CULTURAL HERITAGE
IN ACTION
Sharing solutions in European cities and regions

#EuropeForCulture

CULTURAL HERITAGE IN CITIES AND REGIONS

Challenges and trends throughout Europe

Imprint

4

NURTURE

ACTIVATE

FOREWORD

by European Commissioner Mariya Gabriel

Investing in cultural heritage is strategic for cities and regions. In the EU context, many local and regional authorities have been extremely involved in making bold investments in cultural heritage, and in ensuring long-term benefits.

What can be learnt from their experience? Can successful stories be transferred to other local contexts?

I am glad to present an e-publication that I would describe as a digital toolbox for culture and cultural heritage practitioners in cities and regions. It contains inspiring local and regional stories on cultural heritage, through case studies, videos, analyses and practical recommendations.

The publication showcases local and regional stories that have one common goal: through cultural heritage, they drive local development, social inclusion, and cohesion, as well as citizen participation.

This e-publication was developed as part of Cultural Heritage in Action, the European peer-learning programme on cultural heritage, financed by the Creative Europe programme. Cultural Heritage in Action supports exchanges between large numbers of cities, regions and local stakeholders.

It is one of the actions of the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage of the European Commission – the legacy document of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018. In 2018, we celebrated Europe's diversity, but we also reflected together on how we can make the best possible use of cultural heritage as an amazing asset for our future.

Europe's cultural heritage has paid a heavy toll since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Closed libraries and museums and the absence of our favourite festivals made

INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage in European cities and regions is at the core of our identity. Local policymakers and stakeholders have also increasingly acknowledged its role in economic and sustainable development and people's quality of life.

This publication draws on 18 months of cities and regions exchanging and working together through the Cultural Heritage in Action EU-funded project to:

Showcase innovative and participatory projects across cities and regions in Europe used to answer three main challenges: social inclusion, urbanisation and governance.

Deliver cultural heritage-based policy recommendations to strengthen the sustainable local cultural heritage ecosystems.

Climate change, social inclusion and economic competition as well as global megatrends such as rapid urbanisation, digitalisation and individualisation are the chief challenges that cities and regions face. These global trends materialise in the form of unemployment, disengagement, depopulation, marginalisation, or loss of cultural identity at local level.

WHAT IS CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ACTION?

Cultural Heritage in Action is the EU peer-learning scheme on cultural heritage that supports exchanges between large numbers of cities, regions and stakeholders, thus building a broad learning community.
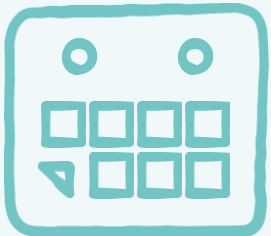
The project's consortium is led by Eurocities with KEA, ERRIN, Europa Nostra and Architects' Council of Europe. The project is funded by the European Union's Creative Europe programme from January 2020 to January 2023. The project is part of the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage of the European Commission, adopted in December 2018 as a legacy document of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

The project identifies good practices from EU cities and regions and supports the exchange of experience through direct contact between rural, local, regional and national administrations as well as experts (civil society, NGOs, local organisations, urban planners, architects, etc.) during thematic peer-learning visits.

www.culturalheritageinaction.eu

KEY FIGURES

3 years

5 partners

3 main topics

32

good practices (..)

39 videos (..)

340
received applications to attend online peer learning visits

10
online peer learning visits (..)

223
selected participants attending online peer learning visits
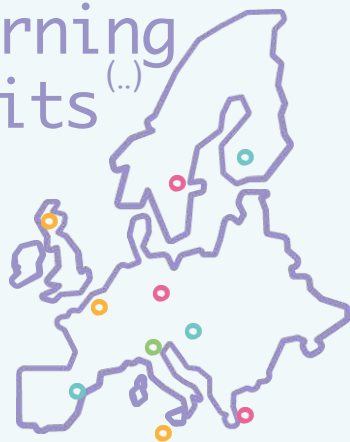
budget
497 960 €

TOPICS

Three core topics formed the bedrock of all the project activities during its firstphase (January 2020-June 2021)

PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

+
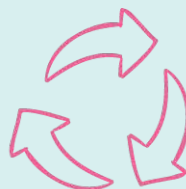
ADAPTIVE RE-USE OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS

+

QUALITY OF INTERVENTIONS ON CULTURAL HERITAGE

+

In its second phase (July 2021-January 2023), Cultural Heritage in Action will focus on three enlarged topics

RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE THROUGH CULTURAL HERITAGE IN A POST PANDEMIC WORLD +

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCING: NEW ROLES FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES +

A MORE SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL HERITAGE TO FACE THE CLIMATE CRISIS +

MAP OF INSPIRING EXAMPLES FROM EUROPEAN CITIES AND REGIONS

Challenge 1 - NURTURE
Inequality and social exclusion

Challenge 2 - ACTIVATE
Planning for rising urbanization

Challenge 3 - RETHINK
Moving past top-down systems

Growing trends, future challenges
Cultural heritage: a booster to change

Other good practices

CHALLENGE 1
NURTURE
INEQUALITY AND
SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Cultural heritage as a human-centred accelerator for cities and regions

Cities and regions are sites of social and spatial inequalities, places where a myriad of social problems meet, from unemployment and lack of proper housing to concentrations of poor and minority ethnic groups, intolerance and racism. Urban diversity contributes to making cities spaces of innovation and creativity, but it must come together with efforts to enable cohesion.

Cultural heritage, cultural and creative industries, sustainable cultural tourism, and cultural infrastructure can serve as strategic tools to mediate across communities and build understanding and caring; they can also boost growth and jobs in Europe by enabling cities and regions to identify and develop their own comparative advantages.

This section shows the potential of cultural heritage as a social and economic equaliser understanding it as an opportunity to include and an opportunity to create.

Cultural heritage: an opportunity to include and solve wicked social issues

Creating public spaces where residents feel safe, valued and part of a community is one-way cities promote social cohesion, inclusion and equity as well as reduce social-spatial differentiation. Cultural heritage is an anchor point in cities as it assembles shared memories of locals, opens public discussions and increases social inclusion. Local people's engagement in cultural heritage is an intrinsic requirement for a healthy democratic society to solve wicked social issues collectively.

Participation of local people in the public sphere is key to inclusive, democratic and tolerant societies. Because of its strong emotional element and its capacity to generate stories (collective or individual), cultural heritage is a perfect vehicle to enable mediated confrontation and to better understand the past. This contributes to building a more democratic future as well as better understanding the historic values of our own urban and architectural environment. Cultural heritage gives people a sense of unity and belonging within a group and allows them to better understand previous generations and the history of where they live, as well as creating spaces open to building new stories collectively.

Cities and regions understand the value of investing in cultural heritage to promote social equality. The involvement of local authorities with local people by enabling an open dialogue and the recognition of the urban needs from different groups are some of the key components that will pave the way towards living together in a sustainable and healthy way.

> Exploring solutions in
European cities and regions

BUDAPEST
HUNGARY

Exploring built heritage to strengthen communities

What?

Budapest100 is an annual two-day festival with the support and participation of residents and volunteers to reveal and celebrate the city's built heritage. The project uses tangible and intangible heritage associated with the city's built environment to fight social isolation and strengthen local communities. Through guided visits of houses, visitors and residents share stories and knowledge and get to know each other. The festival strengthens local communities, keeps the stories of the residents alive and raises awareness about the value of heritage and a well-designed built environment.

The festival is made possible by the work of 150 volunteers annually. Every year more than 50 public and private buildings are open to visits.

How?

With the support of volunteers and organisers, residents develop a programme related to the history of their buildings. Exhibitions, artistic performances and storytelling by residents and volunteers (urbanists, architects, researchers, photographers, etc.) complement the visits which allow festival participants to learn about

the history of the place and what makes it unique or interesting. Budapest100 uses the built heritage to drive community engagement and increase awareness of and participation in urban development. Activities contribute

Management

Budapest100 is an initiative of the Contemporary Architecture Centre in Budapest (KÉK) and the Open Society Archives. Both organisations oversee and support the implementation of the festival each year. The Municipality of Budapest (Cultural Department, Architectural Department, Mayor's cabinet, City Branding

Agency) supports the project. Currently 13 people work on the project part time with about 150 volunteers.

