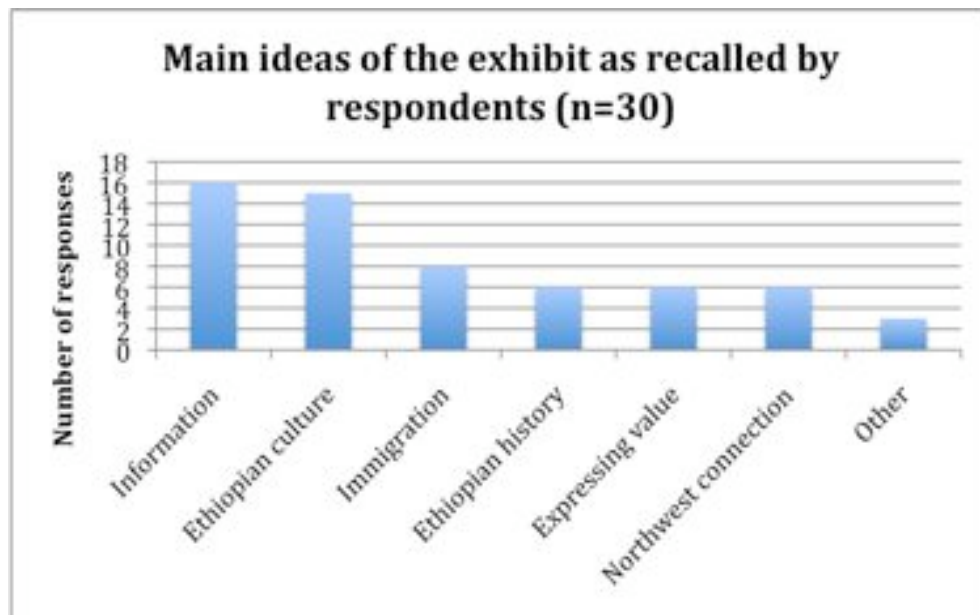


Figure 19: Categories of main ideas of the exhibit as recalled by respondents.

Some visitors used words like “beautiful” and “unique” in their responses, expressing an attitude of value toward Ethiopian culture in Seattle. For examples of visitor’s responses, see Table 1.

Table 1: Category, number, and examples of visitor responses to the prompt, “ I think the main idea of the *East by Northwest* is...”

Category	Number of Responses	Examples
Information	16	<p>“To inform the public of Ethiopian culture.</p> <p>“To show Ethiopian culture, lifestyle, traditions.”</p>
Ethiopian Culture	15	<p>“To make people aware of Ethiopia and its culture.”</p> <p>“Cultural awareness and appreciation that others have contributed to humankind.”</p>
Immigration	8	<p>“How people migrate great distances.”</p> <p>“The challenges faced when people have to leave their homeland.”</p>
Ethiopian History	6	<p>“Remind us of our roots and our rich histories.”</p> <p>“To provide a history of migration by black people.”</p>
Expressing Value	6	<p>“Ethiopian Americans value both their cultural traditions that link them to Ethiopia and the opportunities provided by life in the US.”</p> <p>“Ethiopian Americans have a unique and beautiful cultural history.”</p>
Northwest Connection	6	<p>“Development of our area from people of the east.”</p> <p>“Ethiopia’s given the northwest a great gift of insight to its culture and history.”</p>
Other	3	<p>“After understanding my visit I like it.”</p> <p>“Excellent.”</p>

Visitors were also asked to answer the question, “How do you feel about the museum’s decision to present an exhibit on Ethiopian culture? Why?” Most visitors (76%) expressed a positive opinion of NAAM’s exhibit decision, with several visitors stressing the exhibit’s emphasis on education (52%) and community connections (36%) to the Seattle area. See Table 2 for examples of visitors’ responses.

Table 2: Category, number, and examples of visitor responses to the questions, “ How do you feel about the museum’s decision to present an exhibit on Ethiopian culture? Why?”

