



RE-designing Access to Cultural Heritage for a wider participation in preservation, (re-)use and management of European Culture

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year a number of projects take place that explore different areas of cultural heritage (CH), each undertaking interesting and valuable work, but not always linking together to share and maximise results. What is more, after projects have ended, these findings are often lost to the sector and not used or built upon by other stakeholders. It was on that basis that the first parallel actions of the REACH project were to establish its online presence and build its network of Associate partners, and use this foundation to discover the results of prior projects for evaluation, and from them identify themes, strong practices, transferable elements or noticeable gaps. Ultimately, 128 cases of good practice were evaluated, providing a comprehensive list of participatory and resilient CH practices.

Having considered the work of these projects, the REACH team identified what they had done well, what might not have been as successful and lessons that could be identified, all of which informed the development of the REACH project's conceptual framework. A further use of this information, enhanced by content from speakers and discussion groups at the REACH conference in Budapest, was the development of a series of participatory models. To test these, four participatory pilots, were established that were of diverse natures, working with different types of communities and stakeholders, in different situations and political climates. In parallel to these pilots (Minority heritage, Rural heritage, Small towns' heritage and Institutional heritage), four thematic workshops that addressed the underpinning themes of the project, management, (re-)use and preservation of CH, as well as resilient CH, were held to gather perspectives from a broad range of stakeholders, with their results also used to refine the project's participatory models.

Throughout the project, good practice cases continued to be assessed, with a number of examples identified via REACH events and participatory pilots. Some of these were refined to be presented as best practice case studies, one addressing the project's theme of gender representation. This reflective phase of the project also evaluated the work that had taken place to identify evidence of resilience in CH, comparing theory and practice, and ultimately making a series of recommendations. Given the project's remit to develop and test participatory models, further evaluation took place that compared the four very different pilots, but ultimately identified a number of common CH related participatory themes, once more outlining a series of recommendation for use by other interested parties wishing to maximise participatory activities and approaches in their work, projects and/or communities.

Throughout the project, details of the all strands of its work were shared via the REACH website, reach-culture.eu, its blog and through multiple social media channels, ensuring that findings and results were disseminated to the network that had grown throughout the three-year period. The open-heritage.eu website was also populated during this time to include a series of resources, tools and policy papers, as well as REACH good practice cases, to provide a base for CH sector-wide collaboration.

In addition to open-heritage.eu, the project team took its requirements as a social platform seriously. With the remit to bring together relevant heritage stakeholders' representatives from research communities, SMEs, heritage practitioners of all kinds, as well as policy-makers, dialogue took place throughout the project's lifetime, with major events including a symposium held in Brussels and a video call, both of which involved representatives of key CH stakeholders, their main objective being to establish a coordination structure that would strengthen the voice of the CH community and provide a place to share result and best practices and maintain the work of projects after they have ended.



2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 BACKGROUND

The REACH project responded to the Horizon 2020 call for *Participatory approaches and social innovation in culture*. Specifically, the call asked for a social platform which would bring together relevant heritage stakeholders' representatives from research communities, SMEs, heritage practitioners of all kinds, as well as policy-makers. The text of the call is replicated here:

"A social platform will bring together relevant heritage stakeholders' representatives from research communities, heritage practitioners from public or private cultural institutions (heritage sites, libraries, archives, museums, and other public or private collections) and organisations (NGOs, associations), as well as policy-makers at European, national, regional or local levels. For improving the excellence of European heritage management and related policy making the platform should also harness the potential of networking among the growing number of European cultural heritage and cultural studies departments at higher education and research institutions.

Based on a focused, critical mapping of existing research and practice, the objective of the social platform is to develop an understanding of the challenges and opportunities for research and innovation in the participatory preservation, (re-)use and management of cultural heritage. The platform should pay particular attention to the sustainability and employment dimensions of new approaches to cultural heritage, taking into account the issues of data collection and measurement. The platform will map and share European and extra-European best practices, identify emerging new European heritage communities, evaluate bottlenecks and opportunities in the financial and legal environment and create new European networks around the participative preservation, (re-)use and management of cultural heritage.

The actions will form the basis for new institutional strategies to engage new audiences and communities and to combine culture, informal culture and cultural heritage demonstration and preservation with innovative ways of cultural transmission and creative (re-)use. The findings will help culture ministries, cultural institutions and other relevant actors to reinvent and modernise their policies and their roles as centres of culture, cultural heritage, information, learning and gathering. Results will give guidance on how to promote European culture and further democratise access to it in a way that enables mutual and intercultural understanding. In addition to new academic results, the activities will also provide analytical tools or toolkits, description of best practices and policy recommendations that can facilitate the direct uptake of research and other insights by stakeholders."

The REACH project abstract provided this outline:

"In the context of radical social changes taking place at global levels, Europe faces a serious challenge: the need for its citizens to live together in peace and mutual respect and to value and enjoy the diversity of cultures, which they bring to their respective societies. The REACH project is based on the proposition that CH plays an important role in contributing to social integration in Europe, and that a fuller and more detailed picture of the range, type and impact of research and participatory research methodologies, current and future, associated with these subjects will further enhance their potential for social good."

2.2 ROLE OF THIS DELIVERABLE IN THE PROJECT

This deliverable is designed to provide an overview of the activities and results of the REACH project. It provides an outline of each of the major activities of the project and the stakeholder relationships that have been built within the cultural heritage (CH) sector. It demonstrates how tasks were interlinked, with each one building upon the results of another, which ultimately led to the development of recommendations and conclusions from the project. The REACH social platform maintained a clear focus on the themes of the management, (re-)use and preservation of CH that were identified within the call, as well as the types of participation (top-down/bottom-up) that have traditionally been in place, and other more contemporary approaches. Further underpinning dimensions have also been incorporated that included the concept of resilient CH, the adaptation in response to disruption, and also the recognition of the portrayal and roles that women have played in CH that have been regularly overlooked.

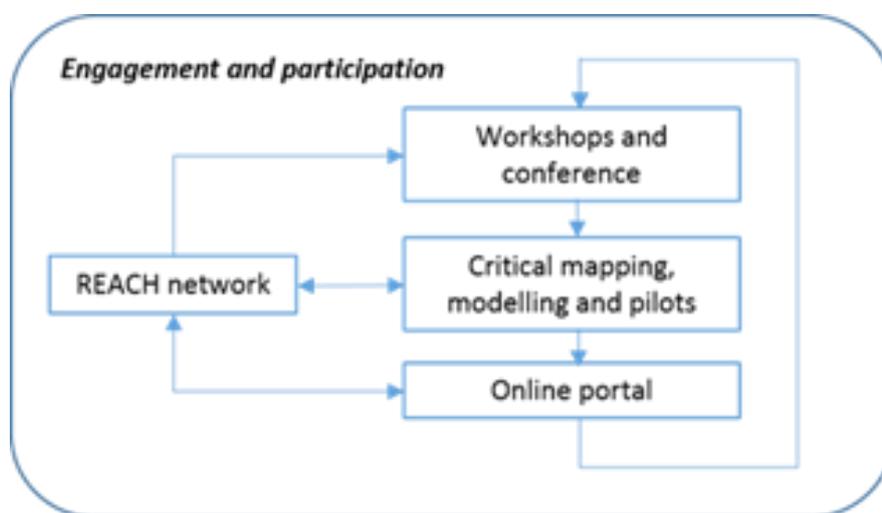


Figure 1 - Overview of the REACH project

2.3 APPROACH

As a concluding deliverable of the project, the approach taken has been to revisit deliverables that have already been submitted, identifying content and summarising, or in places directly reproducing, it here. Acknowledgement is hereby made to the authors of those deliverables and their contributions.

For this deliverable, a decision has been taken to not include links within footnotes to the many initiatives or academic texts that are briefly referenced. The prior deliverables that this one has drawn upon are signposted, and therefore details of these initiatives can be found there, together with links to any source materials.

At the conclusion of a project that has placed participation at its heart, and that has benefitted from the many and varied contributions of its project team, it felt right to ask them for their perspective of the REACH project. Team members were given the option to contribute a few paragraphs about their experiences and the benefits to them and/or their organisation of having been involved in the REACH project. These have been presented as interludes, between chapters and provide a further dimension to this overview of the project.



2.4 STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

Following this introductory section, this deliverable has five further chapters, although as described above, an interlude has been inserted between each of those, that provides the views and reflections of REACH team members.

Chapter 3 details the necessary groundwork that was required to set-up the project's infrastructure to enable further tasks to take place. This begins with developing the online presence and building of the REACH network of Associate partners, a group that would both receive project results, and be able to contribute to ongoing work. Two further tasks then mapped activities from prior projects through lenses used to identify cases of good practices and resilience in CH. Together with opening conference presentations and discussions, analysis of these activities provided significant experiences, opinions and results to enabled the team to build its initial participatory models that would be validated through further project activity.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the four participatory pilots (Minority heritage, Rural heritage, Small towns' heritage and Institutional heritage) that each had the dual role of testing REACH participatory models and identifying further examples of good practice, together with working in their respective communities to bring together different stakeholder groups, to increase dialogue and to promote participation as a way of enhancing their day-to-day operation.

Chapter 5 takes the core themes of the REACH project; management, (re-)use and preservation of CH, as well as that of resilient CH, and provides an overview of the dedicated workshops in Berlin, Coventry, Granada and Prague, involving stakeholders from a range of backgrounds and different viewpoints, that generated vibrant discussions and made valuable contributions for the project.

Chapter 6 reflects upon the work of the participatory pilots and thematic workshops to identify best practice examples, to identify instances of resilient CH and to evaluate participatory models and approaches, drawing conclusions and making recommendations (that include the REACH theme of gender representation) that other projects, organisations and initiatives can benefit from in the future.

Chapter 7 looks to the REACH project's sustainable legacy, reviewing the final dissemination activities, including the development of the open-heritage.eu website that is a repository for the wider sector to use as a central resource. This dovetails with the activities of the social platform to bring together stakeholders from the wider CH sector to share knowledge, expertise and results and to have a more unified voice that demonstrates the importance of CH to society.

The conclusion looks back on both the preceding chapters, and also the REACH project as a whole.

3. ESTABLISHING THE REACH PROJECT

From the moment that the project began, infrastructure had to be put in place. It was important for the project, and its mission, to become known and for a network of stakeholders to be established to both support partners and receive results. This was an important foundation for initial tasks to build upon as they assessed prior projects to learn lessons, that in turn fed into the opening conference, and then to the formation of participatory models.