Top Tips

- **A personal connection among communities is key** to make citizens feel included.

- **Be patient** – community building takes time.

- **Working with key stakeholder(s) and if possible with a civic NGO** that will liaise and coordinate with the municipality will create a sense of integration among different actors.

- **Develop a win-win partnership** with all the stakeholders.

More info

CENTRAL
SCOTLAND
UNITED KINGDOM

World Heritage
for community
development

What?

The Antonine Wall is part of the 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire' transnational World Heritage Site. The 60 km site cuts across five councils and one city in central Scotland. The wall runs through many disadvantaged communities of Scotland, many of which fall into the 20% most deprived in the country. The key idea behind 'Rediscovering the Antonine Wall' was to use the wall as a catalyst for the social and economic development of the neighbouring communities. The challenge was how to foster participation amongst a diverse audience, and those less likely to engage with cultural heritage.

The six partners managing the wall (five local authorities and Historic Environment Scotland) carried out an extensive public consultation with the communities along the wall

How?

A project team runs the daily work. Stakeholders are involved depending on each project, including organisations like Scottish Canals, Forestry and Land Scotland and Nature Scotland.

Specialists within local and national authorities (arts staff, museum curators, archaeologists, environmental experts, etc.), as well as external contractors support the delivery of projects.

The community, community councils, and local heritage groups participate. Volunteers contribute with research, content development and managing events. Schools, youth groups, university and college departments along the wall are involved in skill development projects. Projects are developed with museums and local heritage organisations.

Top Tips

- **Ensure political and administrative support.**
Community engagement needs resources: staff, time, and budget. Support from the highest decision-makers (mayor and head of departments) is key. Without them, the road will be rocky.

- **Institutionalise community engagement** and train staff to become competent community organisers.

- **Know about the communities** you want to engage with.

- **To engage your communities**, you need to know who you want to reach. Define which communities you want to involve and think about how to reach them. Ensure ownership of the projects by communities.

- **The aim is engagement.** Thus, support communities in planning and implementing their project ideas, but do not do the project for them – it is about doing it with them.

More info

GHENT
BELGIUM

Circus for young people at risk

What?

Ghent decided to revitalise the Malem social housing quarter by working with a community arts organisation that offers training and infrastructure for circus artists.

The city helped the organisation secure a former parish church listed as non-protected heritage. Ghent is a breeding ground for creatives, giving them space and support. Circus gets special attention in the current term of office. Focus is also set on children and youngsters, and on participation and audience development.

Young people in some areas of Ghent are particularly at risk of social exclusion, and not being engaged by traditional educational and social activities. There

How?

Circusplaneet, founded in 1999, works with children and young people at risk, using circus for non-formal cultural education and community building.

In 2015, Circusplaneet bought the former church in the Malem neighbourhood, a social housing quarter, built in the fifties on the borders of Ghent's historic city centre, and Ciruskerk was born. The church was renovated and is now open for activities. The city, local schools and leisure

Management

The purchase and renovation of Ciruskerk was supported by the city council. Circusplaneet organised and supervised the purchase and renovation of the building with a team of external experts. The City of Ghent departments of culture, youth, finance, education and strategic planning were involved. Through the whole purchase and building process, Circusplaneet involved stakeholders: children and youngsters, circus artists, residents of the neighbourhood, and local partner organisations.

Top Tips

- **Study the building in all its aspects:** energy use, stability, heritage aspects. Use this study as a solid basis for a master plan for renovation.

- **Assist organisations through the process of building with public finances**. Fund them to hire specific expertise.

- **As an organisation, do not be afraid of this investment.** The fact that Circusplaneet is financing almost half of the project with its own funds gives the organisation a very solid position for future development. Owning property also opens new doors.

More info

Cultural heritage: an opportunity to create, grow and nurture sustainable local cultural ecosystems

The current global trends characterised by a continuous process of delocalisation and a decrease in industrial jobs in Europe in favour of a service economy have had a profound consequence in the field of culture and cultural heritage. Traditional craftmanship is slowly disappearing, leaving with it an intangible part of our inherited history.

Cultural heritage contributes to enable cities and regions to develop its own comparative advantages, thus boosting growth and jobs in Europe. Tangible and intangible heritage across European cities and regions contributes to increasing attractiveness, investments, tourism and retaining talent by supporting entrepreneurship and jobs in a creative economy.

Furthermore, the use of local resources, skills and knowledge in combination with digital tools or new approaches is a way for public authorities, stakeholders and citizens to highlight the role of culture as a social and economic equaliser.

Cultural heritage represents an opportunity to regenerate cities and regions and contribute to job creation while reducing social distress.

Cultural heritage contributes to enable cities and regions to develop its own comparative advantages, thus boosting growth and jobs in Europe.

> Exploring solutions in
  European cities and regions

SENIA
SPAIN

Heritage as an engine for sustainable development

? What?

The Ancient Olive Trees of the Territorio Sénia project was born as a response to the high concentration of ancient olive trees in the area and the need to preserve them as a very important part of its cultural, historical, landscape, agricultural and environmental heritage. The Mancomunidad Taula del Sénia, a local public entity formed by 27 Valencian, Catalan and Aragoneses town councils with more than 111,000 inhabitants in 2,070 km2 joined forces in 2006 with the Territorio Sénia Association. Together, the public and private sectors are conserving all the ancient olive trees of the Territorio Sénia in order to make this entire initiative a sustainable and resilient practice.

How?

The Taula del Sénia Commonwealth carried out an extensive inventory to map the number and characteristics of ancient olive trees in the area. As a joint initiative, the Commonwealth and the Sénia Territory Association, from 2009 to 2013, developed the four-year pilot project 'Oil and ancient olive trees, the engine of sustainable development in the Territorio Sénia'.

This project was the starting point for other related projects to support tourism, entrepreneurship and employment in the years to come, under the umbrella of the 'Ancient Olive Trees of the Territorio Sénia' initiative. Historical oil

Management

The project is led by the Taula del Sénia. Representatives from the private sector (landowners, mills, restaurants, tourism) are closely involved through the Sénia Territory Association. Volunteers and the local community contribute to activities. The 27 municipalities, the provincial councils of Catalonia, Valencia, Castellón, Tarragona and Teruel, as well as the national administration, support the initiative financially.

Top Tips

- **The practice could inspire other territories in Southern Europe,** especially in the Mediterranean Basin, where there is a significant number of ancient olive trees (Italy, Greece, France and Portugal).

- **Before conceiving a project,** make sure to know the dimensions and characteristics of your heritage assets through inventories, studies and research.

More info

CENTRAL DENMARK REGION

Reviving traditional crafts for local development

What?

The peninsula of Salling was once the manufacturing site of 80% of the Danish-produced furniture and hosted around 70 furniture factories. Today, only 14 factories are left in the region. The rural area of Salling now faces rapid depopulation and young people struggle to find employment opportunities.

By reviving the local tradition of chair production and using the existing infrastructure (furniture factories), the STOL (chair) project created a sustainable platform for crafts and design which creates new jobs and brings life into the area. The project also creates a meeting place for all ages, contributing to community building and participation.

How?

A group of residents from the villages of Salling approached an artistic organisation looking for new ways to encourage community engagement and local development. Together, they designed an artistic project around the tradition of chair production.

A series of workshops were organised to test and develop the project. The workshops included local crafts for children and events where professional carpenters transferred their skills and knowledge to people. The local and regional authorities supported and communicated about the project.