Category	Number of Responses	Examples
Positive Reaction	25	<p>“Good choice--it’s part of history, plus people should have the opportunity to learn about it.”</p> <p>“Good--there is a large Ethiopian community/presence in this area and I’m glad to learn more about it.”</p> <p>“This was beautiful and informative. Today was my second and more in depth viewing of the exhibit. The fact that my child was interested means a lot.”</p>
Educational / Information	17	<p>“Very educational and mind-expanding.”</p> <p>“I enjoy exposing myself and daughters to Ethiopian culture, especially since they don’t get this exposure in Northwest schools.”</p> <p>“Great idea--allow the Seattle community to learn about their Ethiopian neighbors.”</p>

Category	Number of Responses	Examples
Community Connection	12	<p>“Excellent--there are many Ethiopians living plus working in our community.”</p> <p>“I feel that it is a good idea because there is a large population of Ethiopians here.”</p> <p>“There are many Ethiopian people living in Seattle. It’s important that their history and culture is represented in this museum.”</p>
Mixed Reaction	3	<p>“Don’t mind.”</p> <p>“Somewhat mixed. I expect to see exhibits primarily pertaining to African-American history in the Northwest, not Ethiopia. That being said, perhaps a smaller exhibit of acknowledgement would be acceptable.”</p>

5. Ethiopian visitors will feel their experiences are valued by others.

This evaluation goal was designed to be answered by cued interviews with members of the Seattle Ethiopian community after a visit to the exhibit. Unfortunately, in the time given, we were not able to locate any willing participants for the interviews.

Because of a very small sample of visitors who identified as Ethiopian on the surveys, we were not able to determine whether Ethiopian visitors felt their experiences were valued by others.

Guestbook

Purpose & Design of the Study

NAAM provided a guestbook where visitors could voluntarily record their comments about the *East by Northwest* exhibit. Evaluators analyzed guestbook entries made between November 14, 2009 to April 3, 2010.

The purpose of this part of the evaluation was to supplement the qualitative data gained from the surveys. In the absence of interviews, the guestbook entries provided insight on some visitors' perceptions, opinions, and comments about the exhibit.

Method

A guest book was placed inside of the right entrance of the *East by Northwest* exhibit by museum staff when the exhibit opened. At the end of the evaluation period all of the responses in the guest book were coded, or placed into categories. These categories represent major themes as presented by guests who were not prompted with questions or asked to participate in the evaluation.

Ninety-two guest book entries were analyzed and placed into seven categories. Many guest book entries were placed into multiple categories according to their contents; therefore, the "number of responses" column in Table 1 adds up to more than 92 entries.

Results & Discussion

Many visitors used the guestbook to express their feelings about and reactions to the *East by Northwest* exhibit. Some visitors simply wrote or signed their name as acknowledgement that they had visited.

The major categories that appeared in the guestbook analysis were overall positive in nature, and included mentions of the educational nature of the exhibit, mentions of personal connections, and expressions of connections to Ethiopia experienced in the exhibit.

Fifty-nine entries (64%) included names or signatures, and 27 entries (29%) included the words “thank you.” Fifty-seven entries (62%) included words or phrases representing value. See Figure 19. For examples of visitors’ responses, see Table 2.

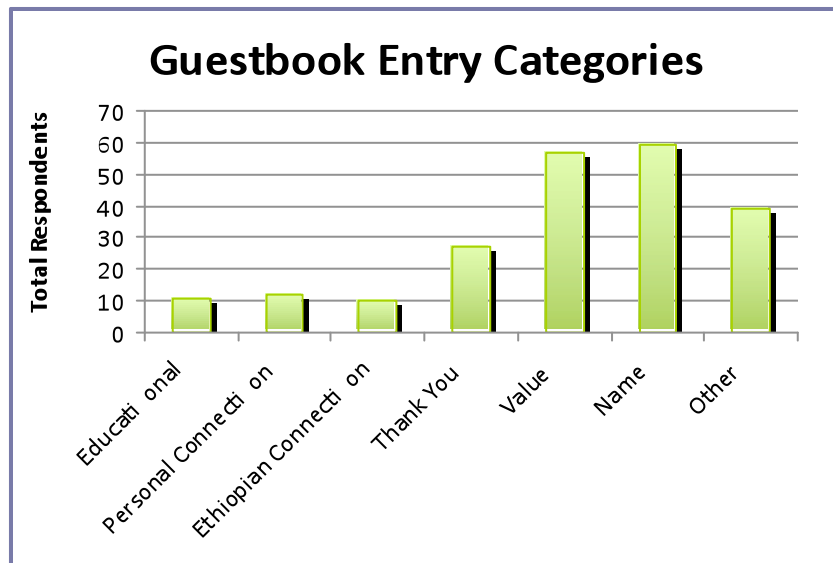


Figure 20: Categories of visitors’ guestbook entries.

