

SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL HERITAGE VALORISATION

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Abstract: Europe's cultural heritage is a rich and diverse mosaic of cultural and creative expressions, an inheritance from previous generations and a legacy for those to come. It includes natural and archaeological sites, museums, monuments, artworks, historic cities, literary, musical, and audiovisual works, and the knowledge, practices, and traditions of all citizens. The policy in this regard pertains to the member states, via regional and local authorities, but the EU is also engaged in safeguarding and enhancing this treasure through numerous programs. Teaching Cultural Heritage is a useful tool in searching for the historical and cultural roots, thus assisting in developing European Citizenship competencies in students, and educating them to understand diversity and the importance of an intercultural approach to life. Cultural Heritage topics pervade the curricula and point to the common roots of human civilisation .

Key words: cultural heritage, academic teaching, civilisation, management of heritage sites

Cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past, irrespective of ownership, that people identify as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and transitions. It includes environment aspects resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, a treasure that needs protection or conservation for single monuments, archaeological sites, historical buildings, landscapes or historic town centres. Heritage must be promoted as a driving force for active engagement and enhanced social responsibility in order to foster a Europe of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

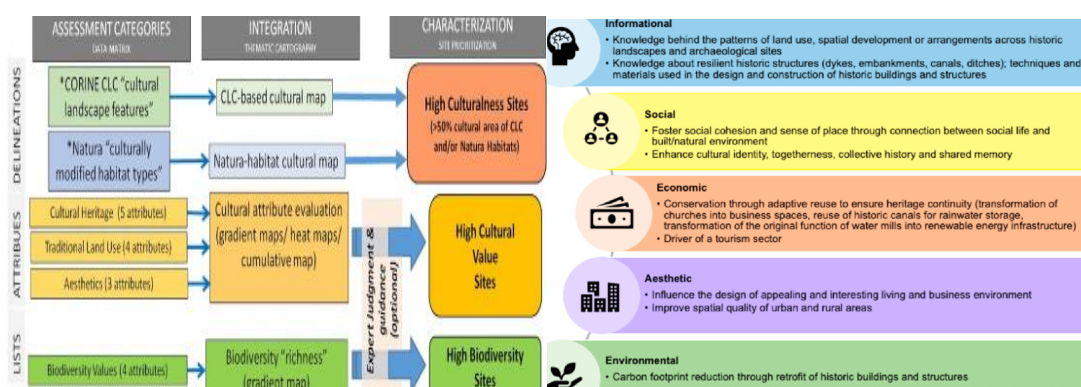


Fig 1. Valorisation of culture heritage sites, cf. <https://heritage-pro.eu>

Heritage education offers opportunities to engage in experiences for learning new concepts and skills. Learners directly experiencing or analysing it get knowledge, intellectual abilities and a wider range of competences on issues like cultural heritage maintenance or societal well-being. In the long run the sustainability of a participatory process depends on the monitoring and dissemination of the result. The transformation from consumerism to sustainability is an acute challenge to face. Education is the key

instrument for changing the world in view of living sustainably and improving our habits, values and preferences. The tangible cultural heritage is our common good, the intangible heritage our common system of values and traditions, and both generate an immense resource of memories, full of examples of sustainable assets and behaviours.

International organisations share best practice models providing expertise and training, and giving guidelines to national, regional and local authorities in order to assess the socio-economic impact of their policies as basic pillars of sustainability and help them improve their performance. EU & national administrations are increasingly integrating cultural policies into their sustainable development strategies.

Professionals contribute to changing behaviours by adopting ecological ethics, specially appreciating and implementing many principles from traditional knowledge. New socially oriented business models are introduced to redesign corporate charters inserting social responsibility. Sustainability is aligned with participatory governance, focusing on the preservation and reuse of cultural heritage. Multiple stakeholder viewpoints are being incorporated to enrich communities and enhance businesses.

Integration of migrants generates structural change in Europe as it leads to the formation of cultural minorities, one of the main causes of social exclusion. Migrants should participate in the social life of the cities and villages where they live. They are displaced from their territories and only have culture as a modality of retaining own identity and well-being. Migration is both a challenge and an opportunity. The world has developed as a result of migrations, and cultures have evolved and got enriched by the contributions of people coming from other territories and bringing with them knowledge, traditions and values.

Cultural heritage can be a tool to strengthen communities in relocations. The ones that preserve their traditional knowledge and skills are especially valuable due to their long-standing experience and resilience.