Management

The artistic organisation Grasslands devised the project. It was executed with a local working group and a board composed of citizens, artists, fundraisers, curators and volunteers. Artist Lene Noer manages the project. The Business and Development Department of Skive Municipality oversees the project. Professional Carpenters, woodworkers and local furniture factories are key partners. International artists, designers and architects redesign and upcycle the chairs.

Top Tips

- This initiative can be a source of inspiration for rural areas that used to have industrial production. The resources you need are at your fingertips: mobilise the local heritage to create new opportunities.

- Keep it simple: STOL introduces a simple concept focusing on one single object – a chair.

- The active role of the local community in the development and implementation of the project

- In rural and remote societies, it is important to build partnerships that are based on trust. Building on previous experiences increases the community's acceptance and openness to a new project.

More info

MALTA

Collaborating to save timber balconies and traditional craftsmanship

What?

Traditional closed timber balconies are part of Malta's cultural identity. They highly influence the aesthetic of the streetscape with their colours, materials and decorative motifs. However, climate change and lack of maintenance threaten these fragile heritage features.

Owners often replace traditional balconies with new materials (such as aluminium) or modern features considered more affordable and maintenance-free. This threatens the urban landscape and conservation areas. Decreased restoration also threatens the transmission of traditional craftsmanship.

Maltese local authorities designed a holistic strategy engaging with heritage professionals and citizens, leading

How?

The information led the Planning Authority to improve conservation and restoration of traditional timber balconies through:

• Participation in an EU-funded project on education and training of heritage professionals on wood and furniture conservation and restoration.

• Review of the 'Heritage in Timber Guidelines' completed in 2019 and updated in 2020. Improvement of 1996 grant schemes to mitigate the cost of restoring and maintaining traditional timber balconies.

Management

The Heritage Planning Unit within the Planning Authority was responsible for the implementation of the practice. The 68 Local Councils of Malta have been closely involved in the project in particular for the implementation of local grant schemes and the awareness raising initiatives. The project benefited from extensive collaboration with other governmental bodies, namely Heritage Malta (involved in a European

Top Tips

- **Engage with the public** and provide information and guidance even at a personal level.

- **Engage with heritage professionals** (artisans, craftsmen, carpenters) to inform policy making.

- **Know your audience** and secure sufficient funding for your communication and awareness raising campaign to be successful.

More info

RECOMMENDATIONS
TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL POLICYMAKERS

DEVELOP DIALOGUE WITH EXCLUDED GROUPS THROUGH CULTURAL HERITAGE

Open spaces
to co-create

+

Open your
eyes to the
surroundings

+

CULTIVATE YOUR LOCAL TALENTS

Cultural
Heritage is an
opportunity for
makers

+

Let citizens
be experts

+

Test your
ideas;
fail fast to
learn fast

+
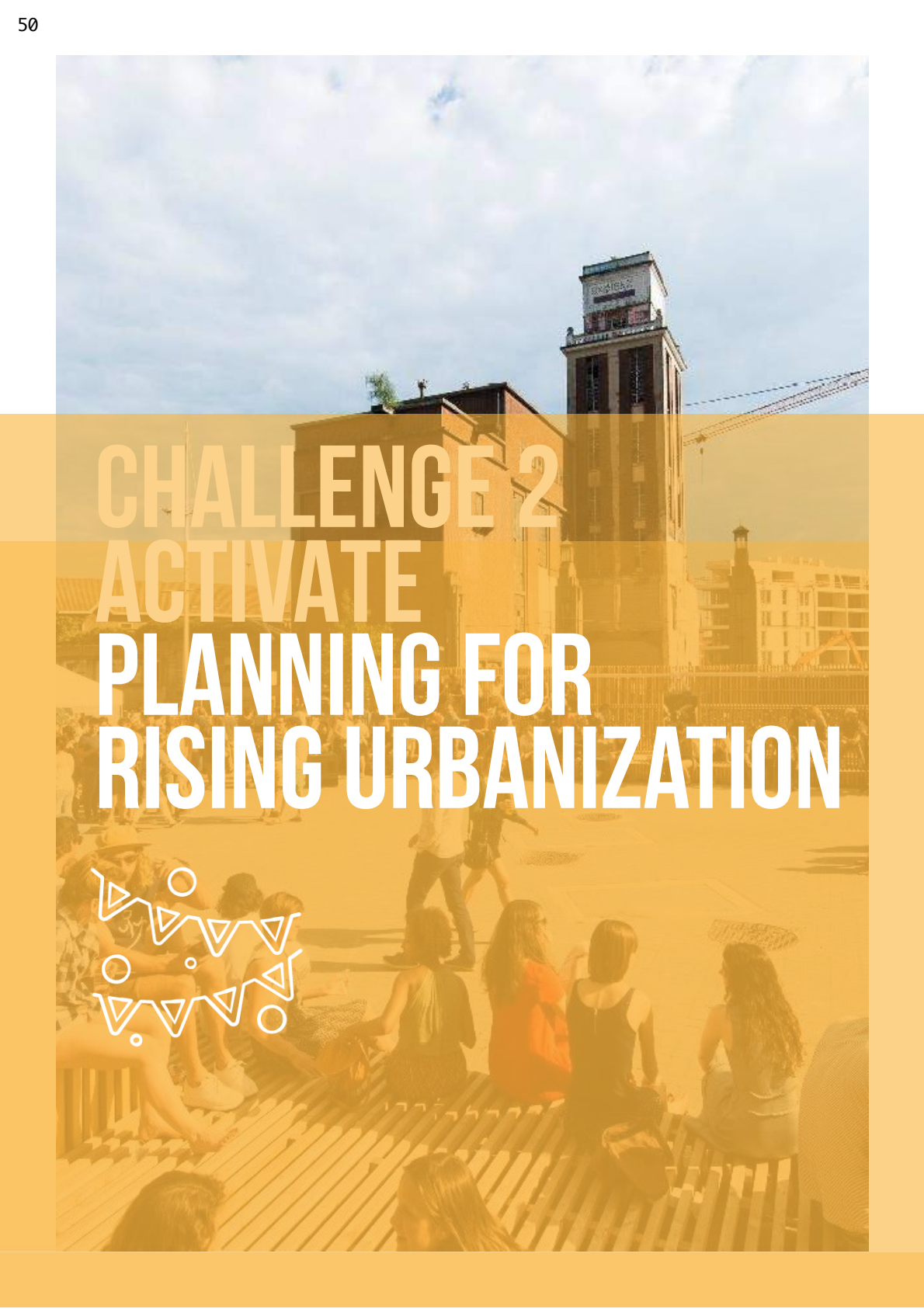
Create an
environment
of inclusion

+

Seek and
share

+

CHALLENGE 2
ACTIVATE
PLANNING FOR
RISING URBANIZATION

Cultural heritage: an opportunity to activate (new) public spaces

Are cities made of buildings or of public spaces? From an urban design point of view, public spaces, as sites for social connection between people, are the catalysts of urban life.

Cities have understood the power and assets that public spaces represent and have been investing in them widely in the past years. Cities are creating new public spaces and transforming existing ones. The objective is to turn public spaces into characterised urban products filled with urban services that can attract a wide range of users – locals and visitors.

Cultural heritage has a role to play in these urban development strategies as an inherent element of an urban landscape that evolves with cities. If heritage is above all a place of remembrance and memories of the past, cultural heritage in cities and regions connects to urban planning

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  European cities and regions

REGGIO EMILIA
ITALY

From the San Pietro Cloisters to an open hub

What?

Reggio Emilia has been confronted with industrial structural changes and the challenging transition from a manufacturing to a knowledge and innovation economy. This has led to changes also in the urban infrastructure and in the historic city centre. Located in the historic city centre, the former Benedictine monastery of Saints Peter and Prospero, called the

How?

