

The background of the entire page is a white architectural floor plan on a teal background. The plan shows various rooms, corridors, and structural elements, including what appears to be a staircase and several rectangular rooms of different sizes. The lines are thin and white, creating a complex geometric pattern.

Citizen engagement & education

Learning kit for
heritage civil society
organisations

Impressum

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Foreword



Martine Reicherts

Director-General for
Education and Culture
European Commission

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a horizontal line followed by a stylized, cursive flourish.

At the beginning of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, we are very pleased to introduce this Learning Kit for Heritage Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on the theme of Citizen Engagement & Education, a crucial topic for the existence and the sustainability of CSOs in the heritage field.

This Learning Kit, together with the Learning Kits on *Fundraising* and *Awareness-Raising & Advocacy*, were prepared following the three editions of the Capacity Building Days (CBDs) that Europa Nostra organised in the framework of its Network project “Mainstreaming Heritage” co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union between September 2014 and August 2017. They reply to one of the key priorities of the project which was to strengthen the capacity of cultural heritage players throughout Europe and enhance their skills, competences and know-how in the field of heritage conservation, management, fundraising, communication, education and involvement of the youth by facilitating and stimulating peer-learning and exchanges of best practices at European level.

This publication follows the third edition of the CBDs on “Education & Public Engagement”, which took place in June 2017 in Belgrade, but also brings valuable insights and many more examples from the field to a much wider community of heritage professionals in Europe today.

Over the last decade, the EU strategic policy and legal framework for cultural heritage developed gradually, culminating in the adoption of far-reaching policy documents in 2014 (including the [Council Conclusions](#) of 21 May 2014 on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe and the [European Commission’s Communication](#) of 22 July 2014 “Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage in Europe”). This policy momentum - sustained by the results of the cooperation Report “[Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe](#)” coordinated by Europa Nostra and funded by the EU Culture programme (2007-2013) that aimed to raise greater awareness on the multiple benefits of cultural heritage for Europe’s economy, society, culture and the environment and present strategic recommendations for tapping into heritage’s full potential - has continued under the current European Commission and has led to the decision to organise the [European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018](#). A stronger focus on Education and Culture has been again reached recently on the occasion of the EU [Social Summit](#) of Gothenburg on 17 November 2017 with a EU



**Sneška Quaedvlieg -
Mihailović**

.....
**Secretary General
Europa Nostra**
.....

leaders' working lunch on education and culture. This was preceded by a new Communication of the European Commission entitled "[Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture](#)", and followed on 14 December 2017 by the very first [European Council conclusions](#) related to Education and Culture.

Civil society organisations from the heritage field and the wider cultural field, including Europa Nostra and the entire [European Heritage Alliance 3.3](#), take pride in their active contribution to this momentum illustrated by the recent statement of the President of the European Council Donald Tusk:^[1] *"Europe is first and foremost a community of culture. A rich and powerful heritage makes us proud but above all it makes us who we are, Europeans. Without our cultural heritage Europe simply would not and could not exist!"*

We are therefore confident that the European Year of Cultural Heritage will provide a unique opportunity for EU Institutions and European heritage stakeholders to give a further impetus to EU policy, action and funding in support of cultural heritage and to develop a much more ambitious European Agenda for Education and Culture. At a time when the European Union is faced with unprecedented political, economic, social and ethical challenges and changes, this Year also offers a formidable chance to convey a positive and cohesive message about Europe for its citizens and to promote an integrated, holistic and transversal approach to cultural heritage.

We believe that this Learning Kit will provide the CSOs a better understanding of the notions of citizen engagement and education in heritage, as well as useful and inspiring approaches to these issues which are among the 10 European Initiatives that the European Commission intends to implement in the frame of the Year. We are therefore proud that this learning kit addresses issues identified in the [objectives of the Year legal basis](#) (and more specifically objectives b and j) and will contribute to the tangible and sustainable legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

To end, special thanks to the authors of this publication, Višnja Kisić and Goran Tomka, and to all the participants of the CBDs and external contributions received, including from the organisers of the forums organised by Europa Nostra and its Country Representations in Madrid in May 2016 on "[Social Participation in Heritage Protection](#)" and Turku in May 2017 on "[Sharing Heritage – Citizens Participating in Decision Making](#)".

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Introduction

What are you looking for?

For better understanding of the “participatory turn” in current public policies and the implied challenges, see **pages 8-10**;

For contemporary trends in learning theories and their implications for citizen engagement and education in heritage, see **pages 11-13**;

For better understanding of the histories and specificities of citizen engagement and education in the field of heritage, see **pages 14-19**;

For a selection of practical issues, questions and relevant suggestions in planning, implementing and evaluating citizen engagement and education projects, see **pages 20-39**;

For concrete inspiring cases of citizen engagement and education from diverse parts of Europe and their related contexts, methods and achievements, see **pages 40-62**.

Who is this learning kit for?

For those who are new to the topic and would like to know more on how to engage in this kind of project.

For those who wish to improve and evaluate their running programmes and projects, and/or solve some issues they have encountered so far.

For those who are looking for inspiring and new ways to engage citizens by their peer organisations across Europe.

Why this learning kit?

For many CSOs, citizen engagement is the very essence of what they do. Quite simply, without citizen engagement, there is no civil society. However, CSOs increasingly go beyond their membership and immediate social circles and engage more and more citizens in their work. Without the engagement of a larger number of people, many projects cannot reach their desired goals. At the same time, engagement is impossible without learning. When citizens get involved in safeguarding, interpreting or presenting heritage, they inevitably learn a great deal about history, law, restoration techniques or interpretive methods.

Moreover, contemporary theories of education highlight the crucial role that engagement with a specific context and group plays in enabling learning — understanding a particular topic or acquiring a particular skill. Heritage, with its materiality and contextuality of artefacts, places and practices, is increasingly being recognised as an inspiring platform for learning, building new skills and engaging with peers. Therefore, even though they have traditionally been treated separately, citizen engagement and education are inseparable and intertwined elements which can enhance one another's effectiveness.

Meanwhile, policy-makers and grant-

givers are displaying a growing interest in citizen engagement. For them, supporting projects with a strong participatory dimension has many benefits. When more citizens participate, the project (and consequently the funder) has greater visibility and outreach. Such projects also have an aura of transparency and democracy, which is in line with how most contemporary political cultures would like themselves to be perceived. Moreover, if public money has been invested, then projects with citizen engagement are easier to justify to the electorate. As the “desirability” for citizen engagement grew, the idea of it started to mean less and less, until today it can refer to pretty much any activity in which citizens are involved. As a result, many projects end up not delivering what they have promised.

Recognizing both the need for and challenges of citizen engagement and education, this learning kit aims to offer basic concepts, inspiring methods and specific examples for thinking about and practicing engagement and education in heritage. The first part of the publication is more conceptual, in which we aim to create a better understanding of historical, political and practical issues involved in citizen engagement and education. First, we point to some policy trends and challenges in implementing participatory projects. Then, we take a broader view on the most recent theories of learning and

education and their relation to citizen engagement. Finally, we sketch the brief history of engaging citizens in heritage, as well as the promised benefits for heritage CSOs that engage citizens.

In the second part, we take you through the process of engaging citizens. Every step is filled with various questions, dilemmas and possible issues, including setting objectives, tasks, desired outcomes and goals, managing relations, building trust and collaboration, and sustaining and evaluating the work done. By presenting these questions and offering possible answers, we aim to supplement and reinforce your own process.

In the final part, thanks to the contributions of many CSOs and individuals who shared their insights and practices of citizen engagement and education with us, we present inspiring cases of civil society organisations across Europe. The eight selected cases present the diversity of scope, topics, methods and modalities of engaging and educating individuals, groups and larger communities in maintaining, preserving and interpreting heritage.

Citizen engagement in heritage – policies, concepts, histories

Why are we talking about participation and engagement of citizens so much lately? Why have many heritage organisations turned to engagement and education in their projects and programmes with citizens? What is the relationship between education and engagement? Is education an outdated form of engagement? What can heritage professionals learn from educators and political activists? In this introductory part, we will deal with these basic questions of citizen education and engagement with heritage. We begin with

discussing recent policy interests in citizen engagement and participation. Then we turn to some contemporary theories of knowledge and learning and look for ways to enrich citizen engagement and education projects. We end with a brief historical glance at the ever-evolving relationship between heritage and citizen engagement.

The “participatory turn” in politics and beyond

When we talk of citizens and their engagement, we are necessarily entering the domain of politics, and European politics has changed a lot in the course of the last two decades. One of the crucial changes has been a decline in the engagement of citizens in formal political practices. Since the 1990s, for various and competing reasons, citizens do not perform their voting rights as much as they used to (see graph below).^[1]

Moreover, democracy has become more or less the standard promise of all European

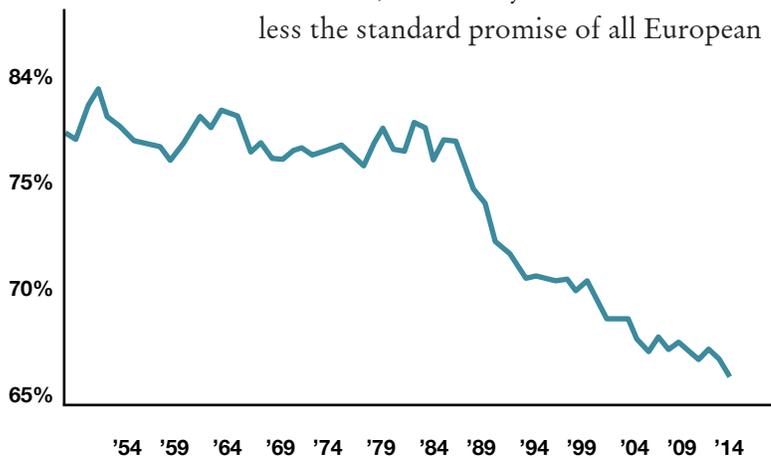


Image 1: Global voter turnout for legislative elections

governments, but democratic standards are often not reached. Finally, with the accessibility of recording equipment and cheap communication channels and tools (such as social media), it is easier than ever to take notice of the various achievements and misdeeds of governments and to encourage some sort

of support or dissent. Taken together, these three factors — more information and visibility of political processes, less interest in politics and problematic governance — are what political thinkers call a “democratic deficit”. It is a claim that the political system as a whole does not function according to democratic standards.

This deficit is inextricably related to the legitimacy of decisions made by politicians. In democratic systems, citizens are the bearers of political legitimacy. In a participatory democracy, they take part directly in decision making. In representative democracies, however, citizens transfer their legitimacy to their representatives (for one election term). So, if only a fraction of the population votes (especially as a consequence of dissatisfaction with the political system), all the decisions made by representatives can easily be dismissed as the rule of a minority. This is why, for a democratic political system, the claim that there is a democratic deficit is always alarming.

To curb the critique and regain legitimacy, the EU^[2] and its national governments have been very vocal in promoting political engagement, participation and democratic governance, as expressed in treaties, declarations and other policy documents.^[3] As a result, studies on the

political habits of European citizens are made; governments are under more scrutiny; all calls for projects, as well as programs of direct beneficiaries like public institutions, have to include a more explicit participatory dimension, etc. Therefore, it has become very common for grant-givers to require from applicants an “active engagement of stakeholders” or “participation of target groups”.

The participation and active engagement of citizens in all kinds of processes carries the hope of creating better, more just societies of tomorrow.

Political participation is, however, just one stream of the wider participatory turn. Whole new companies have been created around participation in content creation, like YouTube or Facebook. At the same time, traditional companies from Adidas to Lego are claiming that they are listening more to their customers and their needs and engaging them in the process of “participatory product design”. Schools are encouraging teachers to create “participatory classrooms”. News media outlets are encouraging “participatory journalism” in which citizens create, rate, and share media content. In “participatory art” and “relational art” artists are creating environments in which the audiences are actually creating or shaping art pieces through their movement or interaction with the piece.