3.1 CREATING AN ONLINE PRESENCE

During the early months of the project, Promoter developed the communication and dissemination plan. The objective was to make the project visible to a wide range of stakeholder groups and to forge links to share news and details of activity for mutual benefit. A logo was designed, and approved by partners, with the purpose of providing a strong visual identity for the project, to be used on all materials and online dissemination.¹

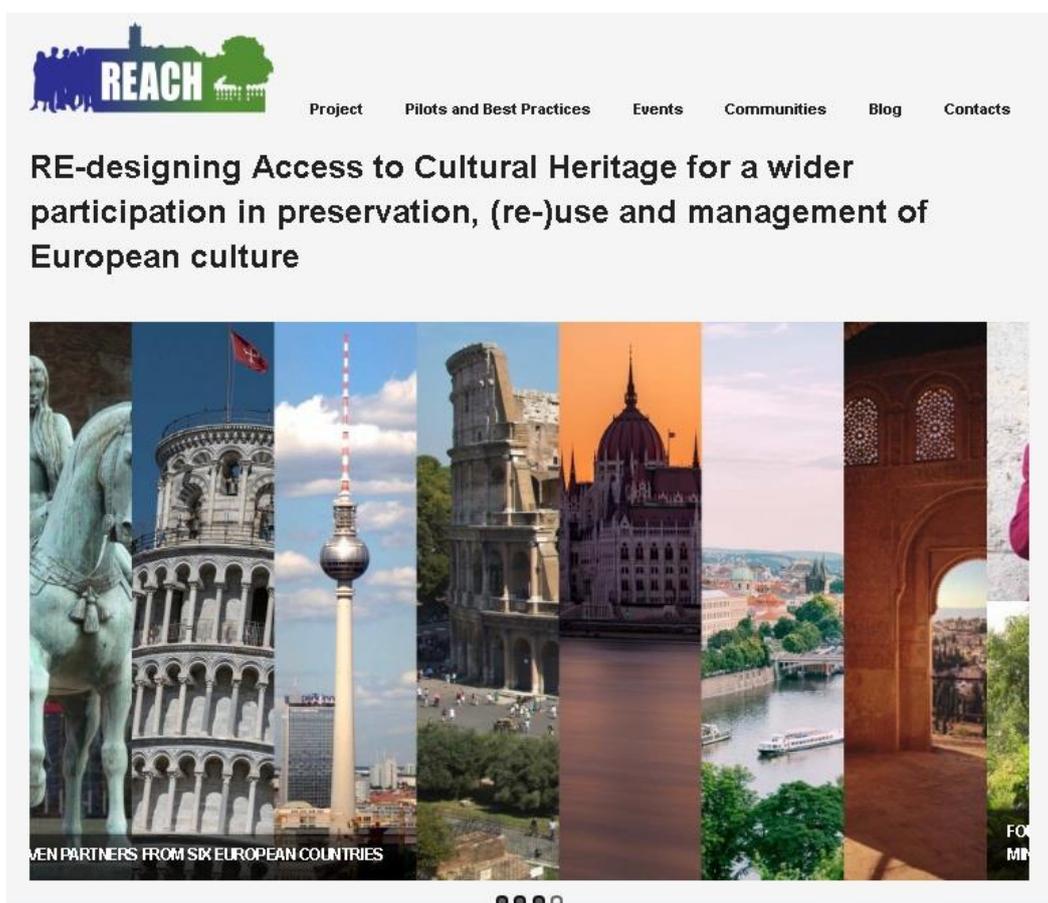


Figure 2 - REACH website home page – reach-culture.eu

¹ Details of project dissemination materials are available at <https://www.reach-culture.eu/project/dissemination> (accessed 25/2/21)

Further information is available within D2.1 – *Project website, internal communication tools, dissemination plan and promotional material*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/repository/Deliverables/REACH%20D2.1%20-%20Communication%20and%20Dissemination%20Plan.pdf> that was produced at an early stage of the project (accessed 25/2/21)



The structure, graphic layout and main features of the website were designed by Promoter that drew upon extensive communication and dissemination experience in prior projects and welcomed input and support from all the consortium partners. The registered domain is www.reach-culture.eu

The project's online presence was enhanced via social media and a blog, through which Promoter shared news and details of activity. The blog is hosted on the Digital Meets Culture website that has more than 25,000 visitors per month, and complements the project website:

- Blog - <http://www.digitalmeetsculture.net/projects/reach-culture-blog/>
- Twitter - https://twitter.com/REACH_2017/
- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/reachculturalheritage/>
- YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTjxbeHm0CEr2-lOb7X-neA>

Towards the end of the first year of the project, open-heritage.eu, the social platform website dedicated to link resources, both produced by the REACH project and those gathered through its networking activities, was launched. It is designed to support the sustainability of the results of the project after the end of the EC funding period.

There were various aspects to the dissemination plan, such as project level events, including conferences scheduled in Budapest and Pisa, workshops in Berlin, Coventry, Granada and Prague and a symposium in Brussels. Pilot partners were to hold local encounters with stakeholders, and all partners were encouraged to share the work of the project at third party events. A series of dissemination materials were developed, including flyers, a brochure and a PowerPoint presentation, supplemented by a series of periodical newsletters sent out to the REACH network.

In addition to the online presence, Promoter also oversaw the development of dissemination materials for use by partners, to share the message of the REACH project, with the support of COVUNI. A range of materials for dissemination and networking were quickly created to target different stakeholders. The most substantial of which was a general-purpose standalone eight-sided information brochure that summarised, in a simple and effective way, the main aspects and key points of the project.





Figure 3 - REACH brochure

3.2 BUILDING THE REACH NETWORK

The REACH project was about participation and social innovation in culture. To promote participatory approaches, it was essential to broaden public awareness of culture and cultural heritage in Europe, to promote civic participation, to inform policy makers, to raise awareness amongst CH institutions and involve cultural studies in higher education and to attract creative enterprises. For this reason, REACH aimed to create an open and sustainable network incorporating a wide range of interested organisations, projects and individual experts interested in sharing the social platform's best practice, knowledge and experiences of participatory approaches in culture.

Within the early weeks of the project, templates were prepared by Promoter to formalise the cooperation with experts, institutions, organisations and other projects:

- Memorandum of Understanding to be signed with other projects.
- Cooperation Agreement to be signed with other institutions, organisations and researchers.

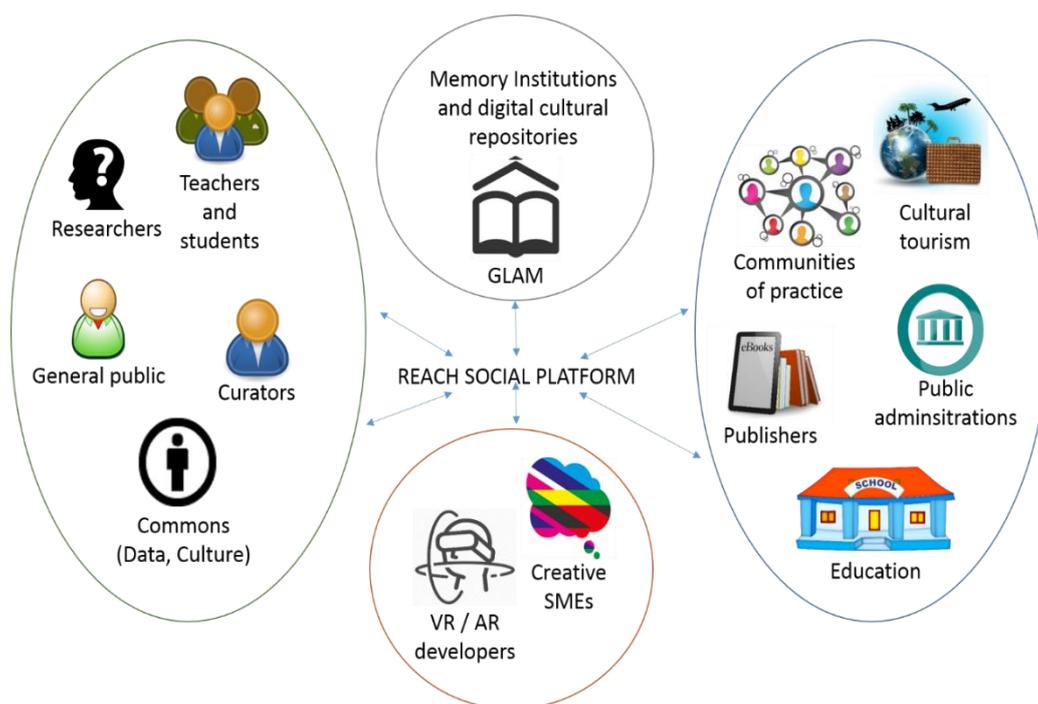


Figure 4 – Outline of the REACH Network (Source: Promoter)



Throughout the project's lifetime, coordinators of numerous projects and organisations were contacted and invited to participate in the network, with each partner contributing suggestions that either led to a signed agreement or a more informal collaborative arrangement.

The REACH network therefore included the:

- partners of the REACH project
- organisations and individual experts engaged through ad-hoc Cooperation Agreements
- linked projects and initiatives engaged in the project through specific Memoranda of Understanding
- wider audience of stakeholders interested in debate about participatory approaches in culture and social innovation. They included people that registered for the REACH newsletter on the website and others that asked explicitly to participate in the network (e.g. by direct contacts with a specific partner or to attend project events).

The REACH approach was to engage with the network, and its Associate partners, to:

- provide information to stakeholders, in order to share project progress and results, context, issues, choices, decisions. This happened through dissemination and advocacy activities, website, blog and awareness documents, etc.
- gather information from stakeholders, which could help to evaluate and improve project results, through local encounter, seminars, meetings, surveys, questionnaires and interviews etc.

The REACH network added a great deal of value for the project, as it assembled groups and teams that worked together, across national, disciplinary and organisational boundaries.²

3.3 COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICES

At the kick-off meeting, the UGR team presented a clear plan for the critical mapping of participatory initiatives/good practices from projects and relevant initiatives. The initial target was that a minimum of 30 projects, both within and outside of the EU, would be mapped, to provide important illustrations of innovation, linked to the strands of the REACH project: preservation, (re-)use and management of CH, as well as to the themes of the four participatory pilots. The aim was to extract good practices of participatory approaches and engagement strategies from projects, favouring lesser-known activities rather than the regularly cited larger projects. In addition, it was considered that those projects from which lessons could be learned would be equally as valuable as those that are better known and successful.

The internal database for partners' use was established with the following fields groups: *What, Where, Who, Target Group, Framework, Short Description, Language, Participatory approaches, Public engagement strategies, Data gathering and data management, Relevant Documents, Web Links and Sources*. For each project identified, five pertinent key words could be added to the record. A short description would be needed, in both English and the local language, of approximately 300-500 words that should include the reason for inclusion of the particular case.

² Details on REACH network building were provided in D2.2 - *Terms of Reference for community building and stakeholder consultation*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/repository/Deliverables/REACH%20D2.2%20-%20Community%20Building%20and%20Stakeholder%20Consultation.pdf> (accessed 25/2/21)



Representatives from each partner joined UGR’s working group and sought good practice cases, as well as refined the database and collection methodology within the first year of the project, with COVUNI taking a primary supporting role. It soon became apparent that it would be possible to include a greater number of cases than initially anticipated, more than 100 by the end of the first year, and therefore have a database with real depth, to provide insight both within the project and for other interested stakeholders.

Once ready, the internal dataset was made available on the project’s open-heritage.eu social platform website, as well as via an open access dataset in a CSV file uploaded to Zenodo³, so that interested CH stakeholders could access and benefit from the project’s findings.

When considering the data collected at the end of the project’s first year, Rural and Urban categories have the highest number of examples, followed by Institutional, Minorities and then Intangible, the latter having only half the number of cases as Rural. Summarised by the project’s three thematic pillars, preservation has the largest number, followed by (re-)use and then, with fewer than half as many cases, management.