Opened in 2019 after careful restoration, the Cloisters now function as a new open public and civic space. Tangible and intangible values of the historic place were considered for renovation, respecting and valorising the historic messages of the Cloisters with the present cultural and social reuse. The restoration process allowed the municipality to improve citizens' engagement in adaptive reuse of local cultural heritage and test out new models of participatory governance for cultural heritage: the Cloisters are now operational throughout the year, and the building hosts many cultural events. Citizens can also find the Urban Open Laboratory in the building, including a co-working space, laboratories, meeting rooms and a cafeteria, proposing several activities around food and gardening. This improved the cross-collaboration between cultural heritage and other sectors such as cultural and creative industries and ICT, created employment opportunities in the historic city centre fostering social inclusion, and increased the offer of educational and cultural opportunities for local communities.

Management

The municipal Department of Competitiveness and Innovation led the implementation process. Considering the cross-sectorial nature of the project, the deputy mayors and the heads of other municipal departments were closely associated with the projects through an executive committee (cultural services, communication, digital transformation and technological innovation; culture, territorial marketing and tourism).

Top Tips

- **Cultural heritage is an important part of Reggio Emilia's urban regeneration strategy** and a powerful engine of sustainable development and economic growth for the whole city. Rediscovering local histories and monuments can offer the city new ways to connect urban areas' past and future.

- **Encouraging the reuse of cultural heritage** as a means of giving the city a distinctive character and improving its attractiveness should not prevent testing new technologies to protect, restore and enhance this heritage.

- **Redesigning the roles and functions of heritage buildings** has many benefits for cities, among them the appearance of new local services and amenities.

- **During the Cloisters' renovation process, the municipality organised public discussions with civil associations**, foundations and cultural institutions to exchange on the future use of the place. Make sure to use an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach to decision making based on co-creation and co-design processes, as this will provide space for uses that match community's needs and interests.

More info

ŠIBENIK
CROATIA

Transforming Šibenik fortresses into a major cultural hotspot

What?

St. Michael's fortress is the oldest of four fortresses in Šibenik, dating back to the early medieval period, while Barone Fortress was built in the mid-17th century outside the city's historical centre. Both fortresses were left for centuries to decay and had no public utility, or economic or social function anymore. Despite the low expectations when the revitalisation project was announced, St. Michael's fortress became one of the

How?

The fortresses were restored to become one of the most visited historical monuments in Croatia, but also transformed into modern cultural and entertainment venues, hosting numerous performances and events. As a result, these remarkable sites have been preserved and Šibenik has positioned itself as a major cultural hotspot, where tradition and modern technology are successfully blended. Today, the revitalized fortifications of Šibenik are powerful generators of cultural development for the city and significant agents of education. All the proposed activities contribute to individual knowledge and social cohesion. The success of the revitalisation projects is reflected in the large number of visitors. In 2019, nearly 200,000 came to the fortresses to visit or to attend an event. There is a constant interest and increase of visits in all demographics.

Management

The revitalisation of fortresses was only achieved through overall institutional activity (cultural and various educational programmes, research and presentation of the fortresses, establishment of a gastro-cultural centre, etc.) and through establishing a firm relation with local community.

'Fortress of Culture Šibenik' sustainably manages and preserves Šibenik's fortification system for the economic

Top Tips

- **The city of Šibenik is a model of urban revitalisation through investment in cultural heritage.** The municipality and the team of the Fortress of Culture invested time and resources in building a strong relationship with the local community, artists and businesses, never compromising on the quality of the cultural offers nor on heritage restoration.

- **This later enabled them to develop trusted partnerships with major cultural institutions in Croatia and beyond.** The Fortress of Culture now acts as an anchor point for the local cultural and creative sectors.

- **Including local talent in the programming** has been a key component in helping them develop their careers and connect with large audiences. It has transformed the city itself.

- **The revitalisation project in Šibenik** also shows the paradigm shift regarding the interpretation and presentation of heritage and the possibilities of digital technology within the institutional care of historical, cultural and natural heritage. The challenge is to find the right balance between heritage preservation, promotion of culture and audience development.

- **With the right management model, it is possible to establish an institution** with the human and financial resources to manage a historical and contemporary cultural monument and be self-sustainable.

More info

LEUVEN
BELGIUM

OPEK, public depot for the arts

What?

In Leuven, cultural heritage has become an accelerator and resource of urban development, thanks to the OPEK independent art centre, one of the first grass-rooted infrastructural initiatives in a listed building in Leuven. It is the story of a matchmaking between five cultural organisations (united in TPAKT Infra, a non-profit association created to maintain and manage a shared infrastructure), looking for a temporary

How?

Settling in a redeveloping district, OPEK has become a pioneer in the canal area, accelerating its transformation into a vibrant creative hub attracting new players every day. OPEK triggered many other organisations in Leuven to work together, share infrastructure and reactivate cultural heritage. It also played a pivotal role in the reactivation of

the community and public space in the canal area. More people are coming every day for a stroll, which also benefits the community living and working there. At local level, the initiative also acted as an eye opener for the municipality, who found its role as a facilitator, leaving grassroots initiatives to lead projects, in the spirit of the commons. Cultural heritage is now more integrated into strategic local policies, perceived as an accelerator and resource for urban regeneration and community building. In order to recognise and strengthen these existing grassroots dynamics, Leuven introduced the Vaartopia project, an urban renewal project aiming to create more affordable space for creatives in the canal area.

Management

OPEK is a completely independent project that runs without any staff support from the city administration. The city supports their efforts with finance and expertise. To manage their daily practice in the building, every organisation contributes an annual fee to TPAKT Infra. Entering OPEK, you could run into theatre company het Nieuwstedelijk, youth

dance & theatre company fABULEUS and art educational organisations Bamm!, Artforum & Wisper, united in TPAKT Infra. These frontrunners were joined by other social and

Top Tips

- **Working with cultural heritage buildings can seem like a source of many problems and constraints**, but it actually enrichens local projects and their relationship with the city, community and neighbourhood. With unconditional faith in the users and the community, a local government can stimulate and activate them to create a high-quality programme.

- **For that to happen, municipalities have to accept that grassroots plans take time to grow**, but the result can be a community-based programme with huge urban, social and economic impacts. By letting local community participate or even co-create local projects from the very beginning, the project will be more widely supported.

- **In OPEK, by exchanging best practices and knowhow, every organisation became stronger and more resilient**. Cohousing with other cultural organisations forces you to sharpen the identity of your organisation and can bring many benefits, including financial ones.

More info

PLOVDIV
BULGARIA

Kapana creative district

What?

Historically an important trade and craftmanship neighbourhood for the city of Plovdiv, Kapana was left for a decade in a troublesome zone with decaying buildings. As part of the Plovdiv European Capital of Culture 2019, the neighbourhood was revitalised and transformed into a creative district, the first of its kind in Bulgaria, and a playground for creatives.

How?

Kapana had a highly positive impact on the people living and working in the area and to all the visitors, by optimising the space with pedestrian streets, cultural spots, bars and cafés.

The public felt open to participating in the creation of the creative district's vibe from the start. A unique culture with galleries, studios, workshops, bars, cafes and restaurants has developed. Since 2014, 55 cultural activities have been supported, with hundreds of events year-round. In 2017, more than 500 active businesses were mapped in the neighbourhood. Through the open-call approach, cultural operators acquired new skills and capacities, and built relations with the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation.

Gradually, the focus turned to the experience and emotion that Kapana brings – the things that today make Kapana's intriguing mesh of streets a place with its own distinctive spirit and unique atmosphere. Kapana Creative District received the award 'Guardian of Bulgarian Architectural Heritage' in 2019.

Management

Plovdiv Municipality (four people) and the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation (15 people) worked for the district in the framework of the European Capital of Culture bid and implementation.

Today, there is still strong support and partners implementing individual projects: cultural operators, many NGOs from the arts and cultural sector and individual artists and students.

Top Tips

- **Kapana Creative District is a good example of structured collaboration of local governance based on an open-minded**, inclusive, contemporary international partnership network, which makes it both locally cohesive and internationally collaborative.

- **From the beginning, partners and supporters based the redevelopment of the neighbourhood on public discussions** and world-cafés with local citizens, businesses, and representatives of local government. They did not shy away from open-for-all polls, even on infrastructural decisions.

