

# Global Girmit Institute

## Girmit Museum: Collections Development Policy

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Collections Development Policy is a guide in shaping the museum's collection. This includes acquisition, care of object, documentation, access and deaccessioning of objects.
- 1.2. The Girmit Museum collection will be a source of knowledge, ideas, stories and memories to inspire, educate and inform the community and visitors to contribute to the preservation of the Girmitiya history.

### 2. Purpose

- 2.1. This policy is a commitment to good museum practices; it deals with the museum's ethical codes for acquisition and disposal, and related matters.
- 2.2. The policy provides a guideline to donors on the treatment of donations to the museum.
- 2.3. This policy is a public document.

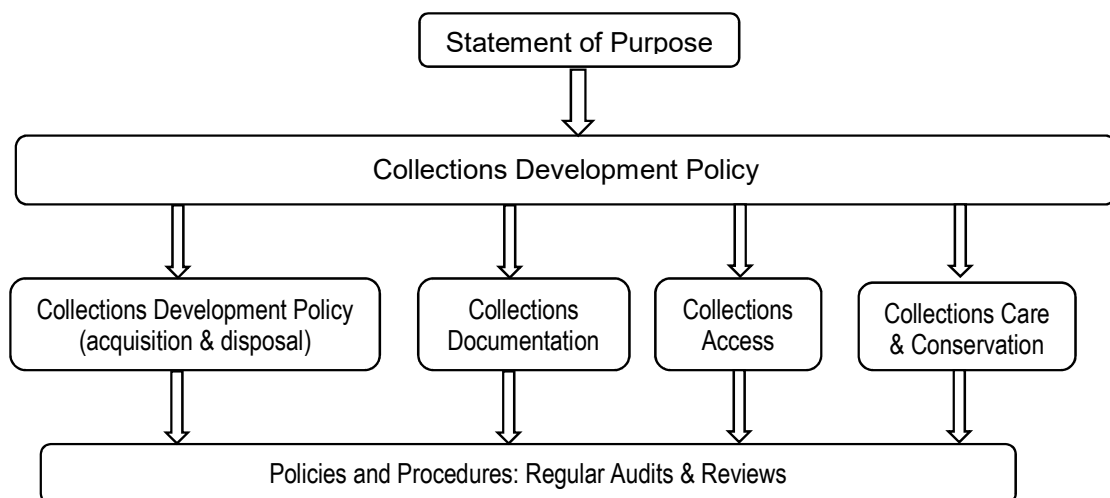


Figure 1. The Collections Management Policy Cycle

### 3. Acquisition, Criteria and Themes

- 3.1. There are parameters in the museum's collecting activities.

#### 3.2. Acquisition

- 3.2.1. Objects are acquired through donations, bequests, purchases, commissions and exchanges.
- 3.2.2. Only objects which can be stored and managed appropriately will be collected.
- 3.2.3. Provenanced objects will be collected or ones that relate to themes relating to history of Girmitiyas.
- 3.2.4. Types include documents, paintings, books, sculptures, digital files and three dimensional objects. There may be clear statements from Museum Curator on which items are not to be collected, and reasons for these stated. Case-by-case decisions would made on very large items and ones that cannot be appropriately taken care of.

- 3.2.5. There is no restriction on any geographical location for collection. It is preferred that the collections depict a history of living in Fiji. Timelines for collection would be determined in this context.
- 3.2.6. Objects will be available for public viewing and responses to enquiries will be actioned by trained staff.
- 3.2.7. Owner's memory of the object will be recorded as well as photographs and where possible video recordings of the object will be collected. This increases the object's significance.
- 3.2.8. The museum is to work in partnership with other museums, galleries, libraries and community organisations for collaborations with exhibitions, exchanges and research.
- 3.2.9. Objects will be accepted on the proviso that copyright is obtained.
- 3.2.10. The Collections Development Policy is a public document and should be made available on the museum's website, a summary displayed at reception and included in resource kits.
- 3.2.11. A collections development committee comprising 2-3 members will make decisions on collection development.