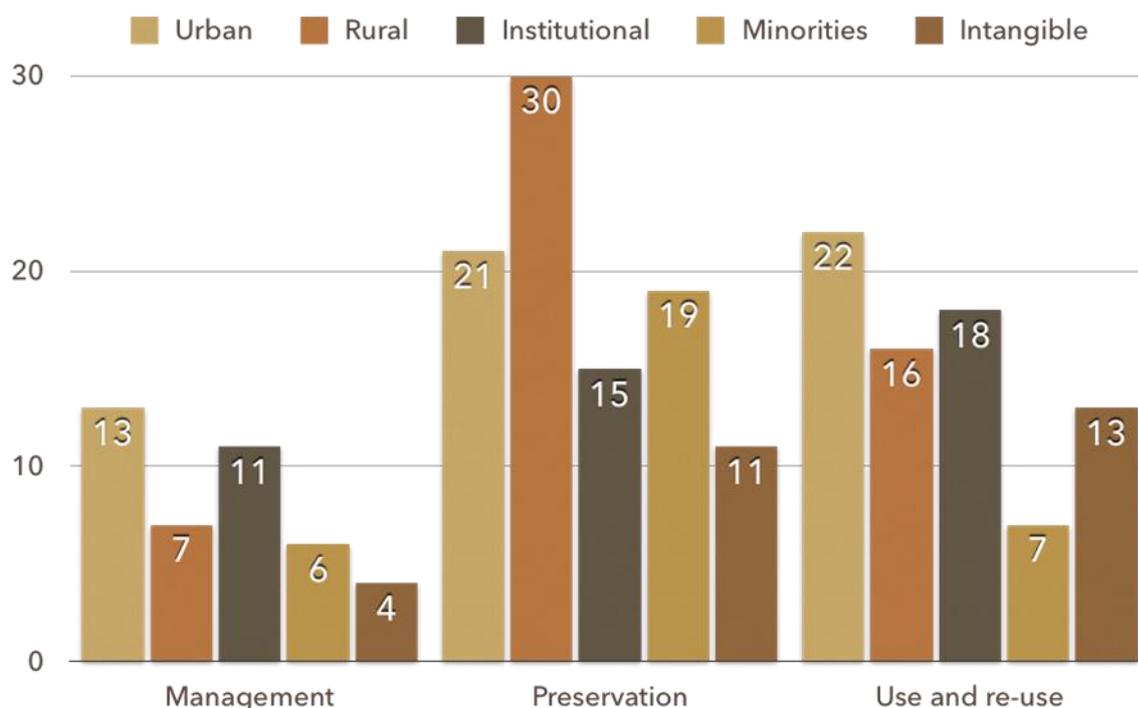


Figure 5 - Correlation between CH typologies and aims of participation (Source: Maurizio Toscano)

When populating the database, partners had the opportunity to include five keywords that best described the projects that they were evaluating. This process has generated a rich list of keywords, more than 150, some of which occur more frequently, while others identify specific thematic orientations that pertain to only one or two records.

³ The good practice open dataset is available at Zenodo: <https://zenodo.org/record/3415123#.X-OPZxbgrIU> (accessed 25/2/21)



For illustrative purposes, the top 16 keywords were found to be:

art (21); museum (20); archaeology (20); digital technology (16); local communities (14); education (12); co-creation (11); women (10); architecture (9); co-management (9); civic engagement (8); Roma heritage (8); bottom-up (8); crowdsourcing (8); abandoned places (7); tourism (7).

During the subsequent two years of the project, further good practices cases have been added to the database, with 128 cases now available for other interested parties to access and (re-)use.⁴

3.4 DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In parallel with the identification of participatory good practices, ELTE critically mapped and clustered relevant research projects through the lens of the REACH theme of resilient cultural heritage.⁵ During the project's kick-off meeting partners had been given the following definition and context:

- resilience is crucial, since it reveals the capacity of the system to renew and reorganise itself after disturbance
- it offers risk mitigation and insurance strategies for the management of change and for social and economic development.

The initial steps were to establish criteria for mapping, define analytical approaches (based upon research contents, user groups, dissemination tools and social impact) and then cluster research projects into corresponding thematic groups. To do this, guidelines were taken from the Council of the European Union's conclusion on participatory governance of CH and consideration was made of the differences in top-down participatory experiences generated by institutions for their audiences and bottom-up participation that relies upon citizens' own perception on their identification. UNESCO has emphasised the importance of bottom-up interventions in heritage protection, as local communities need to have a sense of ownership of their heritage, which reaffirms their worth as a community and their appreciation of their culture.

The next step was for outputs of the 36 selected national and international projects to be reviewed, with transferable elements or noticeable gaps identified for potential use for policymaking. It resulted in a comprehensive map of research on heritage practices in areas of envisioned participatory approaches, with particular regard to the themes of the project's four participatory pilots. This would enable the consolidation of terminology: resilient CH, CH milieux, participation, and the adaptive cycle to be built upon through subsequent REACH activities and emphasise the role of participatory approaches that support European social cohesion and integration.

The REACH conceptual framework considered a number of aspects of CH, including:

- the concept of resilience in natural and social sciences
- resilient CH and communities, and community of heritage

⁴ Further details can be found in D6.2 - *Good practices of social participation in cultural heritage*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/REACH-D6.2-Good-practices-of-social-participation-in-cultural-heritage.pdf> and in the REACH good practice database: <https://www.open-heritage.eu/heritage-data/good-practices/> (both accessed 25/2/21)

⁵ Further details can be found in D3.2 – *Selection of projects and mapping of clustered research findings*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/REACH-D3.2-Selection-of-projects-and-mapping-of-clustered-research-findings.pdf> (accessed 25/2/21)

- European identification
- local communities' cultural diversity.

To quantify and benchmark this process, several categories were used:

- spatial aspects: integrity and territorial cohesion, including landscape and convergence of central and Eastern European heritage
- temporalities: resilience, sustainability, including management of risks and changes and digital heritage
- heritage communities: identity and participatory governance including enhancing European identification, local community as a reference place for identification, cultural diversity, marginalised communities and participatory heritage governance.

3.5 OPENING CONFERENCE

The REACH opening conference - *Resilient Cultural Heritage and Communities in Europe* - took place on 10 and 11 May 2018 at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, co-organised by host partner ELTE, Promoter and COVUNI. After a successful promotional campaign, the conference attracted over 150 attendees (professionals, academic experts, arts practitioners, associations and interest groups representative of non-professionals and local societies and policy-makers at local and international level) coming from all around the world.⁶



Figure 6 – REACH *Resilient Cultural Heritage and Communities in Europe* conference, Budapest

⁶ Further details of the conference, including the programme/booklet and photographs are available on the project website: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/events/opening-conference-in-budapest> and also, in D4.4 – *Opening Conference*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/REACH-D4.4-Opening-conference.pdf> (both accessed 25/2/21)



Each day began with the presentation of a keynote speaker, followed by two of the four participatory pilots, who were joined by expert Associate partners, to present key themes of their work. The Minority heritage pilot's panel was held in Hungarian, with live translation available to enable representatives of the Roma community to participate in their native language and interact with attendees. This panel, held at the Hungarian National Museum was seen as a moment of real significance for a minority group that is so often overlooked.

Carenza Lewis' keynote considered the capacity of publicly engaged archaeological heritage projects to benefit wider society. In an era of financial cuts, tangible heritage is often viewed as a liability rather than an asset. Her address set out to challenge that view, presenting a variety of case studies in which it has delivered measurable specific benefits to diverse sectors of wider society. She discussed a new paradigm for engaging wider publics in participatory activities, that gives equal weight to intrinsic, economic and societal benefits, seeing the delivery of each as beneficial (and often essential) to achieving the others. Strategies can and should be developed and deployed which identify, maximise and evaluate benefits of public engagement to individuals, communities and society. This will allow heritage to be seen not as a liability but as an asset, and expenditure on participative heritage to be seen, not as cost, but as an investment.⁷

The second day concluded with a world café session; this participatory method is an effective way for knowledge exchange whereby the conference attendees become active participants, discussing topics at several tables, with individuals switching tables periodically and being updated on the previous discussion by a "table host". The two topics featured were: *Social cohesion and social inequality* and *Resilience in practice/interconnectedness*. Following the conference, the table hosts wrote summaries of the discussions that had taken place in relation to their topics, which were added to the conference page of the REACH website, and also informed final project conclusions.

As part of the REACH project's intent to work closely with other projects, each day also featured slots where posters and videos could be presented to share best practice. Over 50 submissions were made by other projects to the call for poster and videos that were invited against a number of themes:

- resilient cultural heritage
- social participation: communities, techniques, best practices
- institutional heritage
- rural heritage
- heritage in small towns
- minority heritage
- social inequality and heritage.

After the conference, these submissions were both added to the project's website, and analysed when defining the conceptual framework, with a number also incorporated into the good practice database.

The objective of the conference was to give as many people as possible a voice, to share the many types of resilient CH within their communities. The conference achieved this, with numerous participatory examples from a contingent of high-quality speakers, with content subsequently analysed as the project team defined participatory models for the participatory pilots to test, ahead of re-evaluation at the conclusion of the project.

⁷ The presentation of Carenza Lewis is available on the REACH YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/J-Po7ROLhXA>

3.6 REACH PARTICIPATORY MODELS

The definition of REACH participatory models was always destined to be one of most significance tasks of the project, as they would be tested and validated within the participatory pilots and thematic workshops, with feedback used to create further, more refined iterations of the models.

An initial challenge was to try and find a model or set of models that would fit the four participatory pilots, as each would be very different in its operation, its client groups and objectives. Any model/toolkit to be recommended by the REACH project needed to be dynamic, flexible and itself resilient, adaptable to social, cultural and economic change.

Although a daunting prospect at the beginning of the project, the work undertaken in mapping prior projects to identify participatory good practices; as well as resilient CH clusters provided useful knowledge to assess and refine. The contributions of speakers and participants within the world café discussions at the Budapest conference were also important, as multiple stakeholders had been given the chance to express their opinions and broaden the debate.

ELTE further explored the transformation in attitudes and approaches from the traditional top-down models of heritage, to a more community orientated bottom-up approach. Although this hypothesis was set to be tested, through participatory models, it was acknowledged that a hybrid concept of participatory heritage, sitting between these two poles, was potentially a more realistic scenario, as some activity needs to be initiated in a top-down manner, before a community can take over and fulfil its objectives, from below.

After evaluating a number of potential models, ELTE identified two central concepts as potential underlying methodologies:

- Participatory Action Research
- Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) Management Cycle.

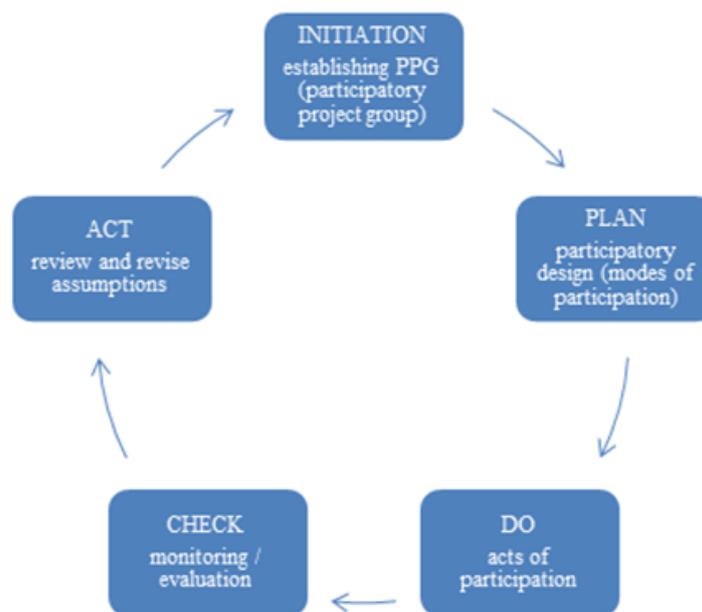


Figure 7 – Participatory model, Plan-Do-Check-Act Management Cycle

The Plan-Do-Check-Act Management Cycle is commonly used for inducing and monitoring change.



Participatory Action Research is a qualitative methodology that aims to integrate methods and techniques of planning, observing, documenting, analysing, evaluating and interpreting the participatory pilots.

The strength of these two methodologies is their flexibility: they are easily adaptable to different contexts of CH preservation, (re-)use and management (aspects that may be given different weight in each of the four participatory pilots), as well as to different levels of participation. As it was impossible to select a single model that would neatly fit all four participatory pilots, it was also acknowledged at the outset of the project that the pilots would introduce and test their own methodologies; these would also be evaluated during the subsequent evaluation.

In addition to these practical models, COVUNI analysed the CH context from REACH activities and events to create six themed CH participatory models:

- intergenerational - sharing of traditions, skills, stories, memory, and oral histories
- community - workshops, demonstration, role-play, non-formal education to both share and challenge perceptions
- revitalise/rebuild an area or building - question of authenticity, related to a site's new purpose
- reappraisal - of an area, era or methodology after a period of time had passed
- institutions - evolving to reflect the changing nature of society
- online/digital - exhibitions, new interactive technologies and social media.