- **The most important thing was to build partnerships and involve people through visits and experiences** that complement passive with active roles. They managed to create friendly and comfortable spaces for leisure and cultural appreciation.

- **Working together, they have created a good example of a sustainable creative district,** directly influenced by the adaptation to its progressive needs. The neighbourhood now has its own identity and unique subculture, where public space meets infrastructure, art meets business, and creativity meets economic growth.

More info

RECOMMENDATIONS
TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL POLICYMAKERS

THE SOCIAL ROLE OF URBAN REGENERATION THROUGH CULTURAL HERITAGE INVESTMENT

Restore,
revive,
rediscover

+

Ask your
(future)
audiences

+

Create or
re-invent
a new agora

+

CULTURAL HERITAGE CONTRIBUTING TO URBAN REGENERATION AND OTHER POLICY AREAS

Support professional exchanges and knowledge sharing

+

Co-manage and co-govern with local organisations

+

Call your local European Union funding officer!

+

THE CONTENT IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE CONTAINER

Never compromise on quality!

+

Tap into your local forces

+

Guide and facilitate exchanges

+
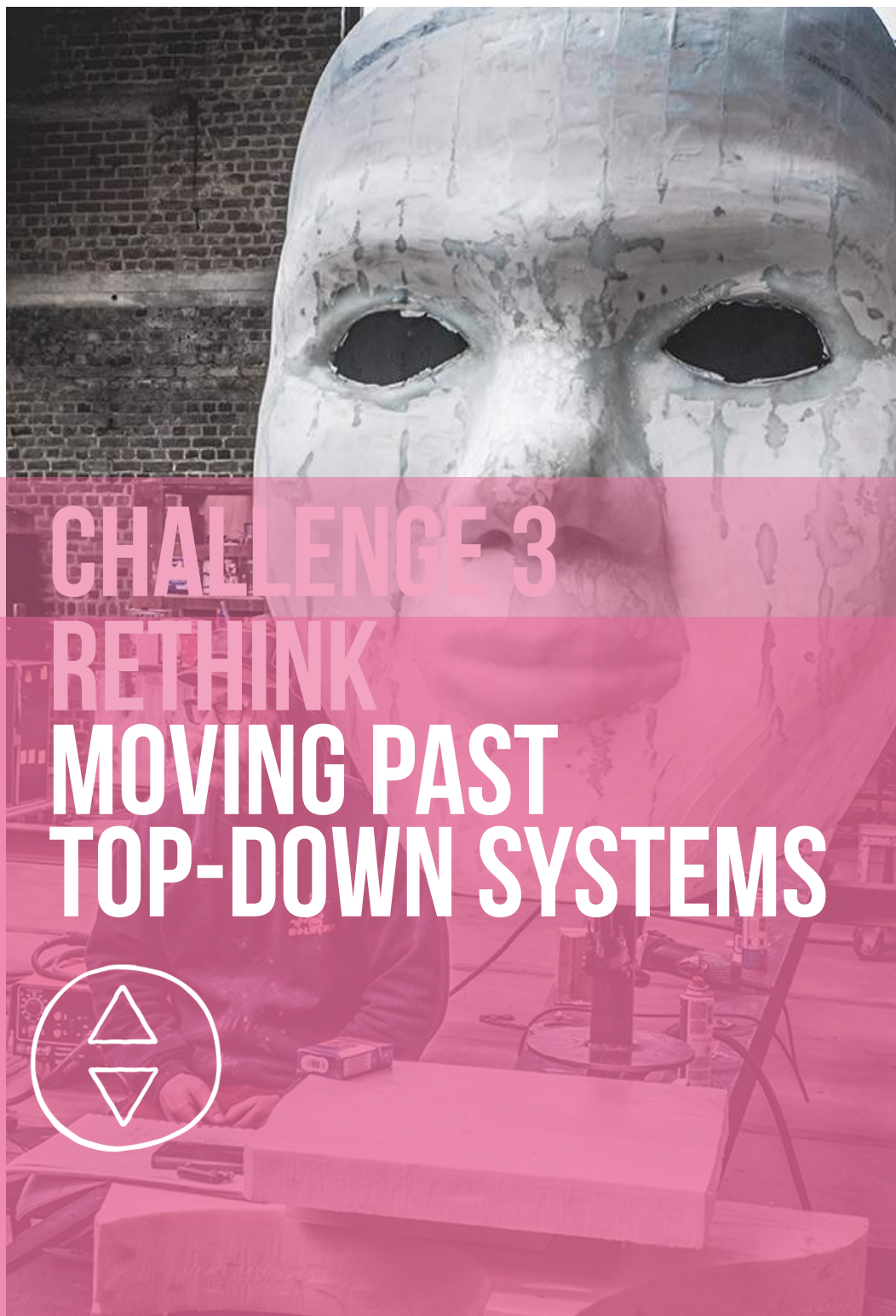
CHALLENGE 3
RETHINK
MOVING PAST
TOP-DOWN SYSTEMS

Cultural heritage: an opportunity to rethink governance and empower communities

Local governments have a duty to respond to their citizens needs and demands, assessing priorities for the greater good. With scarcer public resources and a higher demand for public services, local and regional administrations need to reinvent themselves and the way they work with local people and stakeholders.

Many citizens wish to act rather than suffer from global and national dynamics impacting their territories. On their side, municipalities are increasingly aware of the importance of placing citizens as actors rather than users of their territory, in order to help the administration set local priorities and develop policies that would be the most beneficial

> Exploring solutions in
  European cities and regions

VANTAA
FINLAND

A cultural environment programme created with local people

What?

"Cultural environments" is a common term in Finland. The protection of cultural environments is even enshrined in the Finnish Constitution and other legislations. Cultural environments are the human built or human influenced environments like places, landscapes and built heritage that are relevant for the identity and well-being of people.

How?

Working on the programme with city officials and residents ensured locals' ownership of the new programme and enhanced their commitment towards shared goals and actions. The cross-sectorial approach mainstreamed heritage and environment in different policy areas (education, culture, real estate, tourism, entrepreneurship), ensuring coordinated and more effective management of these resources. The goal of involving residents in the process was to get them to understand and acknowledge the meaning of local cultural heritage, and the impact it has on their well-being. Another objective was to make the residents feel that their participation has a direct impact on the outcome for their city.

At the end of the process, the municipality noticed improved co-design of public policy between local people and the local authority, and improved preservation and valorisation of the urban cultural environment and natural resources. The awareness, engagement and participation of citizens in conservation and management of cultural and natural heritage was reinforced. More stories and memories of local heritage have been collected and saved.

Management

Vantaa Deputy Mayor named an official steering group formed by city officials. Its role was to give guidelines to the project coordinator and to take care of the progress during the project. City officials also named 100 persons from their staff to take part in the discussions. To a few of them, cultural environment was already part of their jobs but for others this was something totally new. The

Top Tips

Vantaa's Cultural Environment Programme was developed in 10 phases:

- **Vantaa started by identifying relevant stakeholders** and their roles in cultural heritage.

- The second phase was to **ensure commitment from the programme's managers**.

- Thirdly, **steering group members named their staff** to take part in ambitious but very concrete discussions.

- The fourth phase was to **interact with citizens through public events and citizen-led projects**. By doing this, the city was visible and meaningful to citizens and started to implement the programme. They also used social media, local newspapers and online questionnaires to reach people and get them to share their stories, feelings and memories of cultural environment.

- The fifth phase **ensures that all parties have a chance to talk together**.

- The sixth phase was to **put everything on paper and consider the resources for implementation**.

- In a seventh phase, **everybody could comment on the proposed plan** before passing the programme to the administration in an eighth phase and making sure there was enough time and money for the implementation in the ninth phase.

- The tenth and last phase was to **make sure that the tools, plans and personnel for keeping track on the progress were present**.