In the field of heritage, this participatory turn is equally present. All the major

international heritage conventions adopted since the beginning of the 21st century explicitly recognise local communities, heritage communities and citizen participation in safeguarding heritage. Heritage organisations are engaging citizens in their work on research, conservation and presentation of heritage. Many museums are striving to become “participatory museums”, with citizens acting as collectors, interpreters, curators, guides. The trend has gone so far that referring to citizen engagement has become not only a standard, but also a sort of a moral stand for those actors in heritage who want to be “progressive”, “open” and “right” and distinguish themselves from the bad, old, elite heritage practices.

This turn to participation is without a doubt a healthy direction in which all actors try to open up their doors to various “others” and create more democratic, inclusive and equal surroundings. The participation and active engagement of citizens in all kinds of processes carries the hope of creating better, more just societies of tomorrow. However, there are several reasons why calls for citizen engagement and participation may often be received with a grain of salt:

First, there is clear political gain and interest in promoting participation that is not necessarily emancipating. It is easier to justify public spending if it will produce utilities for a larger number of people. Participating in local, regional and national cultural projects inspires pride

and strengthens the feeling of belonging to a particular community and its political formations. Citizen engagement in projects is also a way to implement other policy goals, such as national pride, over-development of talent and demand for local cultural goods, intercultural sensitivity and social cohesion.

Second, many of the participatory promises are not fulfilled.^[5] With the surge in policy interest in citizen participation, everything that has the label of being participatory/engaged finds support much easier (some call it “participatory rubber-stamping”^[5]). As a consequence, many organisations and policy-makers employ participation just to get their ideas through and then do not devote enough time, resources and attention to running often very complex and demanding participatory processes.

Participation requires that power, resources and benefits be redistributed in a more egalitarian way.

Third, in many participatory projects there is the implicit promise that the participation of a person in a small issue or project will lead to much wider political engagement. However, many observers warn that participation in particular projects (like heritage, media, education or arts) cannot be equated with political participation in the full sense of the word. While the former is bounded to rather small and marginal decision-making spaces (“political sandboxes”), the latter is

a much more serious partaking in the distribution of power and resources.

Because participation is very valuable as a practice but very vague as term, there is a high need to acknowledge that participation is about more than just any kind of engagement with anything. Participation as a democratic practice means that someone enters certain spaces of power and processes of decision-making; that they shift from passive observers to active decision-makers; that they gain the opportunity to shape their lives in accordance with their views; and that they gain the space for expressing their views and joining the debate on what society should be like.

Participation requires that power, resources and benefits be redistributed in a more egalitarian way. However, for this to happen, individuals and groups have to gain more than power. To participate means to also have certain visibility, social connections, access to information and most notably, knowledge. Although participation is often considered a substitute for education practices in heritage (especially when it comes to engaging adults), participation without learning is no more than entertainment and consumption. For this reason, we understand education and citizen engagement as two sides of the same coin.

New approaches to learning and engagement

Heritage educators who follow developments in education theories and practices know well that education, whatever the age of the person, is impossible without direct, active engagement with the context, subject and social group in which the learning is being produced. Conversely, those participation mediators who deeply engage with citizens know that any meaningful and developmental engagement happens through processes of mutual learning, translation, exploration and instruction. This is why engagement and education should be understood as intertwined processes for becoming part of a particular community of practice. In other words, they are ways of becoming knowledgeable, connected and empowered to participate and act in formerly closed and inaccessible circles.

In the following section, we therefore discuss some of the underlying assumptions of the new approaches to education and the crucial role that engagement plays in learning processes and vice versa. As a red thread throughout, we will use some contemporary theories of knowledge and examples of teaching and education and look at possible consequences for heritage educators.

Knowledge is action

When we say “knowledge”, most people would understand it as an organized collection of information that sits in our heads. Old theories of the mind range from tabula rasa, a blank slate to write on to mid-20th-century informatics theories, in which the human brain is compared to a computer drive — processing, loading and inserting information. People have tried to understand the dazzling complexity of our brains by using less complex, quotidian metaphors like pen and paper, calculator or computer. However, our brains are not really computers, and this kind of explanation has a very detrimental effect on education. It portrays learners’ brains as static surfaces which are objects of education – manipulated by teachers, as experts in learning. To the contrary, the way our brains work requires constant activity and dynamism on the part of those who learn, and ways of learning are very individual, just like our eyes or fingerprints are.

So, the first and most difficult change in thinking that we need to deal with is that knowledge is not a thing (an inscription or data) in our minds. Knowing is inseparable from thinking, moving, seeing, speaking. It is in these activities that knowledge is shown. When we write, fix roofs, prepare lunch, sing or fundraise, we

perform our knowledge. Consequently, it cannot be given or taken, nor poured into someone's head. Through the practice of doing something, we become knowledgeable in that practice. If you like, knowledge is not a noun, but a verb. Instead of owning knowledge, we are knowing.

There are many consequences for educators and heritage activists if we accept this change of explanation. First of all, there is the shared responsibility of "teachers" and "learners" for the learning process. Second, learners (if they have the will to learn), know the best ways to learn, they just have to discover them through trial and experimentation. Finally, teachers are not giving something that learners are taking. Rather, it is a shared process (of analysing, remembering, inventing, painting, fixing, singing).

What educators and activists can do is to share our ways of doing and thinking with learners and participate in the same process or activity, in which participants will learn through their own doing and thinking. This also requires the creation of open, trusted and flexible learning spaces which allow adaptation, experimentation and collaboration.

The body knows

Learning does not happen solely in the mind. Knowledge is also in our bodies as we move, handle and touch objects, other people and ourselves. It is also sentient and affective. We learn not only by listening and seeing, but also by touching, smelling, speaking, moving, walking...

Learning is not only a cold, rational, cognitive process, but always also emotional.

This has a tremendous effect on citizen engagement and education. Stiff, emotionally suppressed and overly disciplined spaces, such as seating-only classrooms, are not optimal for learning and engagement. It has been shown that kinetic learning, learning through moving the body, is essential for many people. A learning space does not necessarily have to be a playground or a circus, but it should be relaxing, welcoming, emotionally supportive and pleasant. Multisensory learning experiences are very important as well. If learners can listen, touch, hear, smell and see, there is a much higher chance for a really quality learning process to occur. This is something that contemporary museums know very well.

Knowledge likes to hide

No, not really! As we said, knowledge is not an object or a person with its own plans. But, it is true that much of knowing is not visible to the eye or translatable to our languages. What scientists, teachers and experts of all kinds are able to mark as "knowledge" is only a tiny part of all the knowledge that is created and used by people in their everyday practices. Much of knowing is unconscious, tacit and unspoken. "It goes without saying" and often cannot be explained by language.

This is where "learning by doing" and "trial and error" approaches to teaching shine. Many things that are learned do not have to be explained. Evelyn Glennie, a

famous deaf drummer, once told a story about how her music teacher, instead of holding the first class, just gave her a snare drum to take home and produce all the possible sounds she could. What an introduction to drumming — no explanation, no guidance. Just trust in the body and experimentation through playing.

Knowing is situated

Every “knowing” is defined by specific historical, social and political circumstances. There is no such thing as universal knowledge, because every situation and every practice requires the practitioner to be knowledgeable in a specific, situated way. In other words, knowledge is created while it is being performed in a particular situation.

This means that the learning process has to be sensitive to its surroundings. Importing theories and practices from other places and times without connecting them to the here and now is therefore not a good idea.

Knowing is social

Knowing and learning are not isolated practices. In most cases, knowing is performed, created, shaped and distributed within a group and together with others. Social relations, community building and belonging are thus inseparable from knowing.

This implies that learning processes have to take into consideration all of the social relations within the learner’s group. Learning in smaller and larger groups,

learning by teaching others, learning from others’ success and failures, these are all very important aspects of learning that are quite different from traditional, individualistic classroom study. This also means that learning spaces should be chosen and shaped to stimulate learning through collaboration, sharing and mutual challenge and support.

Furthermore, learning means being able to act in a different way within a wider community. For this reason, it is important to reflect on the implications of learning for wider social actions, attitudes and beliefs. This is why, observed from a wider social perspective, learning can be emancipatory and empowering, as well as enslaving and limiting.

What about objects?

Finally, knowledge entangles not only people. It involves all kinds entities, ideas, living beings and artificial objects. Excluding them from the learning process makes knowing much harder. Natural science teachers know it well — a classroom without models, drawings and, recently, mobile apps and touchscreens is not a good classroom. In the case of learning about heritage, incorporating objects, artefacts, sounds, videos, tools and living bearers of heritage is the right way to go.

Perspectives on citizen engagement and education in heritage

In all cultures across the world and almost all historic periods, there has been some kind of relationship with the past, as well as with the symbolic objects or practices that have been inherited from previous generations. Depending on the organisation of those practices, there were either particular individuals or groups within the community that were entitled to care for the objects, rituals and customs deemed of special value. Other community members participated to a different extent and in different ways. (Just think of priests and precious religious objects; storytellers in illiterate communities; shamans using symbolic objects and rituals for communicating with the past; or the curator-keeper of statues in the Roman Empire).

Moreover, the process of becoming an adult was intertwined with the customization and learning about these specific practices, texts or customs as young. Therefore, becoming part of a culture and community happened through education and engagement within that very community, which in turn ensured that the norms, practices and important places would be taken care of by the next generations. Of course, with each new generation, new encounters with other cultures, and change of context and circumstances, these practices were altered, revalued, neglected and recreated.

Doesn't that sound like Faro?

Even though parts of these processes resemble the definitions of heritage valorisation, use and care as defined by the 2005 Council of Europe's [Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society](#)^[6] it is impossible to understand the contemporary appeal of citizen engagement in heritage without posing some questions. First of all, who are the citizens we are talking about and when did they come into being? When has heritage become a special field of human action, separated from everyday life — a field that you learn about or engage with? And what was the new professional community that took over the role from priests, shamans or storytellers in selecting, protecting and communicating the meanings and values of new societies? And why has it become important to engage or educate citizens?

The birth of professional heritage institutions

All these questions are bound by some of the key concepts of the modern European societies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a period that has defined the modern concepts of heritage, citizenship and education. The ideas behind democratic revolutions and the overthrow of monarchical regimes contributed to the creation of equal rights of individuals as citizens (however, males only) instead of the king's subjects. Enlightenment ideas

with belief in reason, learning and education were seen as a way towards emancipation from religion, superstition and monarchical powers. And finally, the creation of modern nation states required a different form of community identification and different types of narratives and memories that could substitute the attachment to monarchy or religion. Those have also contributed to the creation of modern public institutions which would take professional care of areas of public life that are deemed important for society as a whole.

Through the efforts of early heritage advocates and professionals, modern heritage was formed as an area of material remains from the past that are of specific value for identity, education and good civic conduct for a newly formed citizenship. Moreover, a whole new set of institutions — museums, archives, commissions for the protection of monuments — were formed to take care of this public realm. With them, new areas of knowledge were developed, new professional elites formed together with new standards and ethics of professional conduct. Therefore, heritage went from being an everyday practice of relating to the past to becoming a specialized field, with a specialized body of knowledge and specialized institutions, which citizens (i.e. non-professionals) can only visit, experience and get information about. This approach to heritage has also been linked with the approach to education, in which some actors have knowledge which is to be transmitted without alteration to

those who are “empty vessels”.

Furthermore, this new approach had quite exclusive criteria for the selection of heritage, criteria which neglected many rural, poor, female, uneducated and vernacular creations and practices. This selection, more often than not, was a reflection of power structures, and what was deemed desirable by the elites.

Consequently, instead of bringing the emancipation and democracy for all, Europe’s early modern shifts contributed to yet another form of social control.

Heritage meets democracy, once again

Already in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were voices arguing for the inclusion of non-elite and non-urban phenomena in heritage, as well as for approaches to heritage that are more integrated into the life of citizens. These for example included the movement of open air museums that would holistically address the everyday life of rural communities. Simultaneously, citizen associations were established to care for the local heritage they found important. Heritage institutions also began to introduce citizen volunteering, which today plays an important role in the work of many heritage organisations.

