



REACH BUDAPEST CONFERENCE MANIFESTOS

A world café discussion was held during the REACH project's Budapest conference in May 2018, which sought the opinions of attendees. After the conference, the outcomes of the discussions were summarised by the table chairs into a manifesto.

The chair for this topic was Alexandra Bitušíková, Vice-Rector for Research at Matej Bel University.

REFLECTING ON SOCIAL COHESION AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

The agenda of the European Year of Cultural Heritage stressed the importance of cultural heritage as a base for social cohesion that contributes to place attachment and place identity, and is a resource for community integration. The growth of heritage sector and heritage tourism industry results also in an increasing interest in the heritage of regional, rural, ethnic and other marginalised groups, and on the other hand, also an interest of these groups in cultural heritage.

We know that there are still various socio-cultural or ethnic groups that are not sufficiently included in cultural heritage experiences. Heritage sector should provide access to everyone, members of all groups including migrants, minorities, disadvantaged.

In the World café, we discussed challenges of new inclusive approaches to cultural encounters. We tried to identify key problems and addressed how they can be treated and what are new approaches and good practices we can learn from: new applications and IT tools, new participatory approaches, tailored actions targeting particular marginalised groups, collaborative tools, and co-designed activities. The aim was to discuss new ways of integration that can bring various groups and communities together through cultural heritage.

Several warm-up questions were defined at the beginning; however, the discussion went beyond these questions:

1. Are you aware or do you know about exclusion of some groups from cultural heritage experiences in your country? Who are those most excluded?
2. Do you know about best ways to integrate various groups? Is it important/ possible to target all marginalised groups or to tailor some tools for particular groups?
3. What works and what does not work? Good and bad practices.
4. Impact of participatory and collaborative approaches on integration, social cohesion and (in)equality.



The discussion was organised in two sets of parallel groups, which were represented by people from various countries. The discussions revealed a number of country differences. A divide was most visible between the European countries of „old“ and „new“ democracies („Western“ and „Central and Eastern European“ ones). The main difference was that there is still lack of experience with participatory methods addressing inclusion in the former post-socialist countries.

Key points/ challenges discussed:

- Groups most excluded from cultural heritage experiences:
 - o Refugees (who live in parallel societies without any access to official culture of the host country)
 - o The Roma minority
 - o People with no or limited income (socially unequal)
 - o Disabled people (with all kinds of disabilities)
 - o New migrants (official economic migrants even within the EU)
- New migrants (official – legal ones, mainly economic migrants) often deliberately choose to be excluded from official culture (e.g. migrants from Eastern Europe working in Central Europe or migrants from Central Europe working in Western Europe). It is the case of seasonal migration or weekly/monthly work mobility when official - legal migrants/ employees from another country come to a more economically prosperous country to work, but have no interest in integrating into local culture – their main interest is to make money and send/take it home – this, however, might cause all kinds of social tensions in local communities where they work. These legal migrants are not a special target of integration policies, but as they do not participate in life of local communities and have nothing to do in their spare time, they are often a source of problems at the local level, which contributes to the growth of xenophobia and hatred in local communities.
- Heritage without stakeholders or unwanted heritage – there are cultural/ ethnic/ other groups in Europe that had to assimilate due to political consequences of the World Wars I and II (e.g. the Sudeten Germans in the Czech Republic or the Silesians in Poland and Central Europe) – who is supposed to protect their heritage?
- Playing with heritage (there are all kinds of groups who play with heritage of „old“ ethnic and cultural groups such as Celts or neopagans) – how to address this question
- Role of religion: religion heritage can be a source of cohesion as well as of conflict (see the case of the Balkans)
- It seems that there is a generational gap in using and enjoying heritage experiences - it is becoming more difficult to attract young people to heritage – new creative ways and good engagement strategies are needed (e. g. using arts – first to make people interested, then to make them participate)
- Gender aspect is still missing in heritage strategies and policies although it plays a significant role here (usually women are stronger bearers and transmitters of tradition) – this is a very underestimated topic in heritage studies and policies



- Economic and social aspects and consequences of living in ghettos or periphery: people living in these areas have no access to transportation, to libraries, to cultural events that are organised in the centre
- The challenge how to measure the impact of participatory and collaborative approaches on social cohesion and (in)equality remains open. University of Coventry has started a new project in this area.

Selected examples of good practices:

- New creative performing arts as a way to make young people of all groups interested and then engaged
- Education from early stage: for instance through toys showing different cultures, races etc. – such as dolls of the others – e.g. black dolls (project in Canada); living books or living libraries – bringing real people from minority groups to classes to tell their life story (project in Slovakia); giving children tasks to look for their family histories and genealogy (finding out diversity of their roots);
- Urban gardening as a way of integrating immigrants in local life (growing and selling herbs etc. – project in Bologna)
- Inclusive university programmes (university programmes involving students with disabilities) – organising weeks of diversity etc.

Please visit the REACH project website for further information: www.reach-culture.eu

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