More info

TAMPERE
FINLAND

Adopt a monument: inclusive cultural heritage for and with people

What?

Adopt a Monument is a grassroots project that consists of maintenance and preservation of archaeological sites and historical buildings by groups of volunteers (adopters). It encourages citizens to 'adopt' monuments of cultural and historical significance in their environment, to care for them and return them to use.

How?

Inspired by a Scottish initiative, Adopt a Monument started in Tampere in 2008-2010, developing adoption methods for archaeological heritage. In 2013-2016 it was adapted to historical buildings. It is planned that the programme will soon include public art monuments and natural heritage sites.

The aim of Adopt a Monument is to develop policies that enable citizens to become more closely involved in the management, research, valuation, and ownership of cultural heritage. In the background there are concerns about the preservation of cultural heritage amid rapid urbanization and accelerating construction, and the dwindling resources of public administration, as well as a growing sense of discomfort amongst the public from feeling disempowered and excluded. Adopt a Monument aims for a comprehensive promotion of mental wellbeing through enhanced awareness of communities' environment and social collaboration.

Management

Sustained long-term maintenance of adopted local heritage is based on agreements between the owner of the sites, the volunteers' group and the local Pirkanmaa Regional Museum.

A management plan is also drawn up that considers the condition of the site and the adopter's resources. The plan serves as a guidebook for the volunteers. It also sets out

guidelines for suitable uses of the site, as well as safety issues related to management and events.

Top Tips

- **The key elements learned during the time Adopt a Monument** has been running is that it is crucial to avoid top-down methods and to focus on facilitating, supporting, and educating.

- **The volunteers should be allowed to plan their own events** for the sites and carry out their efforts if they do not damage the cultural heritage sites.

- **The atmosphere of freedom and trust is important** when organising Adopt a Monument activities, however the maintenance work at the sites should be done systematically with proper plans and instructions.

- **For that it is important to surround yourself with professionals of the heritage field:** archaeologists, researchers of historic buildings, a master builder specialised in restoration, and researchers from local museums. Special expertise is needed not only to provide advice in the management of buildings and archaeological sites but also to develop participatory methods and interaction. Volunteer groups can rely on site-specific training, meetings and excursions.

More info

KORTRIJK

BELGIUM

Participation and co-creation through cultural heritage

What?

Giants are a particular tradition in the North of France and Belgium. Animated and dressed in local costumes, giants embody the collective identity of the town. They are carried by one or more people in parades, often accompanied by the local band. Manten and Kalle, Kortrijk's giants, were damaged and neglected in the 1990s. But the municipality wanted to revive this tradition through events, programmes and participate

How?

In Kortrijk, Emma, the new giant, now plays an important role in the development of a common story for all citizens of Kortrijk. Art and culture have been useful tools in this endeavour, triggering citizens to make changes in the city, while addressing societal issues, stimulating innovation, and enabling participation and engagement.

An artistic invention can lead to participation and local cultural heritage can be reinvented with the participation of citizens and relevant organisations, allowing new connections between the past and the future of a place. Making sure citizens can have an active role in the (cultural) life of their city will ensure a more cohesive society and build confidence for citizen to feel ready to confront various challenges (climate change, resilience, well-being, security or identity issues). Citizen's empowerment in turn contributes to a more democratic society that values freedom of expression and social engagement.

Management

A clear choice was made for a participatory, decentralised approach. Staff from Bolwerk led the project based on a cooperative management system between the city administration and a constellation of private actors and citizens: educational, youth and cultural organisations (private and public sector). Bolwerk gathered a group of volunteers via an open call in the Kortrijk newspaper, local press, social media, and so on. This group is responsible for the maintenance, cleaning, storage and performance of the giant.

Top Tips

- **To set up a successful participation process,** cities can rely on their local cultural organisations, artists and the creative sector, if they are given the freedom to develop their vision.

- **Cities can provide financial incentives** to participatory projects and governance/review funding mechanisms and set new criteria linked to efforts to engage with citizens and the local community.

- **Creation is attractive to people:** starting outside cultural institutions facilitates engagement and cities should know their local artistic and cultural resources upfront.

- **If the project can be rooted in a local tradition with a contemporary twist,** it makes it more relevant and a good way to give heritage a new meaning and purpose.

- **The process can be envisioned as an experiment,** knowing that not everybody can be reached the first time. However, the process itself is as important as the result and the impact.

More info

ROTTERDAM
THE NETHERLANDS

Crowd sourced local archives for collective memories

What?

DIGIT UP in Rotterdam is a formalised cultural heritage collection process to enrich the city's historical archives through crowdsourcing. Despite the large collection of the Rotterdam City Archive (Stadsarchief Rotterdam) - one of the oldest in the Netherlands and part of the municipality – part of the city's intangible heritage was overlooked by formal government records. Memories, stories and oral traditions were at risk of oblivion as citizens were not sufficiently involved in heritage collection, preservation and dissemination.

How?

The collaborative archive model of DIG IT UP in Rotterdam proves that designing a collaborative partnership between city archives and grassroots cultural heritage organisation can help to combine the best of both worlds. The public institutions contribute staff to sustain the partnership, funds and spaces to exhibit the heritage collections, while the DIG IT UP association connects more easily to different communities in Rotterdam. In addition, the project adds the results of DIG IT UP crowdsourcing collections to the public archive and thus makes them accessible to a larger public.

The initiative allows people to show a new side to the city history. The conservation and preservation of the inhabitants' cultural heritage and their stories is assured by the collaboration with the city archive, as citizens' heritage is added to the city archive. Without this partnership with DIG IT UP the city archive would not be able to keep track of the city's 'newer' history and to add the citizens' heritage to the city archive, safeguarding it for future generations.

Management

The special feature of Rotterdam's practice is the partnership, bringing the official public cultural heritage institutions, such as the city archive and the public library together with the grass-root community organisation DIG IT UP, a community gallery and heritage lab. The municipality gave a grant to archive the material that DIG IT UP received and gave DIG IT UP an initial push. The partnership brings together the stability, permanence and power of public institutions and the agility, openness and flexibility of grassroots organisations. The common goal of the partnership is to collect and safeguard city history, especially everyday city history from the perspective of those involved, the inhabitants of Rotterdam.

Top Tips

- **For a partnership such as the one implemented in Rotterdam to be efficient,** one should look for partners who complement each other with their resources and skills with a view to achieving a common goal. This can create synergy effects that allow more to be achieved than alone.

- **When starting a new partnership, explain well the reasons why you want to cooperate.** Demonstrate your honest interest and be open to learn from each other. Base the partnership on the needs and interests of the partners. Agree how information is shared and can be used by the partners.

- **Each organisation has its own priorities and working speed,** so it is important to plan sufficient time for coordination and decision-making to be able to work together and ensure there is a right match between the activities you plan and the funding you get.

- **Ensure that there are "open spaces" for discussions,** with free communication and open language to build trust between the partners.

More info

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RECOMMENDATIONS
TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL POLICYMAKERS

A TRIGGER FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENS ENGAGEMENT

Know your resources and crowd

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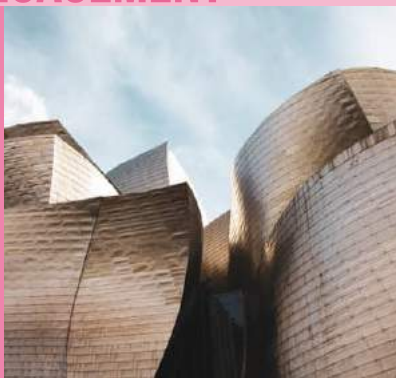
Develop tools to build a meaningful and long term dialogue

+

Adapt to your target groups

+

IT TAKES TIME,
TRUST AND SUPPORT

Think
long-term:
Rome was not
built in a
day

+

Help is
needed

+

Don't shoot the
messenger

+

WORKING TOGETHER
TOWARDS A SHARED GOAL

Check
who's in

+

Share a goal and
a vision

+

Know your own
colleagues

+

GROWING TRENDS, FUTURE CHALLENGES

CULTURAL HERITAGE: A BOOSTER TO CHANGE

The world is changing, affecting every part of our society, including the arenas of cultural heritage. The devastating effects of climate change, an unpredictable health crisis, the unresolved issues around identity or even the incorporation of new technologies have stormed up our way of living and have made us rethink our foundations. Adaptation has proved to be the key to embracing change and the field of cultural heritage is transforming accordingly to the shifting paradigms of the 21st century.