Following the human rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s, voices calling for the democratisation of the heritage field gained prominence. The movements of ecomuseums in francophone countries, community museums in North America or integrated museums in Latin America all addressed the need to engage citizens

in the processes of heritage valorisation, selection, protection and communication; to broaden the concept of heritage so as to include the diversity of practices, memories, voices, objects and places deemed important for a particular community; and to use heritage for the education, emancipation, future development and improvement of opportunities and quality of life within their communities. Unlike prominent heritage institutions where citizens are invited to be passive short-term visitors, the new approach to heritage placed it as a part of developmental, emancipatory and democratic practices that engage citizens in its very creation, where they can learn reflect and discuss throughout the process. The past, instead of being a fixed place assessed through outstanding sites and objects, should become a place of reflection, critical thinking and social imagination, addressing social and political challenges and allowing societies to think about how they want to create a better future. Most of these movements have called for new models of organising public heritage organisations as places of collective action and education, in which professionals take the role of facilitators and mediators, with a critical stand and ethics oriented toward social justice.

From objects of representation to represented subjects

During the 1980s and 1990s, critical voices within the field of museums and heritage started addressing the politics of representation of different social groups, practices of inclusion and exclusion, as

well as power relations entangled within museum and heritage practices.^[7]

Furthermore, the Burra Charter created by ICOMOS Australia (first time in 1979) was created as the first heritage policy document to implicitly address the colonial past and explicitly recognise the more active role that indigenous communities should play in heritage making. These ideas contributed to the understanding of heritage as a socially and politically produced field, which both reflects and impacts how certain social groups and communities are positioned, valued and represented within a particular society. Promoters of participation in this context called for the change from treating social groups and citizens as the passive objects of representation curated by professionals, towards active thinking subjects that should be involved in the very processes of framing the images and identities related to them. On a global scale, the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) aimed to recognise the diversity of social practices connected to the past that are performed across the globe, which fall outside the (until then) mainstream idea of the materiality of heritage.

Democratising technologies?

Due to the democratisation of images via reproductions in the 1960s, the role of institutions and professionals as exclusive mediators of heritage has been called into question. Andre Malraux has written about the imaginary museum, an intimate museum that can be created and owned by

each individual, following individual interests, valorisation and associations in ordering objects and meanings. Furthermore, during the 1980s and 1990s there was an increased number of volunteer-run museums, in which local community members gather to protect and interpret parts of their local heritage. The number of such civic museums has been growing ever since. With the advancement of technologies and the digital sphere, the idea of the imaginary museum has gained incredible possibilities. Not only has the digitisation of heritage allowed for individuals and groups to select and communicate their preferred heritages, independent of the practices of public institutions, but the internet has redefined what community means, allowing groups to gather based on their interests and values, independent of their location, ethnicity, age or class. This gave rise to online museums and online heritage platforms which rely on heritage crowdsourcing – engaging a large group of undefined individuals in an effort to transcribe, document, collect, curate or interpret heritage in the digital sphere.

Mainstreaming and appropriation

In the policy field, the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for the Society (Faro 2005) has incorporated much of the previously outlined ideas related to the nature of heritage as a social practice, the right and responsibility of individuals and communities to value, create and manage heritage, the idea of heritage serving wider

social goals, as well as the notion of a heritage community, not bound by background, territory, ethnicity, identity or citizenship in a particular country. A number of related declarations, communications, calls for project proposals and advocacies followed the Faro Convention.

What we see however, is that such mainstreaming has also been influenced by the neoliberal turn in politics, in which the democratising perspective on participation can easily slip into its competing counterpart – participatory consumption. The latter is encouraged because, the argument goes, it leads to increased emotional attachment and loyalty to a brand, institution or organisation, higher effectiveness and visibility of messages promoted by organisations, as well as the creation of communities around products, institutions, objects or practices. Its main proponents have been private companies and corporations, whose success was soon to be recognised by politicians promoting neoliberal ideas, as well as professionals looking to sustain their institutions, both financially and politically. Translated to the heritage field, it leads to the situation in which CSOs and institutions have embraced the idea of audience development, relying on interactive exhibitions, empowerment-lite participation, "edutainment" and marketing practices, in order to attract larger and more diverse groups of visitors. Oftentimes, this has come without questioning the role in society that

heritage CSOs and institutions want to play and the very essence of the content, narratives and power relations that come hand-in-hand with this position.

Today, much of the critical literature points to the contradictions and limitations in the policies, discourses and practices related to citizen participation in heritage. With the extensive presence of “participation” in the public discourse, this word has come to mean many different things to many different people, thereby combining diverse elements of the available practical, political and theoretical tools. What is often lacking in such diversity is reflection on the political and social assumptions that stand behind the practices we promote, as well as the implications of such practices for society.

What can citizen engagement bring to heritage today?

For the heritage CSOs that want to build their practices around citizen engagement and education, there is a whole set of positive aspects for their organisation, the citizens involved, the heritage that is focused on, as well as society as a whole. First of all, unlike heritage institutions, civil society organisations in heritage are by definition groups of citizens joined by common interests in protecting, interpreting or using certain heritage. On the one hand, unlike institutions, this means that they can stay niche and small without needing to be accountable for the rest of society, as long as they do not use public resources. On the other hand, involving more citizens in their work means that CSOs can spread their ideas,

values and interests to the wider society, creating heritage communities and social movements around their work.

Engaging other citizens means that the work of the organisation can be developed, increased and oftentimes sustained for a longer period of time. Furthermore, “new-coming” citizens, with their perspectives and knowledge, are a good basis for influencing wider social circles, as they often act as translators between an organisation, its mission and the rest of society. Rather than relying on the legal protection of heritage prescribed by policies or the technical protection of heritage led by conservation, restoration and documentation, wider citizen engagement and education in heritage contribute to the social protection of heritage that is led by aware, thoughtful and engaged citizens. Therefore, the sense of ownership that is created through engagement is one of the best bases for the wider understanding, valorisation and protection of heritage in today’s societies.

Furthermore, heritage as a socially constructed practice is being developed through human action, serving different interests. The idea of a fixed number of entitled public institutions or social groups that care for the uses of the past is what props up the hegemonic nature of single narratives, mainstream representations and fixed identities. In this regard, the engagement of diverse groups of citizens in the processes of defining, selecting, collecting, valorising, documenting, protecting, caring for and interpreting heritage can lead to a more

open, diverse, broad, dynamic and pluralistic field of heritage.

As many of the above concepts of heritage participation suggest, heritage is deeply reflective and embedded into the wider political, economic and social positions and struggles of today. The right to history, representation, heritage and remembrance is deeply connected to human dignity and sense of belonging, as well as to recognition and power structures. Therefore, heritage is inseparable from human rights, as well as collective cultural rights. In contrast to the promotion of official narratives and histories by mainstream heritage institutions, CSOs oftentimes address contested and neglected memories and histories, involving marginalised groups in these processes. Inclusion of such social groups in heritage making processes can act as a starting point for empowerment and larger claims for political rights.

Furthermore, the processes by which citizens from diverse backgrounds engage with and learn through heritage can be used as a platform for exploring identity, intercultural dialogue and better understanding across social classes, genders, ethnicities, professions and other frames of belonging.

Finally, even though participation in heritage cannot substitute wider citizen participation in political decision-making, it can act as an agora for emancipation. This is precisely because a critical look at heritage can provide an understanding of the continuities and changes in societies, politics, economies, ideologies and alternative positions throughout history. This in turn can provide the basis for reflecting and debating on current social challenges, and inspiring people to imagine and act upon a more just and desirable future.

Participatory governance of heritage within the EU policies

Since 2014 the EU has initiated a series of policy actions and adopted related policy documents in regard to cultural heritage, each of which highlight the commitment to citizen participation in cultural heritage. The Communication of the European Commission [Towards an Integrated Approach to Cultural Heritage](#) (2014) recognises heritage as a common good and common responsibility, implying the participation of public, civil and private sector in heritage safeguarding and advancement. The same year, the Council of the European Union, adopted [Conclusions on participatory governance of cultural heritage](#),

emphasising that the involvement of all interested parties in decision-making, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating cultural heritage policies and programmes can increase public awareness of the values that it represents, reinforce transparency and accountability in the use of public resources, and build trust between citizens and public authorities. Cultural heritage has also been set as one of the priorities of the new [Work Plan for Culture for 2015-2018](#), and participatory governance of heritage has been a focal topic of the [Open method of Coordination](#) (OMC) in 2015, mobilising the experts from ministries of culture and national

cultural institutions of the EU Member states to share related experiences and policies across the EU, one of the outcomes being the report [Mapping of practices in the EU Member States on Participatory governance of cultural heritage](#). Finally, through the Voices of Culture, a framework for structural dialogue between civil society stakeholders and the European Commission on culture, the theme of [Participatory governance of cultural heritage](#) has also been addressed in 2015 resulting in the [Brainstorming Report from the session on Participatory Governance of CH](#).

Navigating the challenges of citizen engagement and education

Engaging citizens in heritage-related projects requires a specific and demanding effort. As in so many participatory processes which involve great numbers of diverse individuals, things can get very complicated. The following text aims to get you going, when the going gets tough. Here, we present a select number of very common challenges for citizen engagement projects and offer advice and approaches that have proven useful.

The following text can be read as a sort of checklist. Go through it with your already finished project or the one that you have just planned and think of the different aspects as you read. How did we do that or how do we plan to do it? Is this relevant to our work? If yes, is there something that feels wrong or out of place now after reading?

Pre-engagement

We trust that any idea can be good as long as it is tested and improved through dialogue. This is why we recommend that you test your idea and project concept through a series of questions and debates which includes diverse individuals. These groups can evolve over time until you are confident that the idea will be well received in the widest possible circles. The following offers some possible considerations, questions and themes for discussions inside and outside your organisation, as well as some examples and cases for inspiration.

Why do we want it? Evaluating the project from an organisation's perspective

Citizen engagement can be beneficial, but also overly demanding and disappointing, for organisations and citizens alike. Before initiating such a project, it is good to be fully aware why you want it. To do so, you need to analyse your organisation well — its developmental trajectory, its mission, its current environment, its reputation.

You can start with these questions:

- Why do we want to initiate a citizen engagement project?
 - What good can we achieve by engaging citizens that would otherwise be impossible?
 - What kind of future situation are we enabling through the project?
 - Which knowledge, experience or memory do we want to stimulate or learn from participants?
- What kind of relations with citizens are we about to create?
 - What kind of relations between potential participants are we encouraging?
 - What kind of relations to heritage are we promoting and why?

The responses to these questions lead to better understanding of the very basic question: why is the project happening in the first place? So, be very clear and precise about your own goals because this is the cornerstone of a sincere and just citizen engagement project.

Sometimes, engagement can be as simple as a call for citizens to donate their memories and stories, as in the case of the [Little Museum of Dublin](#), winner of a [European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award](#) in 2016. Today a favourite local museum, it was created as a private initiative aiming to display and tell citizens' perspectives of the city. They created their museum collection solely by participative collecting, in which citizens contributed their objects, memories and stories related to 20th-century Dublin. Citizens are not engaged in the process of managing and running the museum, but they still contribute to the museum by sharing objects and stories, guiding tours across the city and suggesting new topics to be addressed by the museum.

Can we do it? Assessing capacity for engagement

It is often said that in participatory projects, participants are the key actors. This sounds nice, however, it is seldom said that actually leaving all the work to the participants is the root cause of failed, exploitative participatory projects. In all projects, citizen engagement included, it is the initiator who carries the most risk, work and responsibility. Planning the project, fundraising, communicating, troubleshooting, motivating, mediating, evaluating, problem-solving, reporting, building reputation... this is just a part of

the list of tasks that cannot and should not be “crowdsourced”. They are on your to do list and should mostly remain there. Participants can support, empower, strengthen and make the whole process a truly unforgettable experience, but don’t lose sight of the fact that you will need all sorts of resources to successfully initiate and run a participatory project.

This is why it is crucial to assess your capacities and strengths, as well as the risks and weaknesses, before you actually start. Here are some of the questions that can support you along the way.