The contribution of conference keynote speaker Carenza Lewis was integral in identifying further contextual models, as she had stressed the intrinsic value of CH and that it must be promoted as a benefit. Together with analysis of evaluated prior project, a list was drawn up by COVUNI for validation by the participatory pilots:

- CH participatory activities are often overlooked, but have intrinsic social and economic benefits
- heritage must be promoted as an asset, rather than a liability; as an investment, not a cost
- participatory activities can boost individuals' confidence, as well as build transferable, soft and work-related skills, leading to positive attitudes
- for activities to become transformative, both short- and long-term plans/strategies are needed to embed change
- participants must be involved in planning and decision making to maximise the benefits (bottom-up approach)
- strategies need to be implemented to preserve and safeguard both tangible and intangible cultural heritage (e.g. engagement of younger population, intergenerational knowledge exchange)
- attention is needed to redress historical gender imbalance and empower women, who have traditionally been strong transmitters of heritage knowledge, yet who are often overlooked
- the scope of activity should not be restricted from the start, it is important to let it develop organically, to find its own pathway and conclusions.

These models would be tested and validated through both the participatory pilots and thematic workshops, with results evaluated at the end of the project.⁸

⁸ Further details can be found in D3.1 – *Participatory models*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/REACH-D3.1-Participatory-Models.pdf> (accessed 25/2/21)



INTERLUDE 1: PARTNER PERSPECTIVES

As described in the Introduction, given the participatory theme of the project, and the valuable contributions that team members have made, it is logical to include their personal reflections of the REACH project.

Nicola Alfarano, Promoter

Nicola was a member of Promoter's dissemination team, responsible for the development and maintenance of the website, as well as sharing results and building network links with other projects, organisations and individuals; he also contributed to the related deliverables.

"To have been involved in the REACH project has been a big challenge. The main difficulty faced at the very beginning was to overcome performance anxiety due to the focus role covered by the activity of communication and dissemination in the establishment of a social platform.

The international dimension required a change of approach and dynamic of interaction. We started to work on communication, aiming to provide a responsive and impactful resonance to the project. We improved our skills related to website implementation and management: step-by-step, we refined ways of presenting the online content, to make it more alive and attractive, to capture the attention of the audience. The need to reach a more effective dissemination fostered our creativity and we became more accustomed to the use of specific programs for graphics that helped to enhance the outside image of REACH. The dissemination team grew progressively, together with the project.

To be part of the REACH project allowed for an exploration of new horizons not only from a professional point of view but also with regard to personal knowledge of SSH research: reading about the challenges faced by new projects and the achievements of others, to be involved in the studies and experiences carried out by the REACH pilots, are all elements that widened our perspective in everyday life.

But the most captivating experience and the very inheritance of the REACH project is the opportunity to have been engaged in the promotion of civil participation in cultural heritage, to have contributed to spread the awareness and the understanding of its value for empowering the capacity of society and we are definitely very grateful for all this."

Silvana Colella, COVUNI

Silvana was involved in the collection of good practices, co-authoring the related deliverable, as well as its successor that highlighted best practices drawn from the project's work. She supported many project activities, most notably those focussed on resilient CH and sustainability.

"The experience of collaboration: I had not been involved in a major collaborative research project before joining the REACH team. REACH gave me the opportunity to understand how collaboration works in practice, and how to sustain a productive dialogue among researchers with different backgrounds, competence and disciplinary knowledge. Putting together the REACH repository of best practices, in the first year of the project's life, was a genuinely collaborative endeavour, which stimulated me to learn new skills, and to re-orient old ones in new directions.



Going beyond my comfort zone: The REACH project had a wide scope and remit; much broader than the research area I am most familiar with. The sheer amount of knowledge I was able to gather by participating in the project's activities, by contributing to the writing of deliverables and papers, and engaging at various levels with all the partners is, in my assessment, an unquestionable bonus.

Overcoming isolation during the Covid-19 lockdown: On a more personal level, the REACH project helped me enormously to overcome feelings of isolation and despondency during the first period of lockdown. It is no exaggeration to say that the work I did for the project kept me sane. Knowing that this work had a purpose, and that, despite objective limitations, the REACH team had to continue deliver results, provided a much-needed focus to my weekly routine. The supportive presence of the REACH community – and the Coventry unit in particular – made all the difference.”



4. PARTICIPATORY PILOTS

The REACH project established four participatory pilots that were each different in nature and working with diverse communities and stakeholders, in different socio-economic situations and political climates. The remit of each pilot was to undertake participatory activities with specifically identified stakeholder groups in order to consider which participatory approaches are most effective in the preservation, (re-)use, and management of CH, and also which could raise the profile of CH in, and on behalf of, its respective communities.

At the start of each pilot, Associate partners and other relevant stakeholders were identified and approached through a series of local encounters, a name that the REACH project used for local events bringing together different groups for open and honest discussion about participation in CH. These local encounters were highly important as they served as a testbed for ideas and participatory models that were then trialled throughout the pilot activity, and also led to the identification of examples of good practice.

4.1 MINORITY HERITAGE PILOT

Although having an estimated population of 8-12 million, the Roma people, face a high risk of poverty, exclusion, racial violence and discrimination. At the same time, Roma cultural and artistic production, history, and contributions to national cultures and identities remain largely unknown and unrecognised. When thinking about European Roma heritage, it is important to question who is constructing the cultural canon and to what extent heritage is preserved by the majority society and how much by the Roma minorities themselves. The Roma people are the largest transnational minority in Europe and also the biggest minority group in Hungary, but had never before been the subject of specific research activity that considers their culture and heritage. The REACH pilot, led by ELTE, therefore brought parties together to try to overcome stereotypes and break through the traditional top-down view of history, culture and heritage.

A six-month preparatory period was dedicated to an extensive analysis of existing research literature on Roma CH and the establishment of an extended network of Associate partners. However, given the weak civil infrastructure, tracing and contacting Roma cultural initiatives and institutions in Hungary was an ongoing process throughout the pilot's lifetime. Three main pillars were identified:

- theoretical research on Roma CH
- observation of participatory approaches
- building cross-collaboration through local encounters.

Based upon these community building activities, three local encounters were planned in cooperation with the Associate partners in mostly rural or urban deprived areas. Rural, in this context, referred to partner organisations located in very small villages and their work, related to preservation and (re-)use of Roma heritage, was in some way representative of cultural practices and traditions related to rural lifestyle. Urban context related to neighbourhoods of Budapest where an important Roma community resides and to which (stigmatised) labels and images of a 'Roma area' are linked.



The first local encounter took place in Hodász, a deprived area in North-Eastern Hungary, (intentionally there rather than in Budapest), and comprised a workshop with experts and representatives of heritage communities, including a visit to the Hodász Roma Country House. The discussion included cultural tourism and creative industry representatives and was dedicated to finding opportunities to preserve rural Roma heritage. During this event, various aspects of sustainability and opportunities arose to create more visibility for marginalised CH sites. The presence of the creative/cultural industry strongly enabled the recognition of new perspectives and suggestions regarding the creation of rural festivals to introduce Roma culture and/or the nomination of the Hodász Country House to the European Roma Cultural Routes.

The second local encounter, in Budapest, took the form of a REACH mini-conference, co-organised with students of the Cultural Heritage MA programme of the Atelier department. The students completed research during the first semester in three groups that engaged with stakeholders: researching the community, music and the fine arts heritage of the Roma community in the 8th District. The main objectives revolved around the questions of visibility and invisibility of urban Roma memory and CH, as well as how much of that heritage is no longer active and has been forgotten.

The third local encounter in Pécs, South-Eastern Hungary, again involved experts and representatives of heritage communities and incorporated a short visit to the Gandhi Secondary School (Pécs). This time, intangible Roma heritage was the focus, with three heritage communities represented, two (the Gandhi Secondary School and the Talentum Art School) have been included in the national register of best safeguarding practices in Hungary, due to their educational programmes, and another (The Hungarian and Gypsy Dance Traditions of Nagyecsed) has been, since 2017, part of the national inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). Discussion was initiated about the different positions of communities, their activity and involvement in the case of Hungarian Roma, where poverty and disadvantaged social status may significantly limit participation in cultural activities.

The local encounters offered transferable and intertwined practices concerning Minority heritage in urban and rural/deprived areas, cultural tourism and the preservation, (re-)use and management of intangible Roma heritage and of collective memory. Through the personal engagement of the local stakeholders, the pilot team identified resilient good practices, different ways of preserving and managing Roma cultural traditions and contemporary practices within a terrain full of potential obstacles and difficulties. These local encounters focused upon different topics and therefore, proposed different techniques and methods, but what they all had in common was the importance of community involvement and the endeavour to create social cohesion through the presence and usage of cultural practices.

The work within the Minority heritage pilot has given Roma culture and heritage a greater visibility and has challenged, and even broken, stereotypical images. One of its most significant moments was the hosting the Roma heritage panel of the REACH conference at the Hungarian National Museum; as was its message, with panel members thanking REACH for working with Roma groups to recognise and amplify heritage in the longer-term and not be yet another well-meaning short-term social welfare programme.



Figure 8 – A significant moment: a Roma panel was held within the Hungarian National Museum

In the context of weak civil society and prospective partners closing, the ELTE team recognised early on the need to take a more proactive role in the design of the pilot activities. The starting point fundamentally changed as the observer/researcher role that the team had envisioned became one with multiple roles of researcher, initiator, facilitator and organiser of events and meetings; this also refined the pilot's objectives. In this new role, there was the opportunity to connect organisations that would never have come into contact, having previously been isolated and even unaware of each other (geographically, socially and professionally). The organisation and success of local encounters showed the importance of interactive and supportive initiatives. When considering the Roma Country House's idea for the European Roma Route or the different methods and approaches in preserving and managing of officially recognised intangible Roma heritage, it is clear that many ideas and initiatives are possible through cross-collaboration.

There is no doubt that the Roma is a resilient community, one that has faced, and continues to face multiple challenges, but has maintained its identity, cultural diversity, tangible and intangible heritage, by managing and overcoming change. Sometimes this is led by a strong individual and in other cases, through interested and supportive stakeholder groups, adopting new practices and creating new opportunities to manage, preserve and (re-)use Roma heritage.

Although the Minority heritage pilot has operated in difficult circumstances, its work with Roma communities focussing on CH and the success that it has generated has underlined the need for such activities and research to make examples of good practice visible both nationally and across Europe. The socio-political activity undertaken by the pilot in very difficult circumstances cannot be seen as anything other than a success.⁹

⁹ Further details can be found in D5.2 – *Minority heritage pilot results*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/REACH-D5.2-Minority-heritage-pilot-results.pdf> (accessed 25/2/21)



4.2 RURAL HERITAGE PILOT

Over the past fifty years in Spain, the modernisation of agriculture, the rural population exodus and public policies have changed the ways in which farmers use water for irrigation. The abandonment of traditional irrigation and terraces has exposed the land, soil and biodiversity to degradation. This has been further aggravated by increasingly frequent extreme meteorological events due to climate breakdown and the misconception of modernising those systems according to the canons of conventional industrialised systems. Historical and traditional means of water management and irrigation strategies share long traditions and trajectories of water knowledge and of a careful utilisation of existing resources, particularly in the south of Europe.