Table 3: Category, number, and example of visitors' guestbook entries.

Category	Number of Responses	Examples
Educational	11	<p>“Beautifully designed exhibit and extremely educational.”</p> <p>“Thank you for educating me.”</p>
Personal Connection	12	<p>“The exhibit was a wonderful experience of the journey that was made to come to the Pacific Northwest, and makes me feel as an African American that we all have had journeys in our lives to be where we are now.”</p> <p>“I am African American. I'm so happy for this opportunity--The intersection where our cultures and history intertwines—It's ultra-important to promote positive aspects of our culture, business and education pursuits for our children and others as well!”</p>
Ethiopian Connection	10	<p>“The look, smells and sounds! Fabulous exhibit of the land I once visited.”</p> <p>“Felt like am back home!!!”</p>
“Thank you”	27	

Category	Number of Responses	Examples
Value	57	<p>“Excellent exhibit--bravo to all!!”</p> <p>“Very moving”</p> <p>“Beautiful”</p> <p>“Thank you, I am always touch[ed] by the authenticity of individuals I meet, their generosity and loving spirit.”</p> <p>“Always an inspiration”</p>
Name/ Signature	59	
Other	39	<p>“E by NW demonstrates the contribution of a vibrant cultural life and ongoing sense of identity to the strength of the Ethiopian community in the NW.”</p> <p>“I especially enjoyed the Journey from Home Stories about individuals”</p> <p>“This museum has an exhilarating experience for my entire family. It not only taught us about a new culture, it also helped us experience our own.”</p> <p>“Proud to be Ethiopian!!!”</p>

The “value” category is an important one to define as the word “value” can mean many different things. Entries including positive responses or praise were interpreted to mean the visitor values the exhibit and its contents.

It is also important to realize that the data from the guestbook entries are limiting. The guestbook only represents the visitors that are already predisposed to entering comments in a guestbook. It does not represent the visitor population as a whole—some visitors may not have seen the guest book and others may not want to share their comments in this way.

Suggestions & Next Steps

Suggestions

- Use the guestbook as evaluation tool. It offers great insight into visitor perceptions and requires minimal oversight. This method also has the advantage of yielding unprompted responses. But, remember that, for this reason, visitors who sign the guestbook are self-selecting group.
- Continue conducting visitor surveys, even if the questions are solely demographic. Surveys might be handed out by front desk staff as visitors enter or leave, and the results are easy to enter into an Excel file and analyze. As NAAM grows and changes, it will be useful to have a record of changes in visitation pattern over time and between exhibits.
- Include introduction panels at both entrances in future exhibits.
- Create stations or pathways that lead visitors to the end of the gallery opposite from their door of entry.

Possible Next Steps

- During future exhibit planning, write down the exhibit goals at the beginning of the process and change them as the exhibit develops. Having these goals on paper will help guide any evaluation that occurs in the exhibit space.
- Conduct focus groups or interviews with members of Seattle's Ethiopian community using the provided interview protocol (see Appendix A) to supplement small sample of Ethiopian study participants.
- Consider other avenues of marketing specifically targeted to Ethiopian Americans in the Seattle area. Only two study participants identified as Ethiopian.
- Begin incorporating evaluation into all museum departments.
- Obtain resources for in-house evaluation (e.g., texts, AAM webinars, workshops, etc.)

Appendix A - Interview

Interviewer: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____ Interview #: _____

Thank you for participating in this interview.

The Northwest African American Museum (NAAM) is interested in knowing how the East by Northwest exhibit has impacted you. This interview is intended to take approximately 10 minutes.

Please answer as honestly as possible. You may choose not answer any question and you can stop this interview at any time.

1. Name three emotions you feel after seeing this exhibit:

2. Do you see yourself represented in the East by Northwest exhibit? (Why or why not?)

3. Who do you think was involved in the creation of the East by Northwest exhibit? (Why?)

4. Who do you think is the intended audience of the East by Northwest exhibit?

4a. Do you think the exhibit is more for younger people, older people, or people of all ages? Why?