EU guidelines in this respect include:

- The contribution of training to increase knowledge and education;
- The practice of participatory governance;
- The respect for diversity and promotion of the quality of life;
- The use of heritage as a sustainable resource;
- The integration of heritage into development strategies;
- The use of innovative technologies for conserving and presenting cultural heritage;
- Stimulate creativity to incorporate social evolution;
- Research and preserve heritage knowledge and skills;
- Work for consensus-based decision-making, in equitably ways;
- Enable citizens to take responsibility for protecting and conserving cultural heritage;
- Give them roles according to their competences;
- Take into account the existing tools and policies, in line with the legal frameworks;
- Make use of all resources in order to achieve optimal efficiency and sustainability.

When communities feel responsible for their heritage, they build a complete and more realistic narrative, better than the one frequently promoted for commercial or tourism reasons.

A community aware of its culture makes better informed decisions about its preservation and is more conservative when it comes to requesting assistance from administrations/professionals. Citizens exercise an informative function, collaborating with professionals in documentation. Stakeholders' contribution helps to adequately preserve heritage integrity and correct meanings to convey for the future.

Communities can generate experiences and new meanings by connecting their sense of cultural heritage with territorial, social and knowledge areas. On the other hand, heritage professionals are reluctant to interrelate with citizens and communities. They are more aware of the emerging needs before they start project planning, as success depends greatly on social acceptability and consequently on inclusion in the political agendas.

Therefore, it is important to seek effective communication and participatory planning to ensure that cultural heritage is further valued by society.

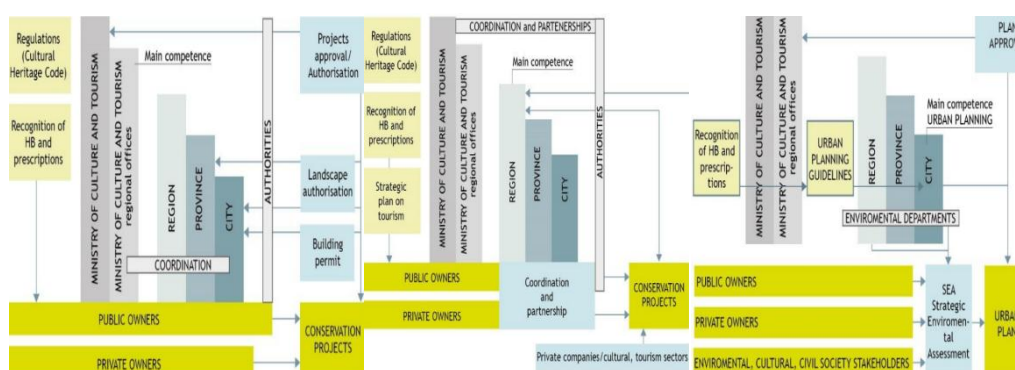


Fig 2. Cultural heritage conservation & valorisation impacting urban planning, cf. www.interregeurope.eu

The significance of historical monuments impacts both life quality in the cities and monuments conservation. Protection of cultural heritage landmarks exclusively by the government is not sufficient if citizens do not take active part in safeguarding them. Creating a closer link between monuments & education benefits the monuments, but also the didactic process, leaving enough room for interdisciplinary approaches. Teaching will thus stimulate the development of higher order thinking skills, making students more independent and confident in cultivating their lifelong learning skills. The methodology used is inquiry-based and facilitates collaboration among students and professors while using actual artifacts, handling replicas, or navigating 3D maps, as well as virtual reality reconstructions based on scans of archaeological sites, which trigger intercultural dialogue and acceptance of diversity in all cultures.

The European identity, common, inclusive, pluralistic, will hopefully protect students from the phenomena of intolerance, racism and xenophobia.

There is much innovation in the use of cultural heritage with proposals for in-service teacher training, including permanent training in institutions such as museums.

Also, by doing cultural heritage research in their own or target communities, interacting with local people and craftspersons, musicians, storytellers, artisans, and experts in local history, professors can discover the rich & diverse traditions around them and make valuable connections to history, place, and environment, to convey to their students.

Bringing heritage studies to the curriculum has many beneficial consequences:

- enhances performance in interdisciplinary learning, and team participation
- enriches presentation skills
- involves students with their community, and increases civic awareness
- builds self-esteem and pride in self, community, and cultural heritage
- provides opportunities for students to contribute to community in meaningful ways
- fosters awareness and tolerance of cultural diversity
- encourages interpretation, synthesis, and evaluation of various kinds of cultural data
- develops technological expertise and skills with documentary equipment
- promotes school-community partnerships
- offers learning opportunities that value each student's life and experiences.