The Rural heritage pilot, led by UGR, worked with communities where traditional practices and knowledge have been abandoned. Communities are often threatened by change, they work without directive and do not know what will happen in future, the pilot therefore worked with them, in a participatory manner, to support improved organisation. Work was also undertaken with city-based stakeholders and policy makers, making proposals to preserve and improve rural heritage. The pilot recognised the need to organise policy-making for economic and social benefits, maintaining productive activity whilst preserving landscapes, as well as cultural, social and environmental values. In both contexts, intervention and mediation become the foci in order to overcome social conflicts and lead to social empowerment, sustainable economic development and cultural and social acknowledgement. The mission of the pilot was therefore to reinforce social participation of local communities as the best strategy to manage and preserve the heritage, cultural and environmental values of the landscapes. The implementation of co-governance initiatives was designed to have a direct impact on reinforcing the resilience of this heritage, increasing its capacity to face challenges, which are directly connected to global and climate change.¹⁰

The pilot focussed mainly on approaches in cultural and environmentally protected areas as a means of resolving conflicts between preservation, (re-)use and economic activities (such as tourism); activities have been outlined in a series of case studies that took place in both Spain and Italy (the latter cases provided by MISE).

The Spanish dimension of this pilot focussed mainly on the area of the Sierra Nevada, an important protected area as UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and National Park. This was an interesting case study because, in recent years, a serious disagreement had arisen. On the one hand, political administrations, stakeholders, and academia have proposed the Sierra Nevada as a World Heritage Site. On the other hand, local communities have considered this proposal as external imposition, without any benefits and with negative consequences for local daily life as well as for the conservation of its environmental and heritage values. Simultaneously, a new development model, based on intensive agricultural production, has been implemented in this territory. The pilot also worked with other rural CH including traditional crafts and rural archaeological sites (such as Mojácar La Vieja, a medieval settlement). Here, activity was predominantly based upon a community archaeological approach, considering historical relationships between human populations and their environments.

¹⁰ Further details can be found in D5.4 – *Rural heritage pilot results*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/repository/Deliverables/REACH%20D5.4%20Rural%20heritage%20pilot%20results.pdf>



Figure 9 – Fieldwork in the Romayla channel (Photograph: Lara Delgado Anés)

The Italian case studies focused on Ticino Park and Norcia. Ticino Park, in northern Italy, is an area that uses traditional agricultural productive techniques, and is also a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Ticino Park's rural landscape is mainly characterised by *marcita* meadows, an ancient practice based on a thin layer of underground and surface water flowing over the meadows; this flow avoids the grass freezing in wintertime enabling the creation of a fertile and varied landscape. However, this is now endangered and is at risk of disappearing, due to over-industrialisation and to the construction of new infrastructure, such as the expansion of the highway.

The town of Norcia looked towards the resilient rural CH when faced with serious earthquakes in 2016-2017 that had severe ramifications on both the landscape and its associated intangible and tangible heritage. Again, the promotion of alternative, sustainable economic models – where tourism works hand in hand with the local community's local knowledge and agri-food traditions – is seen as a means of resilience thinking for rural heritage.

The Rural heritage pilot's case studies demonstrated how it is important to understand that heritage is not only about monuments but also landscapes and natural resources such as soil and water. Natural geographical features, resources and elements in turn connect to traditional agricultural knowledge and practices that must be seen as important cultural heritage. Rural landscapes are thus important places to preserve both tangible and intangible CH. In considering how heritage could be (re-)used, the pilot's case studies revealed a central issue of (self-)governance of cultural rural landscapes in a period of global change. Governance should support communities, share ecological knowledge and provide conflict resolution.



This pilot evidenced how joint action and innovative solutions are ways to approach the role of heritage in empowering communities' resilience towards, and capacity for, the great changes that they are called to face both now and in the future. Furthermore, it is important to build good public policy to drive just transitions where change is needed, that builds upon local traditions and skills and that does not replace these but rather energises them. Bottom-up approaches are needed (at community level) working together at ground level to co-develop what 'good' looks like. Heritage is significant here because it has a lot of meaning and value: importantly, this meaning is determined by the community and so its voice must be heard. There has arguably been community resilience for over 1,000 years in the Spanish communities that the pilot has worked with, with examples of best practice of adaptive management here being management by irrigator communities.

An assessment of this pilot can be seen as enormously positive in terms of the project's capacity for generating social impact. The pilot mobilised significant sections of the local population involved and the response from local authorities and different associations, collectives and stakeholders was likewise significant, as evidenced by the level of change in the perception of heritage in general, and of cultural landscapes and archaeological features in particular, leading rural communities to develop new relationships with their history. The impact of the Mojácar excavation and its participatory programming was striking: the work provoked a deep change in the community's perception of their history and heritage. The team of archaeologists is now consistently welcomed by each of the communities and has been invited to participate in other activities, such as local festivities.

The Italian case studies have clearly demonstrated that a rural landscape system can be a resource of resilience for local people if it is understood and evaluated in terms of local knowledge as a part of the historical and social system. Furthermore, each study showed how a landscape embodies and transmits tangible and intangible aspects of heritage that encapsulate a deep sense of identity and place. These feelings are essential in terms of a community's and, indeed, heritage's resilience to recover from disruptive events. Rural heritage connects people at a local level and it can also connect and visualise social-ecological systems, thereby promoting sustainable regeneration, as well as promoting local awareness and knowledge. It can also work as a resource and place of alternative economic models, turning rural landscape as heritage into an active element of continuity between past and future.

4.3 SMALL TOWNS' HERITAGE PILOT

Small towns play a significant role in Europe, but are often overshadowed by larger cities and regions. Given the proportion of people that live in small towns, their culture, heritage and ways of life have regularly been overlooked, often leading to inaccurate analyses of European society. The Small towns' heritage pilot, led by CUNI, sought to rectify this situation, by working closely with a broad range of stakeholders in Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland.

In defining a small town, the pilot team chose the option of community self-perception. While essentially looking at the towns of under 20,000 inhabitants, the adopted criterion remained flexible: *The town is small if its citizens consider it to be small.* Geography is important, as towns are usually in the orbit of a city, and yet located in the countryside, and therefore have to weigh up their strategies, which often also fall between cultural heritage needs and promotion, and economic pressures.



Initial pilot actions were to build a network of Associate partners that would introduce the pilot team to a wide range of experiences and opinions, providing insights into different local circumstances and interactions, as well as establishing mutually beneficial links. CUNI organised three local encounters in Prague and participated in three further regional meetings. These encounters involved representatives from small town municipalities, regional administrative bodies, cultural workers, academia, private enterprises, governmental and national non-governmental heritage and tourism organisations, and provided valuable context for the pilot team.

In addition, case studies were developed that profiled the Vysočina (CZE), Šariš (SVK) and Podlasie (POL) regions. These were based upon critical mapping of representational strategies of heritage in small towns, comparing and contrasting the use of CH and the approaches of small towns to marketing and tourism, as well as mapping their activities and best practices. Major foci were on the implementation and analysis of participatory and collaborative CH practices and interactions, as well as on questions of how to increase and strengthen awareness and relevance of CH and how, in turn, it might support sustainable and resilient community development.¹¹

The activities of the pilot incorporated:

- mapping critically representational strategies of heritage in small towns
- tracing and listing the use of history presentation in museums, pageants, and festivals in small towns
- comparing and contrasting the use of CH in small towns' approaches to marketing and tourism
- interconnecting local and regional actors
- mapping small town activities and best practices.

As resilience is an integral element of the REACH project, the pilot considered this in three ways:

- resilience of heritage, which may be defined as capacity not to be lost
- resilience of preservation, (re-)use and management of cultural heritage, which is their capacity to withstand discontent from stakeholders
- social resilience, that not only concerns small towns and their communities, including various stakeholders and subgroups, but also society at large, as small towns are part of larger socio-spatial structures.

The pilot proved that the heritage is a prominent part of a town's self-presentation and serves to make the it more attractive for residents and visitors. On-site visits, analysis of websites and documents and discussions with stakeholders largely showed that a robust infrastructure of heritage presentation is often the case even in very small towns, consisting of: a combination of information/tourist centre, a museum, information tables and/or heritage trail, and guidebooks or leaflets as a standard offer.

Cultural heritage is widely used in the promotion of small towns, and a range of media are often available to instantly represent it. However, the overall images and stories often remain biased towards tangible, monumental, and old heritage, with little effort made to address (intangible) issues such as a town or region's difficult past and its contemporary problems, or to make visible and explain links to wider spatial referents, such as Europe or other places.

¹¹ Further details can be found in D5.5 – *Small towns' heritage pilot results*:
<https://www.reach-culture.eu/repository/Deliverables/REACH%20D5.5%20-%20Small%20town's%20heritage%20pilot%20results.pdf> (accessed 25/2/21)

The pilot showed that heritage is connected with large investment and tourism, but indicated two opposite scenarios, where sustainability and resilience acquire somewhat different meanings. On the one hand, there is the sustainability of the tourism offer, and industry and infrastructures. On the other hand, it is important to build sustainable tourism that does not destroy the 'liveability' of the town nor its authentic character, that does not lead to damage of heritage nor make the town economically vulnerable in the face of sudden economic change.

The pilot has shown that human agency is an important element in the dynamics of the use of CH. At the local level, the interests of individual stakeholders are often in conflict, and their actions can significantly affect the situation, either positively or negatively. The mere presence of monuments does not mean that this CH will be used effectively for local people or external visitors. Some of the researched localities with significant heritage potential have long suffered from the lack of interest from the general public.

In UNESCO listed heritage sites, where the heritage industry is strongly rooted, municipalities are able to accumulate great wealth, which they can reinvest into the city's infrastructure. However, in some instances, it is apparent that even the effective commercial use of heritage does not fully solve the problem of the brain drain from small towns, population decline and the depopulation of city centres. It will only partially solve the social problems of the population. For others, it is clear that although the heritage industry provides a living for a small group of people, from the least qualified strata, a significant part of the population will not find employment with their qualifications in a small town, even assuming that the tourism offer is strong, since their qualifications are not applicable. Therefore, towns cannot focus solely on earning through cultural heritage.



Figure 10 – The UNESCO heritage listed small town of Telč (Photograph by Jaroslav Ira)

In terms of recommendations, the pilot stressed the important role of networking. Networking has often been highlighted as a factor that fosters sustainability, competitiveness, the exchange of ideas and innovation, as well as resilience. At the same time, it can partially serve as a barometer of a town's adaptation to the transformation of socio-spatial structure in the wake of globalisation, European integration, the loosening of borders among EU member states, the relative decline of hierarchical spatial orders, and new means of communication, etc.



Furthermore, although the management, (re-)use and preservation of CH may foster small-town resilience, it may also have negative effects, as the prioritisation of some goals and perspectives, such as over-reliance on tourism, may destroy the place for its residents, as they can no longer live there. A resilience perspective requires thinking beyond the narrow horizons of immediate economic profit and day-to-day renovation projects, and instead needs to find ways of using CH to cultivate the long-term social, cultural, and political qualities and skills of small-town communities.

4.4 INSTITUTIONAL HERITAGE PILOT

The Institutional heritage pilot, led by SPK, took place at a time when museums were actively self-critiquing their role and activity. Museums were actively moving away from the traditional image of monolithic storehouses of collective 'Memory' and 'History' (which has often excluded minority perspectives) to become vibrant meeting-places for intergenerational, cross-cultural dialogues and encounters about collective memories and histories. Emphasis is turning to the plurality of history, to seeking out 'histories from below' to enter the collection, as a marker of a more equal and tolerant society that is not afraid to confront and to learn from difficult histories.

The Institutional heritage pilot examined participatory activities conducted in museums, institutions that play an important (curatorial, communication and educational) role within culture and cultural heritage. The analysis was based upon a comparison of three German museums of different types describing their concepts of participatory engagement, areas of activities, approaches, methodologies, gaps and impacts.¹²

At the Industrie- und Filmmuseum (Industry and Film Museum), interviews and discussions were conducted with museum staff, management and participants and the museum's initiative *Bilderschau* (Picture Show) was visited. The main focus was on the significance of involving activities for the communities and the institution (and their relationship) as well as the possibilities to intensify, stabilise and sustain civic engagement. Although the *Bilderschau* had initially began as a data enrichment exercise, the act of bringing retired workers back to their former workplace enabled them to reminisce, bond, and rediscover a sense of identity and value.