Cultural heritage stands out as an enabler of social cohesion and inclusion and as a driver for equity and local sustainable development by integrating participatory approaches. Moreover, cultural heritage is acquired, produced and shaped by citizens in multiform processes through which communities make sense of themselves and their surroundings.

This section reflects on the capacity of cultural heritage as an opportunity to change and empower society from a local perspective. In each of the following ongoing societal challenges, sustainable development, the health crisis, dissonant heritage and the digital transition, cultural heritage can be an instrument to yield positive change.

> Exploring the growing trends

Cultural heritage and the climate crisis

Climate change, through consequences such as global warming, rising sea levels, extended dry seasons or floods and heavy storms, threatens our habitats and our built heritage.

Cultural heritage, including historical buildings, archaeological sites, monuments, their contents and collections, as well as intangible aspects are a legacy from our past and an asset in our present. Deeply entangled in its surrounding environment, cultural heritage is subject to changes and adaptations.

Climate change adds potential changes to cultural heritage that could be damaging and threatening to its very core. The effects of climate change are already degrading and irreversibly changing our natural and cultural heritage. It puts thousands of sites with cultural, historic, and archaeological value at risk of being damaged or lost altogether, including archaeological sites that have not yet been discovered.

Structural changes are necessary in the management of our cultural environment. In that sense, the climate crisis also offers a moment of radical new thinking and innovation and an opportunity to explore and test innovative ways to protect monuments, historical buildings and sites from the effects of climate change and natural hazards.

To safeguard our natural and cultural heritage, decision makers and practitioners in cities need to bring environmental sustainability and action on climate change into their work. Doing so will unlock the potential of cultural heritage to be a driver for a new green economy; enhance economic, social, and cultural value in cities; and contribute to all key areas of the European Green Deal.

Cultural heritage can also be a component of climate change resilient solutions themselves. Heritage sites can serve as places of opportunity and experimentations for climate communication and education, and researchers on historic sites can help us understand past responses to changing climate conditions, which can in turn inform decision makers and practitioners in cities on how to develop adaptation and mitigation strategies for the protection of cultural heritage.

› Inspiring examples from cities and regions

'S-HERTOGENBOSCH

THE NETHERLANDS

Climate resilient restoration of a historic water defence system

What?

'-Hertogenbosch is a riverside municipality in the Netherlands characterised by impressive fortification walls and historic water defence features (bulwarks) that date back to the 16th century. Due to the disrepair of the bulwarks and the effects of climate change, at the end of the 20th century the inner part of the city was threatened by rising waters. The lack of public funding to sustain the urgent restoration work put pressure on the municipality to find a sustainable solution.

The municipality turned to an overall redevelopment plan for the former St. John's bulwark, deciding to restore the former water defence feature in a climate resilient way instead of building a new system. The restored building includes hydraulic and aquatic properties necessary for serving as a retaining wall for rising waters in order to protect the historic city. This climate resilient aquatic environment preserves this local cultural heritage.

More info

VAL GRANDE

Cultural community mapping in alpine areas

What?

Val-Grande is a national park shared between 10 mountain communities located in the remote Alpine area in the Piedmont region. Like many rural territories, the area is at risk of marginalisation. Recent depopulation led to a progressive abandonment of built heritage, but also threatens the transmission of local knowledge, values and memory. Since 2015, the Commonlands project aims to activate and empower local mountain communities to take responsibility for the preservation and valorisation of their shared cultural and natural heritage as a driver for community cohesion, wellbeing and sustainable development.

The 250 inhabitants triggered a bottom-up process to co-design and manage cultural and tourism initiatives in a sustainable way. The participatory approach enabled local communities to re-appropriate natural and cultural heritage as a source for local development and sustainable tourism. In the medium-long term, the project is expected to lead to the creation of an eco-museum to further sustain and expand the ongoing initiative.

More info

Cultural heritage in a pandemic world

The unprecedented health crisis that started in March 2020 has not only affected our lives and our social and cultural fabric but our tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Covid-19 has shut down heritage sites and cultural institutions resulting in huge economic losses. Countless artists, craftspeople and heritage practitioners have seen

how their means to earn a living have disappeared and their vulnerability increased. The pandemic has posed, as well, serious social challenges. Quarantine limited social relationships, isolating communities and broadening social inequalities.

Nonetheless, our cultural intangible heritage has been a part of what has kept us together during the hardest moments of the pandemic. Music and performances in backyards and balconies have connected us to our neighbours and helped us cope by providing us with an extra psychological and social support while at home.

Now, in a post pandemic world, the cultural heritage sector has an opportunity and an important role to play in sustainably building back better but the question is, how?

- By engaging with contemporary events and co-

  producing new knowledge and heritage narratives with more diverse communities and perspectives.

- By increasing the citizens' engagement and benefiting cultural institutions such as museums in a post-Covid world where the trend is to localise the audience.

- By strengthening the development of cultural heritage management strategies based on prevention and disaster response.

- By enhancing our creativity to deliver new cultural offers and services during Covid-19 that will now become a norm.

- By exposing our public heritage spaces to new uses accessible to all and available to meet outdoors (from concerts to street performances).

The way cultural heritage creates a sense of place and local identity makes it a central instrument to resilient cities in a pandemic world.

More info +

Cultural Heritage going digital

Cultural heritage is having a 4.0 revolution thanks to digital technologies and the internet. One of the main benefits of this digital revolution is that cultural heritage becomes more accessible to people notwithstanding their location or their financial means to actually visit or access cultural sites, objects and intangible heritage (stories, memories).

Digitisation of cultural heritage can be a crucial tool towards the conservation, renovation, study and promotion of European cultural resources.

Digital solutions are also increasingly used as a way to encourage community projects and develop shared solutions, as well as reach out to new audiences. Digital solutions are often developed to work more closely with younger audiences, and digital tools such as social media are also widely used to reach young adults.

Open data and collaborative software solutions are often required to develop participatory models for digital heritage projects, and well-designed standards and guidelines are paramount for any project involving shared digital tools. Developing participatory digital tool to crowdsource information around local heritage requires a strong curatorial and engagement team to populate the selected platform with content and involve citizens in the process, as well as technical skills to develop the data modelling behind the digital tool. Using the right tools to collect and organise materials matters as it conditions the way you can design participatory approaches to collect, assemble and open access to digital heritage. The language used should be accessible when working with communities so that everyone feels comfortable.

The Covid-19 pandemic has put digital tools for the cultural and creative sectors under the spotlight again. The pandemic evidenced the challenge of digitalisation in the sector, be it in terms of basic equipment, in terms of staff with digital literacy and skills development, or more broadly in terms of digitising cultural heritage content, especially for non-accessible heritage. But beyond the pandemic, investing in the digitalisation of cultural heritage projects is also an

> Inspiring examples from
  cities and regions

NANTES
FRANCE

A digital platform for the discovery and expression of local heritage

What?

In Nantes, heritage is seen as a source of innovation for the construction of the city. Nantes Patrimonia is a digital platform where citizen access information on the everyday heritage of their city and neighbourhood. Nantes Patrimonia provides digital tours, articles and interactive cartography, showcasing urban history, daily life, architecture, historical events, and the latest news on Nantes' heritage. Citizens can also bring input to the platform (testimonies, photos, videos, anecdotes, etc.) and become actors in the life of their city and district through topics that bring them together and represent them.