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1. Does the Board agree with the initiative and are they ready to support you along the way?
 2. Are the main people behind the project experienced with running citizen engagement projects? If not, what additional knowledge is needed?
 3. Do you need to hire an additional person with the required experience?
 4. Are all the key people behind the project planning to stay in the organisation for the duration of the project?
 5. Do all the employees understand and support the project?
 6. Is your organisational culture in tune with participatory culture? Are you ready for open and flat decision-making procedures? Are you comfortable with opening up some questions in relation to your usual practices?
 7. Do you currently have enough resources for the project? What kind of financial changes or additional fundraising is needed? Can you undertake the additional effort?
 8. Do you have the support of your partners and donors for initiating the project?
-

Why would “they” want it? Evaluating the project from participants’ perspective

In a study on motivation for citizen engagement, researchers conclude that: “volunteers are motivated by a complex framework of factors that dynamically change throughout their cycle of work on scientific projects”.^[9] Of course, some motivations are general, but the way they are perceived and defined are personal. People have very different reasons for participating in or abstaining from a project. We know from several studies that intrinsic motivation is most important. This kind of motivation stems from the task itself, not a pressure or reward that comes as a consequence (extrinsic motivation). It is rarely rewards,

fame or status that are the most important when it comes to creative citizen engagement tasks, but rather having fun, enjoying, making social ties, learning and a sense of selfless contribution to the world (altruistic motivation).^[10] However, every project and every group is somewhat different. To find out what exactly can attract the citizens that you want to engage, you need to understand their positions, interests, knowledge and motivation.

When talking about participation, many would like to think of their participative projects as an invitation for everyone to join. This however, rarely happens, because even when the organisation claims full openness, “desirable” profiles are

Insiders as partners

Being a small heritage CSO, it is quite tricky to be familiar with the experiences, background and interests of groups that you might want to involve, especially when you want to go beyond your usual network. This is why having partners who have long-term experience of working with a particular group is a good idea. For a project engaging school children, talk to teachers, parents or school associations; if you want to engage retired people look for a partnership with some

of the associations, clubs or nurseries for the elderly; if you plan to engage groups with disabilities, look for the valuable insights, contacts and help of the organisations and associations that gather these groups. Engaging these insider organisations as mediators from the very beginning will increase the chance that your goals and strategies of engagement are in line with the capacities, needs and interests of this group.

This is exactly what the [Faith in Maintenance](#) programme from the UK, winner of a [European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award](#) in 2010 has done to connect and consult with its target community. Wanting to train community members to care for the religious buildings in their towns or neighbourhoods, they first consulted with a number of religious groups, assessing the needs and interest for such project.

implicitly represented in the way that the call for action is outlined, the specific theme it addresses, the particular heritage niche in focus or the profile of the organisation and its network. This is why it is much better to think thoroughly about whom you want to engage and why and clearly define your target groups, in terms of age, specific interests, or other background. This can help you plan activities and processes that fit into some of the specific cultural needs and interests

of the participants and increases the chance that particular people will feel addressed by your projects. This knowledge will be the foundation for your promotion and communication with participants, as well as argumentation for raising funds and establishing partnerships. Here are some questions that can help you along the way.

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1. What is the target group or citizen profile that your project is specifically suited for?
 2. What are the valuable insights, experiences, memories and knowledge that participants can bring to the project?
 3. What kind of new learning, experience and insights will the engagement provide to participants?
 4. What kind of group-building, socialising or belonging can the project bring to them?
 5. How will the engagement create a sense of contribution among citizens?
 6. What kinds of memories that the project safeguards or awakens could be of interest to particular groups?
 7. How can the learning and engagement be fun, awakening or rewarding to participants?
 8. What are the obstacles to participation that can make it difficult for some citizens to participate? What can be the strategies and interventions to make engagement possible for desired groups?
-

What is there for heritage? Evaluating the project through heritage lenses

Inspiring and meaningful engagement initiatives in the field of heritage go well beyond “engagement for engagement’s sake” and truly contribute to the particular domain of the heritage sphere. This can be as general as cleaning a local heritage site (as in the case of Improve a Heritage Site from Norway, the winner of a [European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award 2012](#)), as demanding as adopting a heritage site and interpreting and managing it (as in the case of the “[Adopt a Monument](#)” project from Finland that won a [European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award 2016](#)), or as specific as collecting the memories and oral histories of a particular group whose heritage is not a part of mainstream archival and museum collections (as in the case of project “[History that doesn’t exist](#)” and “[Oral History Kosovo](#)”, which, respectively, engaged women in collecting the

documents of female histories in Montenegro and told the stories and memories of women in Kosovo). Sometimes, the engagement can happen only after a process of training, education or instruction takes place (as in the case of the “[Training for the Owners of Rural Buildings](#)” from Estonia, winner of a [European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award 2015](#), which aims to train owners to care of their traditional houses, or the “[Faith in Maintenance](#)” project from the UK, winner of a [European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award 2010](#), in which volunteers were trained to do the basic maintenance and inspection of historic places of worship in their towns). The options are numerous and depend on the focus and scope of your organisation, the gap in heritage safeguarding and the specific groups engaged.

Here are some of the questions that can shed light on the heritage aspects of your project.

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1. What is the existing gap in collecting, researching, documenting, maintaining and interpreting the particular heritage that your organisation deals with?
 2. How can citizen engagement improve, expand or deepen your scope and ways of working with or understanding heritage?
 3. What are the particular memories, documents or historic objects that your target group can contribute?
 4. Is there any specific knowledge and skills that participants need to have in order to contribute? What kind of training or education process can you provide so as to equip participants with relevant skills?
 5. In which ways might current heritage laws and measures prohibit the engagement of citizens and how can this be overcome? Do you need particular permissions from public authorities in order to make the initiative possible?
-

Digital crowdsourcing projects in the heritage domain

In recent years, engagement with heritage via digital tools and in the virtual environment has been extremely popular. Galleries, libraries, archives and museums are inviting citizens to tag, analyse, scan, classify or intervene in other ways with their collections. Unlike face-to-face engagement where participants interact, contribute and learn on the spot, crowdsourcing projects in the digital sphere require highly autonomous, explicitly specified, less complex and well guided tasks.^[16]

Oomen and Aroyo^[17] have classified the types of citizen engagement in crowdsourcing projects in the heritage domain, some of which have already been tested or could easily be implemented outside the digital domain:

1. **Correction and transcription** — inviting citizens to correct or transcribe results of the already finalised digitalisation process;
2. **Contextualisation** – inviting citizens to add contextual information to the digitised heritage object;
3. **Collecting** – inviting citizens to contribute their objects and memories to already digitised thematic collections or exhibitions;
4. **Classification** – inviting citizens to create descriptive metadata or tags related to the objects from digitised collections;

5. **Curating** – inviting citizens to select, curate and interpret digitised heritage content, creating their online exhibitions;
6. **Crowdfunding** – inviting citizens to donate money or other resources needed for a particular heritage project.

The online heritage platform Erfgoedplus.be (Belgium), winner of a [European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award](#) in 2017, is a long-term crowdsourcing platform for recording and providing access to all cultural heritage in, or related to, the territories of the Belgian provinces of Limburg and Vlaams-Brabant. It consists of a web-based registration tool to allow managers of small, local collections to make an inventory according to current professional standards, a data repository for collecting all relevant information and the website www.erfgoedplus.be for public access. It also provides services to assist collection holders in the usage of the tools and proper standards, so that the quantity, quality and sustainability of their efforts is enhanced.

Framing the engagement — defining processes, goals, outcomes

Having a clear and precise frame of reference before the process starts is crucial for engagement projects. Goals, roles, tasks and outcomes that are not properly defined in the planning process will be hard to explain and discuss with participants. That is when chaos and demotivation make their way in. Research shows that in cases where intrinsic motivation is crucial (such as amateur and altruistic projects), tasks have to be defined so that they are inspiring and entertaining, so that they require a range of skills to be fulfilled (they are not monotonous) and so that there is an autonomy to the task, meaning that the

results of a single person or group are easily recognisable to the participants themselves (that there is a feeling of “we did this!”)^[18]. For example, when clearing and conserving a small heritage site, there are a range of tasks to be done, the whole action is meaningful, and after the work is done, one can turn back and admire the work (and take a photo of the work, of course). No wonder such projects are highly popular in many countries (see the case of Improve a Heritage Site in the third part of this learning kit, p. 41).

If you have thought about all of the above-mentioned aspects, here are some suggestions that can make planning easier.

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1. Define the process and type of engagement, with clear tasks in relation to the above-mentioned planning steps (motives, organisational needs and culture, target groups, and heritage niche).
 2. Think about the learning and education process that will make engagement more enriching.
 3. If relevant, define clear guidelines related to the quality of contribution that is expected from participants, together with illustrative examples.
 4. Create space for questions, discussions, interactions and learning among participants.
 5. Create — in the case of digital participation — the possibility of meeting in the ‘real’ world.
 6. Plan ways to experiment and monitor the realisation, and leave space for modifying the tasks if needed.
-

In the course of engagement

After the call has been made and citizens put their time and effort into engaging with the proposed tasks, it is time to manage, monitor, adapt and improve the engagement process. In the following, we will offer some challenges and advice for this phase of the project.

Balance the power

The very basic division within the majority of citizen engagement projects is between participants, as the lay members, and initiators, as the professional and more experienced ones. The imbalance of knowledge, decision-making and experiences inevitably creates an imbalance of power. For many projects, this is a crucial problem. In the extremes, there are two opposing ways to handle this challenging situation.

On the one side, imbalance is accepted as such and justified at the start of the process, while roles and positions are assumed according to that. Initiators control and evaluate the learning and engagement process. The participants follow and conform to the rules. The problem with such clear-cut divisions of roles and an emphasised power imbalance

is that the whole process of learning and engagement can easily become estranged from the participants. Their knowledge and experiences remain hidden just because of their role. Ultimately, such a division mostly serves the initiators. On the other side, some projects tend to “erase all divisions” and empower participants to “take over” all the decision-making. However, such an attitude can also be very problematic. Without guidance and basic support, engagement can turn into a vague, unstructured and overly chaotic process. Moreover, this approach tends to silence professionals who have devoted a lot of effort in collecting experiences, building skills and learning ways to present their knowledge to others.

A more balanced approach than those two would be to accept a degree of imbalance, but look into the ways in which all the relevant skills, experiences and insights, no matter who owns them, can be shared in the best possible way to contribute towards learning and the advancement of the whole project. The following questions can serve as a departure for such a trajectory.

-
1. Are the teachers/mediators the only ones who can share their skills, experiences, perceptions and knowledge?
 2. What are the things that participants can bring? Are there ways in which citizens can become, at some point, also teachers?
 3. Who decides on the best way to go about learning? How do you know that the learning process was agreeable and successful (and who defines success)?
 4. What are the particular ways to experiment with the balance of power in your project through probing, sharing and constant adaptation?
 5. How are these decisions evaluated and changed?
-

Offer a diversity of roles

Some citizen engagement and education projects tend to be fully preconceived and linear from beginning to end. The tasks, outcomes and results are pre-set, and any possible meandering is understood as time lost. However, with all the key attributes of the process predefined, there is very little freedom left for participants to experiment, try out different options and adopt the process. What usually anchors such an approach is the fear amongst educators, activists and community managers that with the loss of control, things might turn out catastrophic: What if my authority is undermined? What if it turns into chaos?

However, there is a wide margin between chaos and an overly tight plan. In an optimal scenario, the roles and ways of commitment should not be defined in too strict of terms. Within the set programme, some degree of flexibility should be enabled for participants to define their tasks, responsibilities, methods and desired goals and outcomes. The goal of

such an approach is to support participants in engaging and learning in the best possible way for them — in other words, to make the process their own.

In the case of heritage projects, some aspects of the process that could be adaptable and flexible are:

1. Objects, sites or intangible heritage that will be at the focus of the engagement (learning, preservation, mapping, classification...);
2. Tempo of activities and time invested (meetings once a week, every day or once a year);
3. Amount of effort put into the project (some would take more responsibility and assume leading roles, while others are fine with marginal contributions);
4. Location and environment of activities (offline or online; in a cafe or in a school);

5. Social arrangements (working individually, in small or larger groups);
6. Learning methods (visual, verbal or audible contents);
7. Working methods (some could do the cleaning, some cataloguing, some transport).