The Haus der Geschichte (House of History) was visited to conduct interviews with museum management, staff and volunteers, and to join a guided tour of the exhibition led by a volunteer. In addition to discussing the significance of the volunteering service for participants, the museum and the city, it was especially interesting to consider the structural conditions of such commitment. In particular, the need for long-term approaches and the improvement of the general frameworks (especially with regard to the financial dimensions of civic engagement) were addressed.

¹² Further details can be found in D5.3 – *Institutional heritage pilot results*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/REACH-D5.3-Institutional-heritage-pilot-results-revised.pdf> (accessed 25/2/21)



Figure 11 – The Bilderschau (Picture Show) at the Industry and Film Museum
(© Friederike Berlekamp, Photograph: Friederike Berlekamp)

The Museum für Islamische Kunst (Museum for Islamic Art) was visited on several times in relation to the Multaka, TAMAM, and Gemeinsame Vergangenheit - Gemeinsame Zukunft (Shared Past - Shared Future) projects, to speak to and interview project staff and participants, and to join guided tours. The focus in these projects was on facilitating access to museums, their collections and their work, as well as of involving people who would ordinarily have little access to museums, and who have, for a long time, been neglected by museums.

In addition to their great variety, the featured institutions were also highly fascinating pilot subjects. Cultural institutions, and especially museums, are important places for communities and community cohesion, since they provide space(s) for cultural interaction and dialogue. They are/can be partners in promoting an involved and engaged culture and cultural heritage offer, by helping to raise awareness and visibility and underlining their significance for communities and societies. In addition, they are/can provide a bridge between different societal entities and their requirements. Forming part of very different environments, they are players in diverse networks and under various framework conditions.



The three pilot case studies underlined how historical-cultural collections are of great value for communities and society since, because of their multi-layered and multi-functional nature, they can be used as starting points for very diverse interactions and discussions on relevant and current social issues including debates on identity, heterogeneity and ambiguities. In addition, they show that collaborative interactions and exchanges around cultural assets are of great importance for the critical development of individual and societal self-awareness and the self-confidence that makes the evolution of feelings of belonging and togetherness possible. However, the ambiguous nature of culture and working with CH should not be concealed as cultural work can potentially also promote and strengthen dissociation and exclusion.

Even though the initiatives and framework conditions of the three institutions vary considerably, they demonstrated a common attitude: interlocutors reaffirmed the importance of strong relationships with the diverse internal and external stakeholders or public (who form the constituent community) and emphasised the important contribution of museums and collections to communities and to society in general. Therefore, interaction, relation and connectivity, as well as relevance and sustainability were key issues in this exchange.

The pilot aimed to develop an understanding of why and how participatory approaches help museums to fulfil and even improve their core tasks of collecting, preserving, researching, documenting, exhibiting, interpreting, transmitting and communicating CH. It analysed the potential and needs of different types of museums to widen their participatory approach as well as the restrictions that might obstruct such development. Of special concern was the impact of such activities beyond the practical contribution looking at their social, intellectual, mental, emotional effect and value for the parties directly and even indirectly involved. Thus, this pilot considered a complex relational network consisting of museum management and staff, participants, visitors/users, communities, the general public and politicians. Based on the pilot's findings, it is clear that providing *generic* practical guidelines and recommendations for CH institutions, that support and enhance their participatory and engagement activities, is not possible, although all of these elements, including discussion on the resilience of CH (in institutions), are important factors that must involve all actors, at all levels. An institution must tailor actions to fit the specific requirements of its location, stakeholder groups and role in society.

Finally, with regard to the REACH project's wider aims, this pilot showed that institutions are a particularly important feature, as they are often linked to very different cultural heritage milieux, such as minority communities, rural communities, and small towns, etc. They can succeed in connecting different spheres and therefore in supporting or initiating cross-sector activities and dialogue. In spite of their perhaps traditionally negative image, museums in fact have the potential to become reliable and responsive partners and interlocutors, as well as reference points for their communities and societies.



INTERLUDE 2: PARTNER PERSPECTIVES

The following interlude provides the perspectives of partners who were involved in the four participatory pilots.

Eszter György, ELTE

Eszter was the coordinator of the Minority heritage pilot and co-author of the related deliverable. She was also heavily involved in the tasks to establish a conceptual framework, propose participatory models, and reflect on the project's approach to resilience, having also been an integral part of the host team that organised the opening REACH conference in Budapest.

“Since the very beginning of the REACH project, I was extremely happy and honoured to be able to work on a topic that is especially close to me since my childhood. Roma culture was something that was present in our family and I have known and liked Roma music, theatre, dance and painting for a very long time. Therefore, after conducting some individual research on specific domains of Roma heritage and urban cultural practices, I felt very lucky to start a much larger research on Roma heritage in the professional frame of an EU project. Even though it was sometimes difficult to “translate” our experiences to the language of our consortium meetings and reports, I found it very useful and pertinent to share our ideas with partners and to learn about their opinion and view of our work.

I really enjoyed all the field trips with my colleague Gábor Oláh and I think we made a good team in building new partnerships and in getting to know and processing all the information and experiences we have run into during the three years. It was a great pleasure to work in close relationship with our stakeholders in Hodász, Újpest, Pécs and Budapest and it was also very gratifying to see how new collaborations can be established (such as between the Budapest Collection of the Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library and some of our Roma stakeholders) and new researches can evolve (from our Cultural Heritage MA students).”

Gábor Oláh, ELTE

As with Eszter, Gábor played an important role in establishing the REACH project, again in relation to the conceptual framework, participatory models and the organisation of the Budapest conference. He was involved in the Minority heritage pilot and was a co-author of the related deliverable and also for those related to resilient CH.

“With an EU project behind us, we arrived at the first meetings with sparkling eyes, enthusiastically explained the details of the project and more than once collided with despair, disappointment and hopelessness. Our initial naive enthusiasm can, of course, also be attributed to our inexperience, but it absolutely did not discourage us, and during the three years we were able to meet special people and visions that continually reinforced that initial sparkle in our eyes. It was extremely interesting to experience the changes in academic roles and methods brought about by the fieldwork itself. We have learned a lot from these modifications, which we will definitely incorporate into our fieldwork in the future.

It was a great experience to be at one moment in a gypsy settlement in a deprived area of North-Eastern Hungary, trying to map a grassroots cultural and community organizing initiative, the other moment we were attending a conference of heritage experts in a European Commission building in Brussels. The theme is pretty much the same, but with very different visions, approaches, and challenges. REACH allowed us to gain experience in both places, to reveal to us the two different worlds and to form a kind of ‘communication-bridge’ between the two.”

**José Maria Martin Civantos, UGR**

José Maria coordinated the Rural heritage pilot, working closely with multiple communities to ensure that their agrarian heritage could be sustained. He was the co-author of the related deliverable, as well as the host of the dedicated workshop held in Granada.

“The REACH project has allowed me to keep on working with rural communities preserving agrarian heritage from an integrated perspective. It has been an opportunity to explore in depth some aspects of the participatory approaches and the role that local communities and stakeholders can have. Most parts of the territories are in conflict (not always explicit), between an intensive industrialized productive model and a more sustainable, but also traditional practice. This conflict is at the heart of our action because rural heritage, which has a complex integrated vision, falls into the second category. Our work is defined by many different interests and even ideologies, as well as by many contradictions. Participatory approaches allow us to reflect with people, learning from them, but also offering new insights from an academic perspective without imposing our sole perspective.”

We have also had the opportunity to learn more about specific mechanisms for resilience capacity that can be applied with an historical perspective. An important part of this traditional resilience capacity for rural communities is being lost as it is linked to the loss of practices, governance structures, economic productivity of the population and traditional ecological knowledge. Rebuilding these elements reusing traditional skills, knowledge or practices is possible, including a renewal and a reinterpretation of many of them. That's part of resilience.

We have learnt some of these aspects thanks also to the knowledge and expertise exchange within the consortium, mainly in relation to the minorities and small towns pilots, but also through the general discussions about participation models, good practices, and the resilience concept applied to cultural heritage.”

Jaroslav Ira, CUNI

Jaroslav was the lead author of the Small towns' heritage deliverable, having worked with colleagues and Associate partners to define the pilot's outcomes. He was also the co-host of the Prague workshop and contributed to REACH discussions on resilient CH.

“For me, the participation in REACH was by no means a first experience in international projects. This made me feel rather comfortable in terms of working in international community, while enjoying some of the positive aspects of international projects, such as horizontal structure of communication, informal atmosphere, exchange of knowledge etc. And yet, REACH was a challenge and a continuous process of learning for me, as it required me to step out of the comfortable zone of purely academic work of a historian and to adapt to the different language of the foreseen outputs and communication with different audiences. The Coordination and Support Action form of the project was another difficulty, since my understanding of impact is largely based on research outputs and teaching activities; for that reason, I may have not fully realized the added value of creating networks and platforms. Finally, I have also realized how difficult it may be to create effective bridges between the research community and the applied sphere. I cannot but regret that I have got better understanding of many things only now, when the project comes to an end.”



One of the invaluable gains that I have got is better insight into how international and multilateral projects of this scale work and what the preconditions are for a competitive bid and successful realization of the project. Three points seemed important to me: the importance of pre-existing results and networks to build on; horizontal structure and ability to cooperate across the teams, and the efficiency of management, not least in terms of capability of project managers to partake on the production of intellectual outputs. These factors appeared all the more important, as we were challenged with the extreme circumstance of loss of our local coordinator at a critical time in the project. This also brought about an extra test for me and my colleagues, as we had to take over coordination tasks.

These insights and experiences are especially important in countries like mine that are low-performing, with relatively little experience in coordination of large international projects. In personal terms this helped me to become a sort of specialist on international projects at my home institution (e.g., I was recently addressed by our grant office to provide advices concerning the new grant-bidding strategy of our institution). Participation in projects of this sort is considered an asset that certainly makes one's academic biography stronger and the person more visible in the international academic sphere, even if there are some drawbacks, too. For junior and middle-career scholars at universities, part of the work that is invested into the project is less rewarding, as it is mainly publications in scholarly journals and monographs that count in academic performance assessment."

Friederike Berlekamp, SPK

Frieda carried out the activities of the Institutional heritage pilot, including writing the related analytical deliverable. She also co-developed the criteria for REACH workshops, and co-authored the deliverable that both reflected their content and evaluated their outcomes.

"Participating in the REACH project was very valuable for me in several respects.

From my education I am a cultural anthropologist with a focus on archaeology, ethnohistory and anthropology in Latin America with experience in corresponding museums through various intern- and traineeships. CH is the basis of my (mostly academic) work. Participation, or rather collaboration, was an issue of my previous work, but my experience was mainly focused on international researchers.

My participation in REACH has greatly increased my awareness and understanding of (participatory and collaborative) museum work and its (potential for) agency and impact, and the dimensions of CH. This is very true with regard to the fact that I have been able to work in this project more and more intensively with people (museum professionals and lay people) and on their interaction with, and interpretation of CH, and less about people and (academically) interpreting CH. Thus, this work implied big differences and changes in my usual and known fields of work, approaches, considerations and procedures. For instance, as my work focused more on local people, communities and institutions, we interacted in a certain way which meant that a different and strengthened connectedness and effect emerged, that enabled an exchange beyond the academic/professional circle by including important players: the public and further cultural and social partners.

Furthermore, the project has allowed me to get to know museums from a different, more analytical and general perspective - in the normal everyday life of a museum one hardly has the time and opportunity for such comprehensive considerations. Indeed, as participation and collaboration are very important topics in the museum world today, it was a great luxury to have the opportunity to address and discuss this issue so comprehensively.