5. List three words that describe the Ethiopian community in Seattle as you see it represented in this exhibit.

Interviewer: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____ Interview #: _____

6. How do you feel about NAAM's decision to present an exhibit on Ethiopian culture? (Why?)

7. In your opinion, is anything about the Ethiopian community in Seattle misrepresented by the exhibit?

7b. Are there any aspects of the Ethiopian community in Seattle that the exhibit does not represent?

Thank you for participating.

Appendix B - Timing & Tracking Map

East by Northwest Exhibit Tracking Map

Date: ___/___/___

Researcher: _____

Time In: ___:___

Time Out: ___:___

Notes:

Male
 Female
 Young Adult
 Adult
 Senior
 Adult
 Adult(s) w/ kid(s)
 Adult group
 Young Adult group
 Other group

X: Stop (stand or sit for 3 seconds or more)
 ->: Indicates direction of travel

Map #: _____

Key to Exhibits

01 Welcome and Introduction	08 The Journey
02 Background	09 Personal Experiences and Objects
03 Ethiopian History Timeline	10 Religion
04 Gojo and Associated Panels	11 What Sustains Us Here
05 Cultural Highlight: Coffee Ceremony	12 Ethiopian American Life
06 Timeline of Modern Ethiopian History	13 Kids' Area
07 Ethiopia Interactives and Textiles	14 The Next Generation
	15 Conclusion

Appendix C - Survey

Survey Administration: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____ Survey #: _____

Thank you for participating in this survey.

The Northwest African American Museum (NAAM) is interested in knowing how the East by Northwest exhibit has impacted you. This survey is intended to take approximately 10 minutes.

Please answer as honestly as possible. You may skip questions or stop taking this survey at any time.

1. Please refer to the first laminated photo. This picture represents the portion of the exhibit that addresses influences that have shaped Ethiopian culture. Based on your visit today, check two of the influences on Ethiopian culture that you can recall. (CHECK ONLY TWO)

- Landscape
- Politics
- Religion
- Language
- Trade
- Coffee

2. Please refer to the second laminated photo. This picture represents the portion of the exhibit that addresses reasons why some Ethiopians came to the United States. Based on your visit today, how would you complete the following sentence?

Some Ethiopians came to the United States because...

3. Please refer to the third laminated photo. This picture represents the portion of the exhibit that addresses Ethiopian customs that some Ethiopian-Americans practice in the Seattle area today. Based on your visit today, how would you complete the following sentence?

Customs that some Ethiopian-Americans continue to practice today include...

4. Based on your visit today, how would you complete the following sentence?

I think the main idea of the East by Northwest exhibit is...

5. How do you feel about the museum's decision to present an exhibit on Ethiopian culture? Why?

6. Check the box that best represents your opinions about the East by Northwest exhibit.

The exhibit was:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Trustworthy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unbiased	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sincere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6a. Please explain why you gave the above ratings.

7. Before today, how many times have you visited the museum in the last 2 years? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- None
- 1-2 times
- 3-4 times
- 5 or more times

8. Did you hear about the East by Northwest exhibit before you came to the museum today?

- Yes
- No

8a. If yes, how did you hear about the exhibit? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Museum's electronic newsletter
- Museum's website
- Email from the museum
- Museum postcard
- Museum brochure
- Exterior museum signage
- Newspaper weeklies (Seattle Weekly, Parent Map, or others)
- Word of mouth
- Other: _____

9. Who did you come to the museum with today? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- With family
- With friends
- By yourself
- School group
- Tour group
- Other: _____

10. In the group you visited with today, how many people are in each of the following age ranges (including yourself)? Write the number of people on the following lines:

____ 0-10 years ____ 11-19 years ____ 20-29 years ____ 30-39 years
 ____ 40-49 years ____ 50-59 years ____ 60-69 years ____ 70+ years

11. Does your race or ethnicity include... (PLEASE READ ALL OPTIONS AND CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> African-American | <input type="checkbox"/> Native American or Native Alaskan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Pacific Islander | <input type="checkbox"/> South Asian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> East African | <input type="checkbox"/> White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethiopian | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic | _____ |

12. Were you involved with the East by Northwest exhibit? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> I know someone who was involved. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| | _____ |

13. Are you a member of the Northwest African American Museum?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

14. Do you have any other comments about the East by Northwest exhibit that you would like to share with us?

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

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