Create a sense of ownership

In so many stories on participatory projects, a sense of ownership and dedication are the key to a sustained endeavour. To start with, sense of ownership is a situation in which a participant can call the action or outcome “mine” or “ours”. Although this has been emphasised over and over again in participatory projects, there are many factors that contribute towards it. According to research,^[19] the feeling of ownership over a process is sustained through a sense of control, intimacy and investment into the process. Let us see how those can be achieved:

1. A sense of control over the process takes place when there is a degree of autonomy of work and freedom of self-expression given to participants. Enabling participants to shape and adapt the process and the activities is beneficial.
2. Intimacy and association with the process can take place when the process is in line with the values and beliefs of participants, so that they can more easily feel the “we” behind what they do. Social networks and

ties built during the action, joint events, trips, dinners and similar events can be very helpful.

3. The more time and energy is invested in the process and the more exciting, engaging and rewarding are the tasks and activities, then the more investment and strengthened sense of ownership from participants.

Make learning and engagement spaces multi-voiced

Learning and engagement processes in the heritage domain can contribute to empowerment, critical thinking and facing radically new perspectives. This is impossible in a learning and engagement situation where only one (or a fully consonant set of) voice(s) is heard and dissent is discouraged. Univocal “classrooms” are rarely exciting, engaging and encouraging, because they keep participants either inside their comfort zone or deeply frustrated if they fit outside of this zone. Being able to voice a different position not only means freedom and encouragement for the person in question, but also makes the process richer and the result more authentic. This is why polyphony and even tension and disagreement, although demanding to manage, are important elements of an engagement process.

When dealing with heritage related projects, multivocality is especially important, as it allows both the participants and the organisation to question dominant historical narratives and step outside of the official memories.

Understanding the diversity of experiences, memories and perceptions of the same historic place, person or event, can often counter stereotypes, make participants more sensitive and appreciative of diversity and create a good ground for navigating the pluralities of the present day.

Moreover, this multivocality can enrich the current knowledge and information related to the particular heritage in question, linking it to experiences of diverse social groups, alternative interpretations and valorisation.

Take that monument down! The Coen Case, the Netherlands

Winner of an [EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award](#) in 2014 “[The Coen Case](#)” project, implemented by the [Westfries Museum in Hoorn](#), was started when a group of citizens demonstrated at the main public square asking for the removal of the statue of General Coen, located on the square. General Coen was the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies Company, well known for its brutal rule in the Dutch colonies. The protestors claimed that this person, once celebrated as a national hero, cannot enjoy this status in the context of facing the country’s colonial past. In order

to use public unrest as a learning and engagement process, the museum initiated a “The Coen Case”, starting a simulated public trial of this historic person. They invited historians, other researchers and citizens to argue for or against Coen as a person deserving a public statue, showing how the perception of his acts has changed, depending on the time, place and society which judges him. Finally, through an exciting public process, a decision was made to leave the statue on the main square but to add a contemporary interpretation which condemns his actions. Therefore, instead of standing for one historic truth,

the museum acted as a mediator and facilitator of the wider process of public negotiation about valuing and interpreting the painful past. In this case, dissent and dissonance, rather than being silenced and smoothed over, were used as the main focus and driving force of the engagement.

Create flow

The famous psychology professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi devoted his life to researching what makes people happy, ecstatic or euphoric. While looking at the experiences of highly successful composers, musicians, athletes and similar professions, he discovered that for the “state of flow”, which he defines as “the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter” two conditions have to be met.^[20] On the one hand, there needs to be a degree of challenge. The task in front of us has to demand from us our attention, devotion and concentration. On the other hand, we can experience flow only when there is a high level of skilfulness in the activity we are performing.

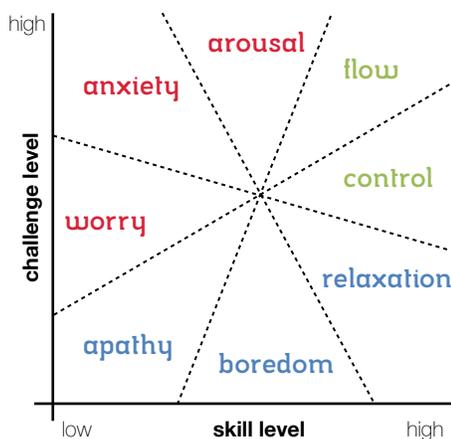


Image 2: Mental states chart

As you can see in the illustration of his model above, if there is no balance of challenge or skill, we are out of the flow and possibly in a potentially frustrating state of being. If the challenge overpasses our skills, we can turn anxious or worried. If the challenge is low and we are very

skilful, it is likely that we will get bored.

Luckily, flow can also happen outside of the extraordinary and rather rare circumstances in which a highly prominent composer sits in his study and has his “moment” or an athlete performs her best run of the year at the track. In other cases, flow can be achieved through carefully designed tasks, processes and environments, including schools, museums or heritage sites.^[21] First of all, participants need to be able to concentrate. Various internal and external factors can be harmful, like noise, crowdedness, lighting conditions or bladder pressure, as well as social pressures, fears and anxieties. Second, they need to understand their task or goal clearly. Confusion is not welcome. Third, there needs to be an immediate feedback on the success of one’s attempts to reach that goal. Fourth, tasks need to be in the flow zone, so there needs to be a good match between the skills of the individual and the challenges faced. In practice, this means that more difficult tasks should come after simpler ones and there needs to be a progression. Moreover, if there is a group of participants, everyone should be able to find a task demanding and challenging enough for their level of skilfulness. Finally, if we are talking about a longer engagement, participants need to have the opportunity to make progress, learn, improve their skills and engage in increasingly demanding tasks. If the theory is right, that will keep them in the flow, meaning happy, engaged and thrilled.

Keep it open

Over time, if no effort is put in, participants of engagement programmes tend to homogenise. A friend invites a friend, a relative invites a relative, a neighbour a neighbour, and what happens very quickly is that the whole following turns into a pretty closed party, which might not be what you were looking for in the first place. If you want your programme to be open and democratic, you need to be aware of its boundaries and the way that barriers to engagement into the programme are perceived and experienced from the outside. The homogenising can happen based on any social or personal attribute: identity, personal traits, taste, ethnicity, profession, etc. It is important to question those boundaries and images.

Here are some of the questions to ask and evaluate the groups of citizens you have been engaging:

- Is there a gender balance in your group?
- Are there also people with less formal education in their CVs?
- Are there people from a working-class background?
- Is the group multi-ethnic?

All these questions are very specific to the programme and might not be applicable to all, but keep similar questions in mind if you wish to expand the outreach of your programme beyond your social milieu.

Welcome newcomers

The importance of creating trust and the “we-feeling” among the participants as well as with the initiating organisation is one of the cornerstone pieces of advice in the learning and engagement processes. During the engagement, ties are made, inside jokes get created and those who used to be outsiders are now proud to show off their new skills and knowledge. No matter how fruitful this is to the initial group of participants, it can cause quite some trouble when you want to engage new members or groups of people in the process. It can (and does) happen fairly easily that the initial group, now seen as insiders, will construct some sort of barriers to the newcomers. You should have that possibility in mind and encourage the group members to be perceptive and sensitive to new people in the group.

Additionally, you can envisage different levels of responsibilities and tasks suitable for more or less experienced participants, as well as encourage a mentoring process in which those more experienced in the process help the newcomers along the way. A good example would be [Cultural Heritage without Borders](#)’ Regional Restoration Camps, Albania, the winner of a [European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award 2014](#). Participants of earlier trainings were supported and encouraged to become trainers and instructors in the next years and to welcome newcomers with their own experiences and newly acquired skills.

Post-engagement

Many participatory projects which aim to engage citizens beyond a transient action, hope that their engagement will result in a sustained interest and effort to preserve, learn, research, promote and protect heritage. However, if the main initiator draws back from the project (for financial, personnel or other reasons), engagement is rarely sustained beyond scattered individual efforts. And that is not surprising. Most citizens have other more vital engagements in their lives. Without the support, mentoring and resources of a backing organisation, it is much harder for them to maintain the work. Moreover, participatory projects often involve a large number of people with diverse backgrounds, desires and needs, and it is always a challenge to create any kind of community around an issue.

Rewarding the contributors

In the case of amateur and voluntary projects, extrinsic motivation is secondary to intrinsic and can even be detrimental for some creative tasks, because participants concentrate on what will come next (a reward or punishment) rather than on the activity itself. Hence, rewards should not be overemphasised. The best way to show respect and gratitude for the outcome and to reward participants' contribution is to actually show how their efforts have contributed to the project, e.g. stories or objects collected and interpreted by citizens have become a part of your permanent collections or the thematic guiding tours

done by citizens have become a part of your standard activity. Nonetheless, some rewards can be beneficial and important. Here are some reasons you should seriously consider rewarding:

1. Rewards in the form of certificates can represent a moment of self-reflection in which a person has the chance to evaluate and acknowledge one's own work and development.
2. In retrospect, small gifts can represent a nice souvenir of an enjoyable experience.
3. Rewarding can have a social dimension, too. If done in the context of an event or a party, it can be a nice occasion to reconnect with the group and build cohesion.
4. Reward ceremonies can also be very fun and entertaining.
5. If done in a public space, rewarding can be a chance to further promote and communicate the goals and missions of the project.
6. Finally, a reward can come as an acknowledgement of someone's role as a knowledgeable insider and result in a mentor or facilitator role in your next project.

Participatory evaluation

Both during and after the project, take time to evaluate what has happened and use these insights for future work. Even though involvement of the project participants in the evaluation process is a desirable aspect of any project evaluation, this is particularly important in citizen engagement and education projects.

Participatory evaluation is an approach that involves the stakeholders in diverse stages of the evaluation process — from the evaluation planning and design, through the selection of methods and approaches, to the data collection and analysis and all the way to the recommendations for improvement.

Engaging participants in the evaluation process means that they are not just an object of someone else's research, but the subjects that can shape and alter the ways in which the successes, failures, benefits and shortcomings of a project are perceived and addressed. In practice, organisations can do a range of activities with participants. Here are some ideas.

1. Share, discuss and agree with the participants on the vision, goal and desirable outcomes of the project.
2. Work with them on setting indicators of success that reflect both the participants' and organisation's needs, interests and capacities.
3. Discuss and reach an agreement on the methods and approaches of collecting the information and data to be used for evaluation. These can be collective and open (such as

discussion and reflection groups with participants which take place at milestone phases of the project), intimate and ad hoc (such as anonymous feedback notes that participants can give when they feel they want to share an evaluative insight), or continuous (such as personal diaries kept by participants).

4. Engage participants in interpreting and valorising the data collected, as well as the outcomes of the project according to their experiences and needs.
5. Finally, make sure that participants can go a step beyond the evaluation by providing suggestions, contributions and feedback for future similar projects.

Sustaining engagement

Many citizen engagement projects end up being one-off experiments. With overburdened organisational schedules on one hand and the shifting attention and changing motivation of citizen-participants on the other, it is not hard to imagine why.

However, there are ways to turn engagement projects into sustained activities. Here are some options at your disposal, some of which you may find attainable.