Above all, it was the exchange with the participants with very different backgrounds and their openness that I have to consider as the most valuable experience, as this also showed (like the findings of the pilot and the workshops) what is most important (in the museum, in the academic research, in the society, in daily life): interpersonal exchange and mutual awareness and appreciation. These results/experiences are very important both for my research activities and for my work in the museum, and I hope to have the opportunity to use and apply them in a useful way (together with the diverse -constituent- museum community) one day.”

5. THEMATIC WORKSHOPS

In parallel with the four participatory pilots, the REACH project held four thematic workshops. The first three considered the project themes of the management, (re-)use and preservation of cultural heritage, with the latter contributing to the project's discourse on resilient CH¹³. All informed the refinement of participatory roles and identified examples of good/best practice.

5.1 DARING PARTICIPATION!, BERLIN

The first workshop took place in Berlin on 20/21 November 2018, organised by SPK, and considered the management of CH. Entitled *Daring Participation!*, the workshop invited experts from different institutions (museums, archives, ministries, libraries and associations) to present their participatory activities and to discuss their experiences of participatory management of CH.¹⁴

The first session began with a keynote lecture addressing museums in the 'Age of Participation' imagining how museums would look and the role that they would need to play in 2030, importantly considering that the traditional label of 'visitor' would be replaced with that of 'stakeholder'.



Figure 12 – Group discussion held at the conclusion of the Berlin workshop (Photograph: Antonella Fresa)

Co-creation was discussed by the next two speakers, the first describing Berlin City Stories/User-generated content in a public library that had been built using contributions from members of the

¹³ Further details can be found in D4.2 - *Workshops results and lesson learnt*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/repository/Deliverables/REACH%20D4.2-Workshops-results-and-lessons-learnt.pdf> (accessed 25/2/21)

¹⁴ Further details are available on the workshop page: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/events/workshops/workshop-on-participatory-approaches-for-cultural-heritage-management> (accessed 25/2/21)



public. This was followed by a presentation on the Citylab Digital/Participatory Memory Practices that enables the collection of diverse user-generated-content about the Frankfurt and provides a forum for the contemporary city and its future.

Three presentations considered the topic of *participation and civic engagement in Europe*. The first, *Cultural Heritage in Danger, People Engagement as a Resource*, asking the significant question: 'Does the idea of preservation held by (different) institutions correspond with that of the general population?' The second was how the Finnish Heritage Agency had used participatory feedback about its Picture Collection to refine its strategy: 'We are successful when, operating and interacting with us, is considered positive and valuable.' The third considered *The Old Prague Society and Its Unique Experience of the Civic Association for Monument Preservation Between 1900 and 2018*.

The next topic was *participation in exhibition planning and as concept for the whole institution* and again introduced three speakers. How can a museum maintain its role when it is closed for renovation? This was the situation that faced the Jewish Museum Frankfurt. The solution was a combination of activities, including analogue and digital strands, pop-up facilities and outreach projects in the neighbourhoods. In contrast, the updated facilities at the Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe offered a new approach, including digital membership, to a younger than traditional clientele who could gain access through a range of devices to games and challenges to support and extend interaction with the museum's collection. This was a very different experience to that described in the final contribution by partner CUNI, as small museums in small towns often have old fashioned approaches, in aging buildings, with less than engaging collections.

The penultimate session explored *participation in research and preservation*. *Participation in the Historical Archives of Cologne* 'showed the benefits of combining analogue and digital offerings and that such intensive interaction between institution and the public is a win-win situation for both sides involved.' This was followed by (what would become the participatory pilot case study at) the Industrie- und Filmmuseum Wolfen and its 'Bilderschau' (Picture Show). Its collection has over 20,000 photographs taken by factory photographers, showing mainly everyday moments of work and life. In the "Bilderschau", former employees help to identify the location, circumstance and those featured in the pictures.

The final session was entitled *Participation in education and outreach*, which featured (another future participatory pilot case study) the Museum für Islamische Kunst, SMB-PK that discussed new approaches and new audiences that encouraged communities to collaboratively develop educational materials to promote cultural education. This was followed by *Inclusive Education with/for People with Visual Impairments*, as the Bialystok Arsenal Gallery seeks to include blind or visually impaired people in cultural life. Its entire programme follows dialogical, participatory and collaborative approaches.

In this lively and enriching exchange, it became clear that the implementation of participatory initiatives concerns different areas of work and that the social dimension of this work gains importance through the involvement of citizens (through new mutual perceptions and new forms of relationships resulting from social/mental changes and technological developments.) This leads to new desires, needs and possibilities/opportunities of interactions such as participation, involvement and engagement, or at least facilitates them. These developments have the potential to change both the concept of the CH institution and of CH itself.

Participation should therefore be seen as an integral part of the institution's concept and should provide a structural framework that can be tailored to the specific needs of different participatory projects and approaches. All staff in the institutions must be involved in such processes and receive comprehensive training.

5.2 PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES FOR CREATIVITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP, COVENTRY

The second workshop took place in Coventry on 12 March 2019, organised by COVUNI and entitled *Participatory approaches for creativity and entrepreneurship*. This workshop had a wide-ranging brief that, in addition to considering the REACH theme of participatory approaches, also incorporated thinking about the creative and entrepreneurial (re-)use of cultural and heritage.¹⁵

A programme of speakers was developed to cover the themes of the workshop from a number of perspectives. The morning session included an overview of Intangible Cultural Heritage and EU projects within the context of participatory and creative (re-)use, an outline of the E-Space Portal/WITH's federated search functionality that would enable the (re-)use of digitised cultural content, as well as Crowd Heritage via the Crowdsourcing Platform for enriching CH assets. For any digitised (re-)use, it is important to consider copyright issues and this is what was covered in the presentation of heritage sensitive intellectual property strategies for intangible cultural heritage.

The following session started with a demonstration of Qandr, an interactive tool for audience participation to ask questions of attendees and directly involve them in discussions. This was followed by MuPop/the pop-up museum, which is designed to enhance a museum visitor's experience and interaction, with pre-recorded information available via a mobile device and, as its name suggests, the ability to be easily set-up in a public space.



Figure 13 – Group discussion at the Coventry workshop
(Photograph: Reelmaster Production – Raluca Maria Polodeanu)

¹⁵ Further details are available on the workshop page: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/events/workshops/workshop-on-participatory-approaches-for-creativity-and-entrepreneurship> (accessed 25/2/21)



The museum theme was considered in a more traditional way, as a warning was given to institutions to design collections and interact with users in this age of participation to attract modern audiences. The final presentation of the morning included stories of Leicester's Cultural Quarter and described how places and spaces could be creatively (re)-used and their past highlighted to inform both residents and visitors.

The afternoon began with an energetic demonstration of how to sprint the creative economy and how to work with different groups to disrupt their thinking and challenge them to consider new approaches and solutions. Next was a showcase of the work of a small organisation within the CH sector (including links to Coventry: UK City of Culture 2021) that discussed post digital participation through play. The final presentation within this entrepreneurial themed session described the important role that *DigitalMeetsCulture: the online cultural heritage magazine* has within the heritage sector for sharing news, raising awareness and building partnerships.

The day had covered themes of (re-)use, creativity, entrepreneurship and participation presented in a number of ways, each providing the REACH project with further areas to evaluate. As this was a workshop that was not as closely aligned to the work of the pilots as the others were, important themes were raised that were important for the REACH project that had not arisen to the same extent within other activities. Ethics within (digital) (re-)use became an important consideration, and related to it the copyright and Intellectual property dimensions, especially in connection with intangible cultural heritage. This was also an event that generated passionate discussion on the role that new technologies can play in participatory activities, with alternative viewpoints presented.

5.3 PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES FOR TERRITORIAL COHESION, GRANADA

The third REACH workshop took place on 26 November 2019, organised and hosted by UGR, and entitled *Participatory Approaches for Territorial Cohesion*. The aim of the event was to investigate the value of participatory preservation of CH in terms of research advancement and social innovation.¹⁶

Drawing upon knowledge and experiences gained during the MEMOLA project, the workshop focused on the recovery of Traditional Agrosystems, with the object of discussion to pinpoint best practices for involving local communities in the care and preservation of the rural areas by instilling awareness of cultural and environmental values and promoting responsible behaviours and civil engagement. To introduce topics, several international professionals presented their own work and experiences, sharing reflections and details of their research.

The first topic introduced the concept of Ecomuseum and related case studies, specifically focussing on the Ecomuseo La Ponte, in northern Spain, that had fought to establish its own identity in response to the mass tourism overwhelming the Asturias area. The next speaker provided background information on a case study of La Vega and the action of preservation of Granada's historic agrarian territory, including the mobilisation of communities to demand a stop to the loss of rural landscapes.

¹⁶ Further details are available on the workshop page: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/events/workshops/workshop-on-participatory-approaches-for-territorial-cohesion> (accessed 25/2/21)

The third presentation went into detail over the response that had been made, including the legislative proposal for protection of soils, as well as detailing the work of the Parc of Fuenlabrada that is working with local people to rebuild the links between urban and rural communities to prevent the further loss of heritage.

The next speaker also had a dual perspective, representing both the Spanish Iniciativas Comunes, that oversees common governance, bringing together different community groups to share expertise. The second perspective covered the ICCA Consortium which addresses collective international governance, in order to enable heritage to address global challenges. The final speaker addressed a specific case study (that would also feature in a participatory pilot) that has featured a 30-year battle to save the *marcita* meadow, an area of high agro-ecological value and of soils of agricultural interest, at Ticino Park, which has been under threat as a result of plans to build a highway to the airport near Milan in Italy.



Figure 14 – Raising awareness of historic agrarian landscapes at the Granada workshop
(Photograph: Antonella Fresca)

There were many synergies between presentations, leading to positive debate, that enabled participants to understand different perspectives of rural heritage and the issues challenging its conservation, preservation and sustainability. From a wider project perspective, several participatory themes from earlier workshops had once again come to the fore, even if in a very different setting. This both re-enforced and amended the participatory modelling conclusions that were being formed.



5.4 RESILIENCE FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE, PRAGUE

The *Resilience for Cultural Heritage* workshop, organised and hosted by CUNI took place in Prague on 5 and 6 March 2020. In addition to continuing the project's participatory themes, this workshop considered different interpretations of the concept of resilience within the fields of culture and heritage, involving a series of varied and fascinating presentations and vibrant debate.¹⁷

The first session *Understanding Resilience of Heritage* described the importance of preservation of Jewish graveyards in Polish cities, where their heritage would otherwise have been forgotten and also the reaction of local communities to the shock election of a Neo-Nazi as regional governor in Banska Bystrica, Slovakia, and how the community came together to stand-up for its values and reclaim their cultural heritage from populists.

The next session began with a presentation defining rural landscape as heritage, especially in the context of disturbances, and specifically how (the Rural heritage pilot case study of) Norcia recovered from the devastation of an earthquake. Described next was *Unwanted Heritage* and how the remnants of the Iron Curtain's infrastructure that had once divided and changed communities is now undergoing a period of re-evaluation.

The session ended by returning to earlier themes such as communities no longer living in their traditional areas, and their history not being remembered by the current residents. Resilience was hereby defined as saving the heritage of one group from another. This could be as a result of living through regime change, maintaining heritage, but also assimilating direct or indirect influences on beliefs and infrastructure.

The penultimate session on *Difficult Heritage* began with a presentation on the public perception of communist heritage in Albania which considered the built heritage that remains in Tirana and the ongoing debate of what should be done with it; 'should society move on from its past or should the buildings stand, so that people do not forget?' This was followed by an explanation of the Soviet tractor-making neighbourhood in Minsk that presented plans and images of the Socialist districts that were built for workers when the factories were opened, considering current perceptions and legacy. The subsequent discussion talked about the legacy of places and the recent re-location of the body of General Franco in Spain.