The portal was built over four years by professionals and over 100 citizens. Nantes Patrimonia allows detailed geotagging of heritage items across the city, as well as using multiple map layers to visualise the evolution of the city in an attractive way. Most importantly, the tool is accessible for

More info

ROTTERDAM
THE NETHERLANDS

Archiving urban history with an open-source software

What?

Archives are our collective and personal memory, a unique and irreplaceable part of our heritage. They nonetheless represent challenges in terms of collecting materials, preserving them, and making them accessible to the public. Despite the large collection of the Rotterdam City Archive (Stadsarchief Rotterdam), some memories, stories and oral traditions were at risk of oblivion as citizens were not sufficiently involved in heritage collection, preservation, and dissemination. Rotterdam has therefore formalised a cultural heritage collection process to enrich the city's historical archives through crowdsourcing.

Together with local association DIG IT UP, the Rotterdam City' Archive identified the features needed for a digital tool to develop a participatory model for archiving local urban history together with the communities. The chosen open-source software, 'OMEKA-S', is adaptable and facilitates digital exhibitions and data sharing.

More info

HERMOUPOLIS

GREECE

Digital tools spark community engagement

What?

The historic city of Hermoupolis is rich in architectural heritage, much of which is endangered or decaying. The key idea behind the 100 buildings/100 stories initiative is that beyond the technical conservation of a building, a local community can keep heritage alive by recognising and sharing its qualitative value: the stories it tells. The challenge of the initiative was to make citizens aware of the vulnerability of their built heritage and encourage them to engage in its preservation. Through digital storytelling, the initiative bridges the tangible and intangible heritage of the city and sparks community engagement.

The city integrated the participatory digital tool 100 stories/100 buildings into its local digital heritage system, HERMeS (HERitage Management e-System). Residents can now narrate, share and re-create the stories of the city and its buildings by submitting them directly on an online portal.

More info

WEINVIERTEL OST

AUSTRIA

Community-driven online archive at regional level (Topotheque)

What?

Topotheque is about building a community for whom the protection and accessibility of local history is important by providing an IT solution with both the infrastructure and the knowhow to build a crowd-sourced online archive. Based on the voluntary work of residents, historical material held by private citizens becomes accessible online. Topotheque managers, anchored in local or regional authorities, enable a citizen-driven process which aggregates dispersed material in a virtually unified Topotheque.

After the technical implementation of a digital archive of tangible and intangible heritage held by citizens, called a Topotheque, and a quick introduction, a Topotheque manager starts with entries that can be taken from existing archives. A pool of voluntary residents is set up by the local or regional authority: the Topothequers. ICARUS, the International Centre of Archival Research, teaches the Topothequers how to gather relevant data, and provides them with information on copyrights and private rights. The Topothequers get in contact with the local residents to gather private historic findings and

More info
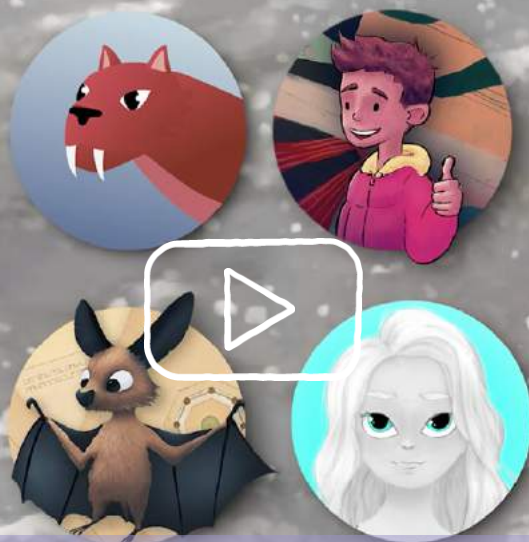
VANTAA

FINLAND

A virtual game to play around real local heritage

What?

As a growing city near Helsinki, the preservation of Vantaa's historical and cultural environment is important to promote sustainable development, improve people's quality of life and reinforce social and cultural cohesion. When the city realised that traditional urban cultural programmes from the 1990s no longer fit, mostly due to the lack of residents' support, a narrow policy approach to cultural environment and lack of monitoring and evaluation, they decided to take another path and started working on a new Cultural Environment Programme, strongly involving the local communities in the development of it.

In parallel, to raise the awareness of children and youth about the local cultural environments, the city developed a digital game in the style of Pokemon Go. Vantaa made the most of its local cultural and creative industries by working with the local game company to develop the game.

More info

Dissonant heritage

Cultural heritage, with its roots in history, can be a contested subject. The tangible and intangible cultural heritage existent nowadays might have been, in the past, a religious, ethnic, national or political manifestation of a specific group to assert, defend or claim power, land, or legitimacy. What is preserved or erased is sometimes an ideological choice that refers to the way cultural values are willing to be shaped and framed.

To define such type of heritage, the term 'dissonant heritage' has become popularised. Dissonance is often used in music theory to describe a tension between two tones that do not blend harmonically. Heritage is considered dissonant when different groups attribute different stories to it. Dissonant heritage is the heritage that hurts as it recalls past events not easy to be reconciled or re-interpreted in our present.

The Black Lives Matter movement is a key example to understanding 'dissonant heritage' as it points out to problematic historic monuments and widespread unresolved issues around heritage, identity, place and belonging in the public space. Protest and debate about examples such as the statues of King Leopold II in Belgium, whose rule killed more than 10 million Africans, highlight how current day inequalities are experienced as deeply rooted in the histories and heritage of local places and the people who live in them.

Heritage often plays a pivotal role for articulating identities and meanings used as arguments to justify political interests, igniting and perpetuating conflicts. However, the strong emotional element and capacity to generate stories (collective or individual) that cultural heritage has, makes it a perfect vehicle and tool to mediate that conflict and to better understand the past.

A good local governance of dissonant heritage acknowledges pluralism in worldviews and the right of each person to understand, create, relate and dialogue around the past.

Cultural heritage will be an engine for sustainable local development when its potential to change narratives is recognised and activated.

OUR 10 STEPS

To sustainable local cultural heritage policies

1 CULTURAL HERITAGE ON TARGET

Make sure that political support for cultural heritage is valued by policymakers and forms part of all key strategic documents. Cultural heritage must be a strategic goal for policymakers.

2 LOOK AROUND YOU

Understand (and map) the environment you operate in and the stakeholders you should work with, and ensure you ground your heritage policies on a robust understanding of your local ecosystem, the main heritage resources you have and how you can make the most of them. Get to know your local cultural heritage ecosystem.

3 SCORE WITH GOALS

Develop a strategic vision: setting clear goals and objectives will enable you to develop cross-sectorial cooperation and onboard partners in a natural way.

4 DON'T DO IT ALONE

Plan participatory processes and multi-stakeholder involvement in advance and take time to ensure you reach a consensus. Set up dedicated teams to manage consultation and engagement to ensure participants are not only consulted but rather in dialogue with your team.

5 PROVIDE A GUIDING LIGHT

Provide guidance and set out clear criteria to ensure the high quality of local cultural heritage projects supported by local authorities, including guidelines and shared resources.

6 GET THE BALANCE RIGHT

Develop adequate structures and maintain the right balance between involving all key stakeholders and giving room for manoeuvre to the teams managing your cultural heritage projects.

7 ASSEMBLE AN ALL-STAR TEAM

Surround yourself with a team with a broad range of skills and knowledge Compose the right teams with adequate skillsets, including digital and technical skills: managing digital projects requires capable project managers to make sure you do not end up with obsolete apps or other digital solutions. Get external support if you need: cultural heritage has many facets and requires a broad array of skills.

8 THE PLANETS MUST ALIGN

When working with different organisations, align timelines, budgetary constraints (which differ between the organisations you involve) and expectations.

9 COMMUNE WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Assess your blind spots and make sure you are not only working with your own usual suspects. Develop alternative ways of communicating and reaching out to cater to the needs of diverse communities.

10 THINK TWICE OR THRICE

Monitor, evaluate and rethink at all key steps of your local cultural heritage projects

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