

The Museum of Geology Valentí Masachs: a tool for learning about the use of minerals

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The Museum of Geology Valentí Masachs, from the Polytechnical University of Catalonia, aims to bring the knowledge of the mineral resources to audiences of all ages. The museum is visited by large a number students from primary school to the university and the general public. There are several activities for children. Each activity has attached several questions that different students who visit us must answer. The museum try to show the visitants the importance of the minerals resources and the needs to exploit them with sustainable criteria.

The museum has Three sections. The first is a systematic exposition of minerals and fossils. A second section show the applications of the minerals. Often the perception that society has of geology, and hence of mineral resources, is that it has little to do with the daily life. To combat these ideas, one of the main objectives in the museum is that visitors can understand how important rocks and minerals are for our day to day. To that end, there are dynamic showcases where small samples of minerals are exposed together with products obtained from them. For example, a showcase exhibits a tantalite sample and parts of a mobile phone.

The third section, is an area of reflection where some of the major problems caused by the exploitation of minerals are exposed. Here we use showcases with minerals and products and posters to illustrate the problems that can derived by an inadequate exploitation of minerals., as infantile work, pollution, promotion of wars. Also, It is shown how the same metal can be used for purposes which cause negative effects to society but others who represent a great benefit. Therefore, from the exhibition in the museum, attendees can conclude that if we want continue in a welfare world and demand equality between societies, we will require agood knowledge of our mineral resources, from geology to mineral processing and end use of metals.