Cultural traditions are almost always:

- passed on informally, by word of mouth, observation, or imitation
- anonymous
- enjoyed and performed by groups members to convey a sense of group identity
- found in several different versions and variations, dynamically altered according to creator/interpreter/audience/number of iterations

Heritage education has been traditionally carried out in settings where teachers use conventional didactic strategies. However, current issues emerge fast, such as the fact that more and more people born in a particular place, lost the opportunity to know their heritage in detail, so their education was neither effective nor contextualized, but emerging technologies as mobile learning or augmented reality have opened a new set of opportunities to improve heritage education by offering alternatives to customize, locate and contextualize learning.

Alternative frameworks in heritage education using emerging technologies such as augmented reality propose a conceptual architecture able to facilitate the educational process mediated by information technologies. Cultural heritage becomes a focal point where building structures, monuments, artwork and intangible values are intertwined, for the use of citizens and their memory. Places and conducts, lifestyles, beliefs, languages, communication customs, all converge in the group cultural identity.

To enhance connections between students and their heritage, new technologies enable them to act as tourist guides with audio input&interactive screens, with mobile applications and access to dedicated web sites. Teacher-centered frameworks focus on traditional didactic methods characterized by the responsibility of the teacher who leads the study process. Student-centered models focus on learners, considering their preferences and needs. The teacher's role is to facilitate the students' learning process.

Content-centered models are characterized by a central axis of information that supports study. Content changes as the learning process evolves, and it may vary,

adjusted to the educational level and to the environment in which it is displayed. Context-centered models focus on circumstances, considering aspects such as real scenarios where the learning takes place, and the accessed devices, in order to define learning strategies. The context is taken into account to personalize the learning process.

Modern didactics of cultural heritage rely on hybrid models fusing learner-centered, content-centered and context-centered frameworks to enrich both formal and informal education, articulating a learning process that takes place in real scenarios where individual needs are personalized. The learning process thus also includes entertainment, enjoyment, culture, or tourism, which significantly enhances the meaning and rhythm of learning.

New generations show less interest or knowledge on heritage values pertaining to the places they inhabit as a result of globalization and cultural influences from other countries.

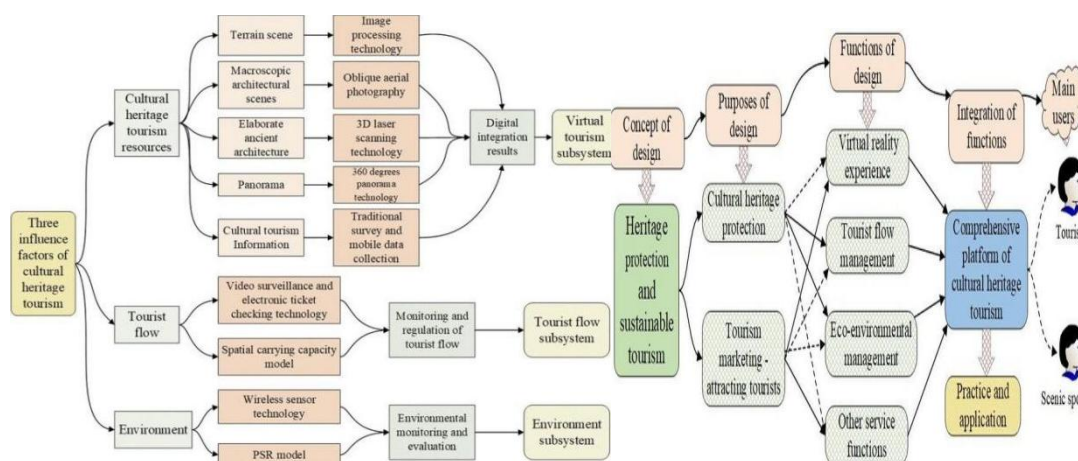


Fig 3. Heritage protection and sustainable tourism, cf. www.coe.int/en/web/

For tourists, information brochures or websites do not give effective & accurate heritage education processes. Numerous modern technologies have been developed to support teaching cultural heritage values, but they are usually used in enclosed and specific places as museums or art galleries with pre-defined scenarios. The content is delivered from web and mobile applications which in general are standardized and do not take into account people's preferences or needs.