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1. One way forward is to transform the activity from a project into a structural programme. To do that, you probably need to engage in a different type of funding relations. However, with a successful project behind you, it should be easier to fundraise. This time, funders can be found on a more local and smaller scale, once they see the results of such citizen engagement.
 2. Another option is to run smaller versions of the project that will give more room for former participants to take more responsibility.
 3. Third, as a form of follow-up support, you can offer various types of guidebooks and do-it-yourself kits or run mentoring and coaching programmes in which more experienced and professional practitioners/volunteers help and guide those in the learning process.
 4. Moreover, you can create a space for mutual support of participants in the form of meetings, gatherings, joint trips or digital platforms (social media groups and hang-outs).
 5. Connect with similar projects on a regional, national and European level to create new enthusiasm and new ideas.
 6. Finally, there is also option to de-professionalise the whole programme by supporting the creation of a volunteer-run structure that will be self-managed. However, as many cases show, a combination of engaged volunteers and devoted and employed professionals always gives much more sustained results.
-

Experiences worth sharing

Thanks to the contributions by heritage organisations and practitioners from across Europe who have shared their projects, stories and experiences with us, we have selected eight inspiring cases that have been successful in combining education and engagement in heritage. Each of these examples has engaged different groups of citizens – from school children and teenagers to adults and the elderly, from ethnic minorities to rural communities, as well as religious groups. Each of them has worked with different aspects of heritage – from significant regional heritage sites to small forgotten local sites, from specific intangible heritage to whole cultural landscapes, from UNESCO World Heritage Sites or religious monuments, to deeply

contested citizens' memories of wars. They have been engaging and educating citizens for different purposes, from caring for particular buildings or safeguarding particular traditions to countering the destructive development of historic places and engagement in cultural tourism to reconciliation and interethnic dialogue. In engaging citizens, some of them use artistic practices, others on-site conservation work, while some work with oral histories and digital spaces. They differ in approaches, methods and scale, which is why together they present a mosaic of practices worth sharing and learning from.



EU PRIZE FOR
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AWARD

2012

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Heritage restoration as a play: Improve a heritage site, Norway

Norway Heritage Foundation (NHF) was founded in 1993 with the goal of preserving heritage across Norway by encouraging its sustainable use. Their educational strategy stresses that the best way for children and young people to learn about history and understand the importance of cultural heritage is through practical work and engagement with specific sites. This is why since 2000 the NHF has conducted the nationwide biannual programme “Improve a Heritage Site” for engaging groups of children and

young people. The programme has a twofold aim: to combine the practical work of cleaning a cultural monument, cultural landscape or historic path with knowledge about the cultural heritage that surrounds it; and to spread knowledge about local history and monuments to other groups in the local community, such as peers, parents, the elderly, immigrants or new tenants. The NHF has cooperated with the Network for Environment in Schools, the Directorate for Cultural Heritage, the Ministry of the

Environment, the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management, as well as the Savings Bank Foundation, DnB NOR and SpareBank 1.

Every second year since 2000, children and young people have been invited by NHF through schools, historical organisations, sports clubs and other youth clubs to adopt a heritage site, cultural monument or historic place/path/road in their local community and make a project to improve, rehabilitate and spread information about it. The biennial programme is implemented following these phases and components:

- Dissemination of the open call: In September, NHF sends an invitation letter to every elementary school, secondary school and local historical organisation in Norway, as well as to various children's and youth organisations. This is followed by a press release sent out to different media outlets and published in NHF's own magazine *Kulturarven*.
- Youth project applications: Each group of children or youth who want to participate has to apply to this open call with their own project. The group selects a site they want to improve in their surroundings. It can be anything from a monument, tomb or graveyard to an old meeting point, a ruined house, a fortress, abandoned grazing land, old roads or stone fences. Each group is led and educated by teachers or historical experts and must get approval from the owner of the object

and inform the responsible heritage authority about the planned work. The procedure is simple and NHF approves all local group projects that have satisfied these requirements.

- Implementation of projects: The work to improve heritage sites is usually done in May and June, or August and September. The practical work done at the heritage sites can vary from maintaining a historically important area by cutting down branches and bushes or removing moss to cleaning and clearing old paths to a heritage site or putting up guide markers, signs or information boards.
- Publicity: Local papers and TV very often follow the projects while the work is being done and show pictures of the results with proud group members.
- Reward: Each group gets a grant of 400 euros after reporting and sending in photos of the work and the results of the project to NHF in December. The 10 best projects each year get an award of 1.300 euros and a diploma, delivered at the award ceremony and in presence of the media and specially invited guests like the mayor of the town, chairman of the county or parliament members from the constituency.
- Documentation: All the reports about the work, as well as photos of each project are published on the website www.miljolare.no, which serves as an

inspirational archive for future generations.

The results of this initiative are stunning. Since the year 2000, in a country with five million inhabitants, more than 30.000 children and young people have been involved in the heritage improvement work. They have spent more than 200,000 hours working on, clearing and improving as many as 1,248 diverse heritage sites. Many projects have included spreading information or installing information boards about the sites, reaching in total several hundred thousand people.

In addition to this, numerous classroom hours have been dedicated to teaching pupils various subjects related to the heritage site that they have improved, making it an ideal crossover topic between school subjects. In 15 years and 8 rounds of the project, more than 20% of all schools in Norway have participated.

Learning summary

“Improve a Heritage Site” is an exceptional programme of youth engagement and education in the field of heritage that has activated an outstanding number of youth in taking care of their local heritage. It has addressed rural areas in Norway, areas where the majority of schools are located but also suffer significantly from depopulation. Moreover, these school actions provided ways for them to care for heritage while developing a sense of community pride and affection for their surroundings. Finally, these actions are a great opportunity for school groups to co-operate with other groups in the community, such as historical organisations and elderly people, establishing intergenerational connections and learning.

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"A house that barely fits you, but fields as far as the eye can see".

Old Greek proverb

© Photo courtesy of Elleniki Etairia

Linking heritage with desired future: Sustainable Aegean Programme, Greece

Since the 1970s, numerous seaside coasts across Mediterranean Europe — especially in Spain, Malta, Cyprus and Greece — have witnessed the rapid rise of tourism and second home development, which has in many cases risked the beauty and attractiveness of these areas. This has been the case with the Aegean islands in Greece, a group of small, dry and mountainous islands, in which settlements have traditionally been small and concentrated, leaving the landscape largely

uncluttered. New developments and economic gains have positioned short-season tourism as the solution for both the locals and new-coming investors, dramatically changing the socio-economic structure, the landscape and the everyday life on these islands. Improper government policies, real estate and construction industries, as well as the global tourism market have pushed these developments to an extreme.

This is the situation that triggered Elliniki Etairia, a CSO with a long experience in protecting cultural landscapes and promoting sustainable development, to conceive a long-term programme that might help address this issue. Elliniki Etairia has been combining environmentalist ideas with cultural heritage protection since the early 1970s and has argued for more sustainable development through lobbying, legal actions, research, production of documentary movies, conservation work and educational activities.

In 2005, they decided to initiate the programme “Sustainable Aegean”, a programme that engages younger community members in learning and thinking critically about their cultural and natural heritage and about more sustainable development scenarios for their communities. The programme started as a pilot experiment on four islands in 2005-2006, and later ran on almost all of the Aegean islands from 2007 to 2009. The overall funding for five years of the programme was 359,000 euros, with contributions from charities, corporations, the General Secretariat for Youth, the Ministry of Labour and the municipalities of several islands.

The target groups were primary and secondary school students. Unlike their parents and grandparents, this generation had not yet been active in the destructive development of the landscape, nor had they profited from it, but they would have to face these challenges in the near future. The children’s programme consisted of an

initial introduction to the topic and screenings of the documentary movie “Voice of the Aegean”, after which there was an activity that encouraged children to think about the issues of development and heritage protection, research them and use photography, film or guides as a method to communicate their views.

- In the 2005-2006 programme, the children were engaged through a photographic contest followed by public exhibitions and award ceremonies on each island. The subjects of the photo contests were: *What do you like on your island and would you like to see it preserved?* and *What would you like to change?*
- In 2007-2008, instead of photography, the children made documentary movie projects about sustainable development. Through this process, students learned the art of documentary filmmaking and discussed international, national, and local environmental issues. All of the documentaries were featured in a community festival.
- During the third phase, in 2008-2014, students were engaged in creating their own guides for their islands, with an emphasis on their cultural and environmental heritage. These guides could take the form of a book, documentary or presentation. They included a complete list of all the natural and cultural resources available on the island; a comprehensive list of threats to all of the resources

mentioned; a description of the consequences that would follow from the destruction of these resources; and suggestions for measures to prevent these effects, such as recycling and setting limitations on construction. All of the guides were presented at local public discussions and community gatherings.

Due to the “Sustainable Aegean Programme”, young people have been enabled to assess the cultural and natural resources of their homelands and empowered by analytical tools which help them raise awareness of the value of the places they live. The programme therefore indirectly targeted adults, raising their awareness through the public display of the results of students’ work and initiating a dialogue within the community about the way in which development is proceeding and how it might be improved.

Besides working with youth, Elliniki Etairia has been proposing alternative economic and ecological models for the islands, such as extending the tourism

season, restoring traditional features of the landscape, reducing building sprawl, renewable energy solutions and environmentally friendly business activities. These options have been collected and communicated on the organisation “Sustainable Aegean” website. Furthermore, with this information, SAP worked on building a network of local stakeholders who support the vision of more sustainable development. This network includes academics, local authorities, NGOs, businesspeople and other citizens, as well as a number of volunteers. Through this network, the “Sustainable Aegean Programme” was able to initiate campaigns against massive wind farms on smaller islands, conduct research on the wrong tourism development paths of other countries that have led to destruction of particular local identities and assist efforts to strengthen the unique identities of each island. In the end, SAP even had an influence beyond the Aegean islands, as it has received media publicity throughout Greece.

Learning summary

“Sustainable Aegean” is an excellent case of youth engagement with their surrounding heritage. The project entailed their creative engagement with important questions of social and economic development, sustainability and the loss of heritage and memory. Through a competition, they have made photographic accounts, videos and guided tours. In the end, young people, who were not aware of the issues of cultural and environmental sustainability beforehand, are today the main advocates in their communities.

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© Photo by Lauri Oino

Musical heritage for all: Näppärit, Finland

Playing and singing music are part of the everyday life of communities all across the globe. Traditional folk music is not authored by professionally trained musicians; it is not meant to be performed only by the most talented and musically educated members of the community; nor is it meant to be listened to at music halls by specialised audiences. Rather, making and enjoying music should go in parallel within a social event in which many could take part. With the institutionalisation of classical music education aimed at the talented few, many people have grown

detached from performing music. Furthermore, when talking about safeguarding traditional folk music, we think about documenting the tunes or safeguarding a particular melody and the knowledge of performing it. But, rarely do we think about safeguarding the very methods and contexts of teaching and playing traditional music.

This is not the case in Finland, where the [Kaustisen Näppärit Society](#) (established in 1986) together with the Finnish Folk Music Institute (created in 1974) aim to promote a more equal distribution of the

intangible benefits of music and music-making, as well as safeguard local musical heritages through the use of the Näppärit method.

It is possible to provide an enriching musical experience that is available to everyone.

The Näppärit method and the underpinning philosophy has been developed on the fringes of the Finnish classical musical education system and with the belief that it is possible to provide an enriching musical experience that is available to everyone. According to this philosophy, making music should be a natural part of the personal life and social interactions of each individual. The method has been nurtured in Kaustinen, situated in the Ostrobothnia region in Western Finland, which is famous for its 300-year-old uninterrupted folk tradition of fiddling. The method was piloted by Mauno Järvelä, a local musician and teacher who has both a long family tradition in fiddling and was also educated at a classical music academy. The method combines classical musical education with local tradition. The target groups of the Näppärit method are children and youth who want to play music for their enjoyment.

There are four key principles and related practices of this method:

- Everybody is allowed to join in. In practice this means that there are no entry exams.
- Everybody plays together, no matter what their age or level of skill. In practice, the music that is played is arranged so that there are more and less demanding parts, and everybody can play or sing something, together and simultaneously. The only limitation for participation is the size of the room, and in the Kaustinen Folk Music Festival (established in 1968) there have been concerts where 500 kids play together.
- Playing music is a part of daily life enjoyed by many. This is why in practice, apart from private lessons, students play music together each week and often perform in their communities and elsewhere. Furthermore, there is no stress that comes from standards of excellence or examination schedules.
- Keep the folk music tradition vibrant. For this reason, the repertoire consists of folk songs or songs based on folk music, and many songs are specially written, whose lyrics teach about history, culture and tradition in a humorous way. The aim is to safeguard local traditions and their heterogeneity against the homogenising global tendencies of popular music and against the strict and exclusive canon of classical music-based education.