### 3.3. Criteria

- 3.3.1. This defines the criteria that will guide the collections development policy.
- **Relevance:** does the object align with the museum's purpose and key collecting themes?
  - **Significance:** priority is given to objects that are significant for their historic, aesthetic, technological, research, and/or social and spiritual value.
  - **Provenance and documentation:** what is known about the history of the object - who made it, owned it and, or used it? The story is as important and goes alongside object. Priority should be given to objects with known history supported by documentation.
  - **Rarity and representativeness:** priority should be given to rare or excellent representations of an object.
  - **Condition and integrity:** is the object in good condition? Is it affordable if conservation is required?
  - **Storage:** can the object be properly cared for? For example, if it is large, can adequate space be provided?
  - **Display:** can the object be displayed? For example, if it is fragile, will a special cabinet be required?
  - **Duplications:** do examples of the object already exist in the collection? If there is an object with a higher quality provenance and history than the one already in the collection, deaccessioning the existing one would be of consideration with inclusion of the superior object.
  - **Legal title:** does the donor have legal ownership of the object which allows for the right to donate? Donors should sign a Deed of Gift stating that the object has been gifted and not loaned.

### 3.4. Themes

- 3.4.1. There are defined themes in the collection.
- **Journey and Settlement:** journey from India, arrival and settlement in designated locations.
  - **People and Families:** connections with family on a daily level or participation in festivals and society.
  - **Farming:** working in farms and farming equipment.
  - **Food and Cooking:** produce, food prepared and kitchen utensils.
  - **Domestic Life:** chores and time spent with members of the community.
  - **Clothing and Jewellery:** daily as well as attire for special occasions.
  - **Music:** spiritual as well as entertainment including musical instruments.
  - **Religion:** observances, rituals and holy books.

- **Community Life:** involvement in community life.
- **National Life:** integration and involvement in national life.

#### 4. Care and Conservation

4.1. Define the documentation processes and the storage and conservation methods. On receipt of an object:

- A receipt is issued with details recorded.
- Object is labelled.
- Collections development committee considers and accepts the donated object and a Deed of Gift is signed. For exchanges and commissions, agreed practices are adhered to.
- Item registered, accessioned and catalogued in a database. The catalogue entry comprises the following data fields: Accession number, Object name, Object's Hindi name, Description, Themes, Acquisition method, Donor, Donor phone, Donor email, Date received, Date due, Date returned, Purchase or bequest details, Donor acknowledgement date (Deed of Gift if relevant) and Date catalogued.
- Significance assessment conducted.
- If the object is not accepted, it is returned with a letter of thanks and explanation.
- With no claims within 90 days, object becomes the property of the museum and is disposed of as seen fit.
- For exchanges and commissions, return objects as per agreement.

4.2. All objects will be stored in an appropriate manner to allow for access. They will be subject to regular checks and monitoring for any deterioration in condition. Restorations will be conducted after seeking professional advice.

#### 5. Deaccession and Disposal

5.1. Deaccessioning is the process of removing an object from the collection.

5.2. The collections development committee makes an assessment and recommendation on the basis of the criteria for deaccessioning:

- Object does not comply with current collections development policy.
- Conservation costs are beyond the means of the museum
- Object is not repairable.
- Inferior quality object in collection is replaced by a better quality one.

5.3. The deaccessioned object can be returned to the donor, exchanged or transferred to another organisation, used as educational material, sold or destroyed if beyond repair.

#### 6. Loans

6.1. Any loan or exchange agreements with organisations need to be clearly stipulated stating any loan conditions.

#### 7. Policy Review and Audit

7.1. A collection development policy requires regular review, preferably every 2 to 5 years. The policy details at the back of this document includes current version and review date.

7.2. An audit of the collection is recommended every 5 years.

#### 8. Future directions

8.1. After the development and growth of the historical museum, it is envisaged that a gallery section of the museum will exhibit works from contemporary artists telling stories from their experiences of Fiji.

**References**

1. Museums and Galleries NSW, *Thinking About: Collection Policies Sydney*, Museums and Galleries NSW, Sydney.
2. Winkworth, K. 2005, *MGNSW Collection Policy Template*, Museums and Galleries NSW, Sydney.
3. Museum of Applied Art and Sciences 2018, *MAAS Collection Development Policy*, Museum of Applied Art and Sciences, Sydney.
4. Hillhouse, S. 2011, *Collections Trust Accreditation Guidance Sheet 1: Collections Management Framework*, Collections Trust, UK.

**Policy History**

Policy Amendment	Title: <i>Girmit Museum Collections Development Policy</i> Version: 0.1 Date: March 2021 Review Date: March 2023
Compliance	The policy is associated by the following legislation and guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ISO 21246:2019 - Information and documentation — Key indicators for museums</li> <li>• International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for Museums 2017</li> <li>• Copyright Act 1999</li> </ul>
Owner	Girmit Global Institute