Therefore, new alternatives should emerge, able to allow users to come closer to their treasures taking advantage of new models, methodologies and frameworks to improve cultural heritage education.

Projects bring together students of with various majors, who focus on diverse and complementary issues, like history, archaeology and cultural heritage, sociology and economics, civic associations, professors and managers, in order to cooperate for improving the quality of citizenship education.

Project objectives may centre on:

- enabling professors to enforce teaching by addressing cultural diversity in groups

- promoting the intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding between students and people with different backgrounds, by emphasizing that different cultural expressions and behaviours could lead towards the same outcomes, with the respect of human rights and values
- enabling teachers & students to tackle cultural differences and use modern attitudes in step with the new times and development levels, in the age of democratisation of information accessed through technology and acquired in global contexts.
- enabling teachers to support cultural heritage & values as a strong basis for economic growth, job creation and social cohesion by collaboration.
- raising students' awareness of the cultural heritage and use it as education source.
- creating open educational resources based on the uses of cultural heritage.
- enriching the teaching profession via acquisition of new skills.
- acknowledging the importance of teachers' role in society.
- promoting inclusive education and social cohesion, by common values and interests.

The social, political, and economic developments and shifts in today's society, such as migration from rural areas to larger cities, as well as dramatic changes in technology, have generated alterations in the perception of significant cultural assets.

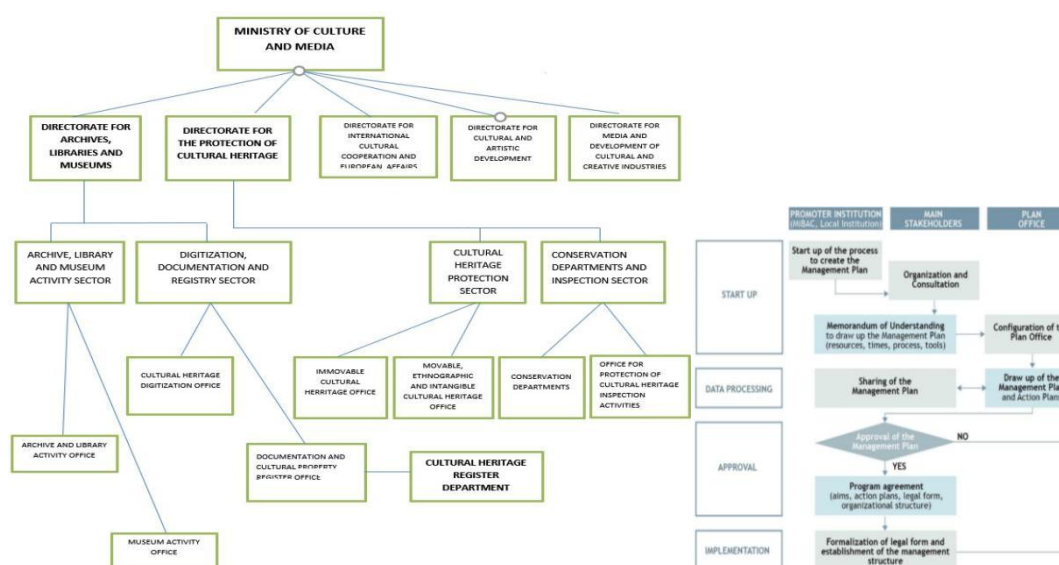


Fig 4 . Horizontal governance mechanisms at local levels, cf. www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca

Article 14 of UNESCO Convention on cultural heritage preservation clarifies the steps to be taken in education. It stipulates that the protection of intangible cultural heritage remains part of formal and non-formal education programmes as it improves interaction, communication, and creativity in students.

A EU Framework for Integration of Digital Cultural Heritage in compulsory education would help member states in their efforts to promote the reuse of cultural heritage digital resources in mainstream teaching. The framework plans to support national, regional and local efforts in fostering digital cultural heritage in compulsory

education, focusing on inclusive digital learning, by offering a common standard of reference, with a common expression and logical approach.

The perspective will be interdisciplinary, digitally mediated and multi-modal, creative and active. It will be in complete alignment with the DigiCompEdu Framework, as the intent is to incorporate the six areas of Professional Engagement, Digital Resources, Teaching and Learning, Assessment, Empowering Learners, Facilitating Learners' Digital Competence. The key pillars to consider centre on digital cultural transformation, digital cultural maturity, digital cultural literacy and digital cultural competences.

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