The Näppärit method has now lived and developed for 30 years and provided heritage-based musical education to two generations and hundreds of people. Many of them have grown into professional musicians, but most importantly, all of them have learned to appreciate and to keep alive the local musical heritage. Many of them have continued playing traditional music actively throughout their lives. Näppäri courses are in demand all over Finland and their repertoire has become more diverse, while the principle of easy participation and openness has remained the same. The method has also been spread to more than ten European countries, as well as to North America and South Africa.

Learning summary

“Näppärit” is a landmark project of musical heritage education. By successfully questioning and avoiding the usual educational power divides on “beginners”, “young”, “elders” and “knowledgeable ones”, they have managed to create a space for joint learning and sharing and lower the barriers for active participation in musical heritage. To reach that, they have developed their own educational method and forms of presentation which are by themselves engaging and stimulating and beg for new questioning.

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Acting for the City: KoTo®o Kotoru, Montenegro

The Natural and Cultural-Historical Region of Kotor is a World Heritage Site that encompasses Kotor Bay in Montenegro, one of the most beautiful bays in Europe, with a unique cultural landscape. However, in recent years, this status has been seriously questioned due to the excessive urbanisation unsuitable for the area, resulting in warnings about the possibility of losing its World Heritage status. This unsuitable development is just the tip of the iceberg for the social and political problems that this area and its main town, Kotor, are

facing: the number of permanent residents is decreasing each year, paving the way for seasonal tourists and new owners; the number of visitors arriving by cruise ships and yachts is approximately 24 times higher than the population; non-transparent decision-making, and political and personal interests are driving tourism management, real-estate development and heritage “management”.

EXPEDITIO, a CSO from Kotor, has been operating since 1997 in order to counterbalance the trend of inappropriate development, inform and alarm decision

makers and engage citizens in heritage protection of the area. Their team of architects, conservators and numerous associates has been participating in consultation groups, research groups and project consortiums together with public institutions; writing petitions; organising heritage workshops, educational programs and exhibitions in public spaces. However, all of these efforts proved to be much less vocal, engaging and publicly well-received than one of EXPEDITIO's most recent projects — a participatory theatre play called "[KoTo® o Kotoru](#)". The play was part of a bigger project called "[Act4City](#)", supported by the [Balkans Arts and Culture Fund](#), which focused on engaging citizens and independent cultural activists in discussing the (mis)use of public resources in their cities and conceiving ways towards more just, inclusive and sustainable urban environments.

Acting for the city was taken quite literally by EXPEDITIO. The theatre performance "[KoTo® o Kotoru](#)" was based on the idea of a truly participatory theatrical process in which interested citizens contribute with ideas for the script and finally act in the play. Besides climbing onto the stage, citizens stood up for their city and its social, political and economic problems — expressing dissatisfaction, voicing out sensitive issues, asking questions of their silenced fellow citizens and corrupt decision makers. The process of creating a theatre play was led by the theatre director and it lasted for eight months until June 2016, consisting of four important stages:

- [Workshops with the citizens of Kotor](#): EXPEDITIO launched an open call for citizens interested in this process, attracting around 60 citizens from different ethnic, professional and economic backgrounds. There were more than 40 workshops that served as preparation for the play — mapping the issues of living in Kotor; working with the body, movement and creative expression; and directly contributing to the play. Even though the initial number of participants changed because some felt that the process was either too vague or too sensitive or even too risky, most of the participants who stayed until the end described this process as a sort of "group therapy".
- [Framing the play](#): The themes discussed during the workshops were made into the script by the theatre director and two artists in residence, and then into particular scenes of the play. The scenes deal with some of the most burning political questions, such as citizens' right to their city and its public spaces and beauty; the destruction and privatisation of cultural landscapes for the short-term profit of political and business elites; the commodification of the area due to tourist demands; and the responsibility of citizens in these processes, both as active participants and silenced bystanders.
- [Open rehearsals and the bulletin about the theatre play](#): As a way to engage more citizens, two open rehearsals were held before the premiere of the

play, and all interested citizens were invited to give their comments and suggestions. This was also a good publicity strategy, as people who were at the rehearsals started talking about the play. Besides this, two bulletins (wall newspapers) were produced to accompany the play. They were displayed on Kotor town walls in order to inform and invite citizens to see it.

- **The theatre play KoTo® o Kotoru:** The play, with 20 citizens of Kotor as actors, was premiered in the Cultural Centre of Kotor. Performing the play on stage and seeing the play as a local audience was a sort of cathartic experience. It was a heroic and brave act and was the first time that the audience could publicly hear the most sensitive, often silenced, topics that affect the city. The interest of the media and citizens was so high that the play has run a few more times in Kotor,

as well as other cities in Montenegro, Croatia and Serbia, speaking out about the problems that all cities in the region face today.

- **Discussions following the play:** On numerous occasions, the play was followed by public discussions, related to heritage protection amidst mass development, citizen engagement in the real everyday politics of their city and participatory theatre as a means for collective action.

This unusual process made EXPEDITIO realise that the diversity of participants' backgrounds and the debating nature of theatre play made the whole project feel like an "agora": a public place where many different views and arguments about everyday life and politics can meet, discuss and imagine better alternatives for their community.

Learning summary

"KoTo® o Kotoru" is example of using contemporary artistic processes to engage citizens not only in heritage safeguarding, but in the broader political issues of ownership, rights and responsibilities toward the public good. Citizens who participated in the creation of the theatre play were engaged in an active process of learning about city policies, heritage protection and sustainable development, while also learning about each other's professional and personal inputs. Their final public result - a theatre performance - has moved both the fellow citizens and political elites of Kotor.

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"stave off decay by daily care"

William Morris, SPAB Manifesto

EU PRIZE FOR
CULTURAL HERITAGE /
EUROPA NOSTRA
AWARD
2010

© Photo courtesy of SPAB

Caring for religious heritage: Faith in Maintenance, United Kingdom

Places of worship are some of the most iconic historic buildings in every village and town across the UK, representing centuries of faith, craftsmanship and design. Moreover, they are often a defining feature of public squares and provide an important link to the past. However, they are increasingly unused for religious functions, which causes negligence and decay. In those smaller communities where religious sites are still in use, there is often a lack of resources to

properly care for the monument in a professional way. This is the reason why the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) from the UK, initiated the training and awareness raising programme "Faith in Maintenance", which ran from 2006 to 2011, with a wide reach across England and Wales.

SPAB was founded by William Morris in 1877 to counteract the highly destructive 'restoration' of medieval buildings at that time by promoting the paradigm of

maintenance, preventive conservation and continuous care. Today it is the largest, oldest and most technically expert national pressure group in the UK, fighting to save old buildings from decay, demolition and damage. Besides giving advice and practical knowledge on the protection of historic buildings, SPAB has an active educational programme for the next generation of professionals, as well as for volunteers and owners of historic places. This is exactly where the “Faith in Maintenance” programme fits into the SPAB mission.

The title of the project as well as its goals and methods, are aligned with the philosophy espoused by SPAB with its emphasis on daily care, conservation repair and the use of traditional materials. The idea is that regular and basic routine maintenance of places of worship can be done by citizens and can save both the historic fabric and the money needed for big conservation works. Therefore, the programme set out to conceive diverse methods of support for the maintenance of religious heritage that can be suitable for a wide range of volunteers who want to get engaged in caring for religious monuments in their communities.

The pivotal method of engaging volunteers was a one day maintenance training course, which was followed by other readily and freely accessible information across a variety of media - telephone line, website, educational DVDs, maintenance handbook - aimed at enhancing the skills, expertise and personal development of volunteers. The

project involved two SPAB employees with a larger project steering group of 15 people from diverse religious and heritage backgrounds. The total cost of the project for the period 2006-2011 was around £800,000, mainly funded by the [Heritage Lottery Fund](#) and [English Heritage](#). The project was implemented through five key components:

- **Consulting with stakeholders:** The project started with researching the needs for practical assistance with maintenance among diverse religious groups and volunteers, including the Church of England, the Methodist Church, the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Roman Catholic Church, the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, the Federation of Jain Organisations in the UK and the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The questionnaire achieved an 85% response rate with more than 75% of respondents identifying a genuine need for the kind of guidance and assistance that the project wanted to offer.
- **Mapping good practice and creating educational material:** In the second phase, the team researched and mapped already available maintenance guidelines and resources, building their own reference library. Based on this, they created a concise, up-to-date and easy-to-use reference point for volunteers in the form of the handbook “[The Good Maintenance Guide](#)”, as well as course materials, lectures, educational DVDs and a maintenance calendar. The project website and publicity materials, such as

leaflets, posters and exhibition banners, were also designed to raise awareness about future courses and the project idea in general.

- **Engaging faith groups and volunteers in courses:** The third phase involved contacting a wide range of faith groups and potential volunteers and has continued throughout the project in order to ensure the participation of a broad and diverse range of volunteers.

- **Implementing the courses:** The “Faith in Maintenance” training course was run by a SPAB architect who specialises in the conservation of historic buildings. The courses ran from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. and included a practical exercise during which the participants were asked to carry out a maintenance inspection of a local place of worship.

- **Promoting maintenance among the young and the wider public:** Since the third year of implementation, the programme included maintenance workshops for young people, as well as

a number of conferences, seminars and other events that promoted maintenance. The project has regularly sent monthly email bulletins with news and advice.

Over the course of five years, a total of 150 courses have been implemented, involving and training more than 4,500 volunteers. Another 17 public events targeted the general public, and 12 events were focused on training young people. Furthermore, educational materials such as guidebooks, DVDs, the Website and the maintenance calendar had a much wider reach and are still freely available. The methods, outcomes and networks created through the “Faith in Maintenance” project showed to be highly relevant and continuously needed. As a follow-up of “Faith in Maintenance”, SPAB created the “Maintenance Co-operatives Project”, which ran from 2013-17 creating 32 co-operatives — groups of volunteers trained and supported by SPAB to take care of their places of worship.

Learning summary

“Faith in Maintenance” is an inspiring example of training volunteers to care for heritage. The project increased the knowledge, skills, capacity and confidence of volunteers by providing practical help, advice and tools on how to look after their historic buildings. Besides practical information, the project enhanced the understanding and appreciation of local places of worship and has provided a rare opportunity for volunteers to network with other volunteers, creating opportunities for peer-to-peer support.

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© Photo courtesy of Mihai Eminescu Trust

New perspectives for villages: Whole village concept, Romania

The fall of the Communist regime in Romania has deeply influenced rural communities in Transylvania. The greatest change has happened demographically and culturally, as 90% of the German-speaking Saxon population, inhabiting Transylvania since the 13th century, has left Romania and gone to Germany, leaving much of their heritage behind. Their mass migration has brought new populations of Romanians and Roma to these villages, bringing with them their traditions and cultural background. Moreover, recent economic development has mainly

influenced cities, while villages have been left without jobs and prospects, resulting in ongoing migration of the inhabitants to towns and cities. The poor economic situation negatively affects attendance in the formal educational system and many children/teenagers attend only primary school.

In response, the [Mihai Eminescu Trust](#) (MET) has been working since 2000 to revitalise local communities, preserve the cultural and natural heritage of the former Saxon villages in Transylvania and offer

more prospective living solutions to these villages. So far, MET has implemented some 1,200 projects in 100 villages and towns across Transylvania, saving over 500 historic buildings and enabling the participation in educational activities of more than 300 adults and 2,000 children, involving more than 1,500 volunteers. MET's annual budget is around 500,000 euros, and the work is done by 6 permanent employees and more than 50 experts, consultants and collaborators.

In 2000, MET pioneered the “Whole Village Concept” in the village Viscri, a UNESCO World Heritage Site with a community of 400 persons, of which the majority are Romanians and Roma. The idea of the “Whole Village Concept” is that education and engagement of the local population in heritage valorisation, protection and the development of cultural tourism can revitalise the village communities by creating a sense of pride, generating income, providing prospects for younger generations and improving their quality of life. As the local community is at the core of the concept, the whole process is done through regular community meetings and open communication, serving to identify local needs, set priorities, integrate them into grant applications and implement them with the support and involvement of the community. The whole process was organized around three key areas of activities, through which locals were “learning by doing” with the support of the MET team:

- **Raising awareness, building trust and joint efforts:** As the sense of community has been lost by migration and mistrust, MET dedicated a lot of time to organising gatherings with people, encourage them to speak up, debate and reach a common voice, motivating them to participate in the common wellbeing. This has also included information sharing and awareness raising activities.
- **Education and building skills:** A series of formal and informal trainings were organised to develop the personal and professional skills of local people, particularly targeting those 25-50 years old. Out of 400 people, 57 community members took part in the formal trainings, being officially certified as carpenter, mason, agro-tourism administrator, cook/chef or project manager, while 132 individuals took part in informal trainings — leadership skills, entrepreneurship, masonry, felting, basic foreign language vocabulary, weaving, and initiation in IT and in environmental protection, increasing the sense of self-esteem among the villagers. Furthermore, 88 children and teenagers took part in educational and creative workshops on architecture, creative recycling, environmental protection and career orientation.
- **Direct involvement of villagers in cultural heritage projects:** Participants have engaged in a range of activities such as heritage restoration work and that has resulted in the direct transfer of know-how to younger generations. This has also included cultural tourism and

agricultural activities for the sustainable development of the village, as well as support for local entrepreneurs.

The educational process undertaken in Viscri directly involved 65% of the local population, who further influenced almost the entire community, resulting in a higher degree of involvement in heritage protection and valorisation, environmental protection and niche tourism businesses. Today, there are 67 families involved in traditional agriculture, 61 individuals involved in tourism activities and 87 craftsmen/craftswomen. While in other villages 50% of families rely on state aid, only 3 families today in Viscri use this support. Furthermore, the development perspective of Viscri has attracted 11 young families from Bucharest or other cities in Romania to start a small business valorising the cultural heritage, while a few local families have returned from Italy and Spain where

they had emigrated due to the lack of local jobs. The prospects for the younger generations have also been opened up because, unlike before the start of the project, today all children attend school. An increasing number reach the elementary degree and progressively more are achieving a higher educational degree (high school or university) including children from Roma families. Finally after 17 years of the project, the birth rate has increased and today a third of the population is under 14 years old.

After the initial success of Viscri, the “Whole Village Concept” was spread to nine more rural communities reaching 6,500 persons in total. The continuity in project development, an integrated approach and regular communication with locals managed to change their relationship with their heritage.

Learning summary

“Whole Village Concept” is a good example of reviving rural communities through heritage. It illustrates well that when involving the local communities, it is important to develop projects directly with community members rather than design them in the office. Starting from the local needs, the project invested time and effort in educational activities and knowledge exchanges, while also focusing on social and economic valorisation of local heritage. This has made the community stronger, more united and willing to bring their own contribution for the common well-being.

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*I hear and I forget,
I see and I remember,
I do and I understand.*
Confucius

EU PRIZE FOR
CULTURAL HERITAGE /
EUROPA NOSTRA
AWARD
2016

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Interpret your city: Apprendisti Ciceroni[®], Italy

Many young people perceive heritage as an old fashioned, unattractive and outdated topic, outside of their interest. Teenagers tend to avoid visiting heritage places, and engaging them in heritage is one of the most challenging issues. This is especially the case with longer-term engagement. This was the challenge that the leading heritage foundation in Italy, Fondo Ambiente Italiano (FAI), set out to address when introducing the cultural heritage education programme

“Apprendisti Ciceroni[®]”. Since 1975 FAI, with its network of 7,000 volunteers and groups in each county in Italy, has been contributing to cultural and natural heritage protection and implementing numerous educational programmes.

These are the assets in knowledge and skills that FAI used in creating “Apprendisti Ciceroni[®]” — an educational project and experience of active citizenship, which engages young people in interpreting and valuing artistic,

natural and cultural heritage. It all started as an experimental one-off project in 1996 by a group of FAI volunteers from Lombardy who enrolled 200 students to help as tour guides during the FAI Spring Days, FAI's most important national cultural event. From there, the programme grew into a popular national initiative. Today, the project benefits from the collaboration of the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research and the National Association of School Headmasters and High Professionals.

Within this project, middle and secondary school students have had the opportunity to study one or more cultural or natural heritage sites of their territory and to illustrate them to the public as "*ciceroni*" cultural guides during special events organized by FAI. The project is based upon a specific training of students and teachers conducted by FAI volunteers, called "*education delegates*", who network with schools to promote the project, recruit students who wish to become cultural guides, organise their training and become their tutors for the whole duration of the project. The training of students takes place throughout the entire school year, both in the classroom and in the field, according to a method that mixes formal and informal education. The learning is organized around the notion of cultural landscapes, which links different subjects, such as history, geography, art, science and literature, and encourages participants to re-discover their surroundings.

The whole process is organised in the following phases:

- **Site visit:** The students, together with their teacher and FAI volunteer tutor, visit a site at which they plan to volunteer.
- **Student research:** After the visit, they research and collect the information on the chosen site, its history, context and artistic aspects.
- **Another site visit and simulation of the tour:** Students visit the site for the second time to cross-check the information. They then make preparations for guiding a tour on the site and have an on-site simulation activity.
- **Implementing the tour:** Finally, students give tours at a planned event organized by FAI or within another cultural institution.
- **Classroom discussion and certificates:** The learning process ends with the final meeting in the classroom to exchange experiences and feedback. The commitment of students is certified with a certificate of participation issued by FAI, while for Secondary School students the certificate offers specific college credits.

In 2014 alone, more than 40,000 students participated in the project and volunteered during more than 1,000 events. Training involved more than 1,000 FAI volunteers and 2,000 teachers. On top of it all, 700,000 adult visitors participating in FAI

events and 50,000 teenage visitors (who are not the usual target group for these sites) have benefitted from the service offered by the “Apprendisti Ciceroni®”.

The programme is a well-conceived mix of learning and engagement that makes students feel personally involved in the social, cultural and economic life of their community. It encourages students to deepen their knowledge of local heritage and cultural institutions, and present them in a way that is nearer to the needs of a young public. Visitors are often amazed by the passion and competence with which the students devote their free time to increasing the awareness of people on cultural and artistic heritage. Finally, the programme has attracted many families who usually do not participate in cultural events or visit heritage sites, but have come in order to enjoy their children’s performance.

Learning summary

“Apprendisti Ciceroni” is a good example for raising the interest and engagement in heritage among teenagers. While being mentored by younger FAI volunteers, the teenagers go through the process of researching, learning and understanding local heritage sites. Through this process they are taking the role of local heritage guides and becoming active advocates for heritage.

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© Photo courtesy of Documenta
Photo by Ana Opalić

Unveiling memories of wars: Croatian Memories Archive, Croatia

Even though the wars of the 1990s in former Yugoslavia ended nearly 20 years ago, the symbolic wars of contested memories still haunt the newly formed countries. In the case of Croatia, public memory of the war soon became singular and fixed and it was backed by new monuments, history education and national commemorations. At its centre is the narrative of the Homeland War of 1991-1995 as the national liberation in which Croatia was a victim and then, ultimately, a hero. In this narrative, there

is no recognition of the atrocities committed on Croatia's side. The crimes against Serb and Bosniak populations both in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have been down-played or even denied by Croatian political elites and within the official public memory discourse. Their claim is that it is impossible for war crimes to be committed in a defensive war. This one-sided narrative impedes inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation.

This is the context in which [Documenta](#) – Center for Dealing with the Past has

started the project “[Unveiling Personal Memories on War and Detention](#)”: an initiative to create a collection of video-recorded testimonies on a wide range of war experiences in Croatia (known as “Croatian Memories”), which collects personal memories of citizens to build an online archive of oral histories about wars in Croatia. Documenta is a civil society organisation which combines transitional justice and human rights issues with histories, memories and heritage related to 20th century wars. Its legal team monitors war trials and repatriation and provides support to war victims; its work in public policy encourages acknowledgement and dialogue about difficult pasts in areas such as education, cultural memory and commemoration practices; while its documentation and archiving efforts encompass research about human losses, memories on war events, and archives of peace and human rights organisations in Croatia.

All of these different aspects were included in the project, which started in 2010, financed by the Dutch Government, in cooperation with [Erasmus University Rotterdam](#), the [University of Twente](#), the [Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences](#) and the [Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research](#). The project grew out of a smaller-scale initiative by Documenta that gathered citizens’ memories related to the 1990s wars in the region of Western Slavonia from 2006-2008, with the aim of encouraging war victims to speak up and file legal charges. The recording of oral

histories from diverse groups of citizens was therefore not only an effort in crowdsourcing heritage and the memories of wars, but was a way to encourage citizens to pursue their legal rights.

Instead of supporting the official national narrative, this approach aimed to recognise the importance of the rights of each individual, as well as the diversity of experiences related to the violent past across ethnic divides. The project was realised through the following stages:

- [Developing methodology and educating interviewers accordingly](#): A detailed methodology with supporting documents for interviewers was prepared, in order to take care of every step, from pre-visits to how to conduct the interviews and post-visit contact. The fact that Documenta had mechanisms to offer other kinds of support to interviewees, such as legal advice or psycho-medical support was important.
- [Mapping and selecting the citizens willing to share their memories](#): More than 1,000 people were contacted in order to find willing citizens to tell their memories and to represent differences in age, sex, ethnicity, origin and place of residence. Importantly, the project not only interviewed the victims, but also bystanders and perpetrators, in order to have a multiplicity of perspectives and to better understand the circumstances that can lead to war.
- [Engaging citizens through oral histories](#): 500 citizens were interviewed

and their stories documented through video recordings. The project relied on the oral history method, based on multiple perspectives and individual memories of traumatic events. Apart from oral history recordings being what one could call “intangible heritage”, Documenta also archived tangible objects, which interviewees used to visualise their stories.

- **Creating an online archive:** The interviews were transcribed and translated, and made publicly available in a searchable online internet platform. This is the first time that these stories have been collected and presented publicly, creating a multi-perspective heritage of 20th century wars that can be further researched and used for educational purposes.

- **Promoting the archive through public debates:** A series of public debates and press conferences were held, engaging the citizens who shared their memories in order to promote the online archive and use it as a basis for dialogue about wars and war crimes. This resource is being used in the educational, artistic and cultural memory projects of Documenta and other organisations and individuals.

The “Croatian Memories Archive” project challenges the principles of collecting, displaying and interpreting the heritage of wars and violence in military museums or through other official memory channels. Rather than telling a heroic story of leaders and their cohesive nation, the project engages citizens in sharing their own, very personal memories, resulting in a diversity of individual voices that are communicated within the public space.

Learning summary

“Croatian Memories Archive” illustrates well the ways in which digital technologies empower CSOs in creating public spaces alternative to official physical museums or archives. Within such spaces, marginalised memories can be expressed, discussed and shared. The project shows how civil society involvement and citizen engagement in relation to contested heritage have deep relations to human rights, human dignity and dialogue in post-conflict societies.

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Notes

- * This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.
- ** [Invitation letter](#) by Donald Tusk to the members of the European Council ahead of the Leaders' Agenda discussion on education and culture, 14 November 2017.
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 2. Although the democratic deficit can be seen all over the world and on many levels of governance, it has been particularly studied and applied to EU politics.
 3. EU's "Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy" is just one of the documents showing the nominal dedication of EU governing bodies to promoting democracy.
 4. For the UK case, see: Cornwall, A (2008). Democratising engagement. London: Demos.
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About Europa Nostra

Europa Nostra is the pan-European federation of heritage NGO's which is also supported by a wide network of public bodies, private companies and individuals. Covering more than 40 countries in Europe, the organisation is the voice of civil society committed to safeguarding and promoting Europe's cultural and natural heritage. Founded in 1963, it is today recognised as the most representative heritage network in Europe. The world-renowned opera singer Plácido Domingo is the President of the organisation.

Europa Nostra campaigns to save Europe's endangered monuments, sites and landscapes, in particular through the 7 Most Endangered programme. It celebrates excellence through the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards. It also contributes to the formulation and implementation of European strategies and policies related to heritage, through a structured dialogue with European Institutions and the coordination of the European Heritage Alliance 3.3. Europa Nostra has strongly promoted and is actively contributing to the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.