The final session of the day examined *Resilience Within the Scope of Institutions and Heritage*. The first example described the progression of CUNI's own CH, illustrating that institutions would have had to be resilient to operate, in spite of multiple socio-political regime changes, during the 20th Century. The day concluded with a presentation and discussion on engaging citizens with Europe's cultural heritage, with a special emphasis placed on UNESCO's values and learning principles, exploring the values and messages that heritage sites can hold and share, and the best ways that narratives can be framed.

¹⁷ Further details are available on the workshop page: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/events/workshops/workshop-on-resilient-cultural-heritage> (accessed 25/2/21)



Figure 15 – Prague workshop presentation exploring UNESCO values (Photograph: Tim Hammerton)

The workshop had once again touched upon themes that had been identified within the project, as well as introducing others for consideration. There is a clear theme of temporality that can be seen through the various descriptions of resilient CH (which supported the project's conceptual framework). The theme of reappraisal of an event or era after a period of time has passed was apparent, but interestingly leading to an intergenerational difference of opinion, as well as detrimental loss of traditional approaches, in the supposed name of progress. Further topics covered the necessary adaptation to regime change and its resultant discontinuity and social upheaval, with the notion that resilience is about remembering and saving one group's heritage from another. In contrast, a community's fight to take back control of its heritage was detailed, as well as the importance of framing a debate to gain support for perspectives and actions.

5.5 SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF REACH WORKSHOPS' PARTICIPATORY FINDINGS

Workshop discussions exploring participatory themes were vibrant exchanges that revealed certain points of commonality for shaping participatory models:

- participatory activities build bridges - they offer opportunities for cross-sector, intergenerational and interdisciplinary connections and cohesion
- participation is based on openness, mutual trust and respect - successful participation is only possible if all participants are engaged and committed to mutual knowledge exchange
- participation is an open-ended process with its own dynamics and must be flexible - all groups involved have to accept that control of the processes of decision-making must be negotiated, shared, and sometimes relinquished. Jointly discussed frameworks are necessary for joint processes that consider the needs and desires of all parties involved
- participation provides innovation and enables further development through its opportunities for new encounters and relationships: these can result in changes of perspective and attitude. In addition, participation has to be responsive to changing situations and circumstances - it is therefore a reflexive and iterative process



- every participatory approach and activity is unique - there is no 'one size fits all' approach. The specificity of every project and situation - its framework and its limitations - must be taken into account
- participation is about networking and relationship building - it can foster social cohesion through opportunities for dialogue, exchange and encounter. As broad a spectrum of stakeholders must be involved in order for a wide range of collaborations and partnerships to emerge
- educational techniques enable participation - participation is itself a form of education
- participation starts with the necessary frame of mind - in order for participatory activities to be successful, it is crucial that all stakeholders, including those directly and indirectly involved, have a real and engaged interest in expanding their own horizons through collaborative experiences
- participation is a long-term endeavour - developing, implementing and sustaining participatory activities need time and effort to properly emerge, flourish and grow, especially to become properly embedded into the CH landscape, and to be more than a box-ticking exercise, paying lip-service to participation without actually being fully participatory
- participation needs suitable and comprehensive framework conditions - participatory approaches therefore need to be resilient themselves, adaptive to changing circumstances with flexible room for manoeuvre [...] to respond to unforeseeable and/or emerging necessities.



INTERLUDE 3: PARTNER PERSPECTIVES

The partners sharing their views within this interlude both made contributions to workshops, as well as to the project more widely.

Mauro Fazio, MISE

Mauro/MISE contributed two Italian case studies to the Rural heritage pilot. These were also featured in several of the REACH workshops; he was also involved in the organisation of the Pisa conference.

“The participation in REACH project has been very valuable for me, as representing an institutional body, the Italian Ministry of economic development. Generally, my partnership in European projects has been in the role of coordinator, but in this case time it was the first time that I have joined as partner, under the coordination of the Coventry University, a leading British university highly committed to internationalism and innovation, in particular with its Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

The main aspect that I wish to point out in REACH participation is its contribution to social integration in Europe, generating opportunities for cooperation, enhancing the diversity of cultures and offering new knowledge in the Cultural Heritage domain. This goal is really achieved in my experience with the REACH social platform, in order to identify the emerging research trends.

It was also very important and meaningful the experience in the pilot studies with their potential of engaging new audiences, of developing frameworks for achieving integrated social and economic sustainability, and of representing the complexity of contemporary European cultural and social realities.”

Jan Krajíček, CUNI

Jan was a member of the CUNI team that worked on the identification of good practices, a co-author of the Small towns' heritage pilot deliverable, and presented his related research at the workshop in Prague.

“First and foremost, the REACH project gave me a huge amount of experience. Being involved in such a complex, specialized and international research project opened to me a lot of approaches, provided many insights and showed me numerous interesting methods on how to deal with the currently trending topic of cultural heritage. I was allowed to accompany my colleagues in their research and to share a bit of their know-how of academic praxis. This was invaluable opportunity of gaining experience and knowledge that was shared across the whole project team. I am also glad that the project work was constantly pushing my own academic research forward.

But maybe an even more important impact of REACH, which I personally feel, is the “human“ factor of the project collaboration. It gave me many contacts, meetings and visits (which could have been even more as if it wasn't for the pandemic), during which I met a whole bunch of wonderful, interesting and inspiring people who achieved so many success and goals in their profession and who I do admire. I am really honoured to be their colleague and most of all, to call them friends.

Finally, as the project is literally crossing the finish line now, I feel sorrow rather than relief. It's a bit sad that the process of cooperation is over, since I feel as it reached its absolute perfection only recently. But at the same time, I know that, within the project team and with many colleagues, some form of cooperation in research will still go on, with the addition of the outcomes of REACH. I am really thankful to be involved in this research community. I wish all of my REACH friends all the best and I'm looking forward to seeing you again!”

6. FINDINGS FROM REACH PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Having established the foundations of the project and then put initial suppositions to the test through very different participatory pilots and thematic workshops, the next step was to identify aspects of best practice, to assess the project's finding on resilient cultural heritage and to evaluate participatory approaches and models, to be able to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

6.1 RESILIENT BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

During the first year of the project, over 100 good practice cases had been identified and incorporated into the publicly available database on the open-heritage.eu website. However, this task did not end there, as throughout the work of the participatory pilots and at the thematic workshops, the COVUNI team continued to evaluate projects and initiatives. Not only did this enable further population of the database, but also due to importance that this activity had gained within the project, a further task was added, to identify cases that could be further expanded and be presented as examples of best practice.¹⁸

The conceptual framework of the REACH project had identified resilience as pivotal. The COVUNI team therefore reflected upon the intertwined concepts of resilience and social innovation, reviewing academic literature and evaluating ongoing REACH activities, to present a focused collection of seven best practice cases illustrating projects and initiatives that have contributed to enhancing resilience or have experimented with socially innovative ideas in the CH field, in different European countries.

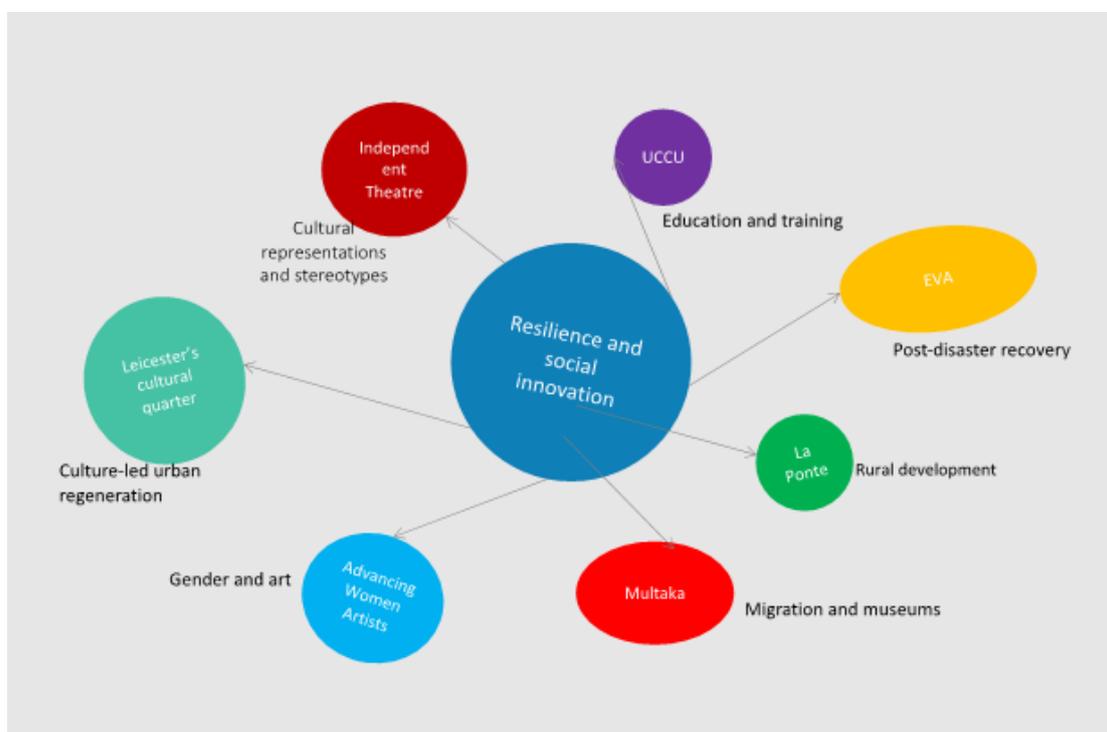


Figure 16 – Illustration of the seven best practice case studies (Source: Silvana Colella)

¹⁸ Further details can be found in D6.4 - *Resilience and social innovation in cultural heritage: a collection of best practices*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/REACH-D6.4-Resilience-and-social-innovation-in-cultural-heritage-v2.pdf> (accessed 25/2/21)



The practice cases outline several types of heritage (rural, urban, institutional and minority heritage) and revolve around topics with far-reaching implications: cultural representations and stereotypes; education and training; post-disaster recovery; rural development; migration and museums; culture-led urban regeneration; gender and art.

Both community resilience and the resilience of heritage are represented in this selection, which shows the importance of bottom-up approaches that take into account the needs of local populations and are alert to the complex interactions between people and places. Culture is a vital dimension of the adaptive cycle, and a crucial asset for individuals and communities, not only because it is a repository of traditions, but also because it provides fertile soil for imagining change, as the initiatives reviewed in this document testify.

While bottom-up approaches are undoubtedly crucial to effect change, the selected best practices demonstrate the relevance of top-down, institutional initiatives that have been undertaken bearing in mind the specific needs of marginalised groups, or the relative invisibility of underappreciated types of heritage. Changing the cultural policies of heritage institutions is a complex process, but much can be done through public engagement strategies sensitive to the demand for inclusion and recognition of a diverse set of 'others'.

As the Covid-19 pandemic brought the globalised world to a crashing halt, leading to a context of uncertainty for the CH sector, the notion of resilience acquired fresh resonance. The REACH project, therefore, added a further dimension to its work by examining some of the initiatives that emerged during the first lockdown, in response to the Covid-19 situation that clearly affected the cultural sector and the work of individual artists, practitioners and creatives.

The lockdown has functioned as a trigger for both institutions and individuals to respond creatively and generously to the unfolding emergency. Culture has never felt more urgent and socially valuable than during the confinement phase, with museums and arts organisations reaching out to new (and old) audiences via digital channels, and the sentiment of solidarity finding expression in concrete actions to help people affected by the pandemic. While it is impossible now to foresee whether these responses will effectively contribute to supporting the resilience of the sector, it is not too early to appreciate the sentiment of solidarity and the collaborative spirit fuelling these cultural interventions.

6.2 REACH FINDINGS ON RESILIENT EUROPEAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

Resilience was always an important strand of the REACH project, with a conceptual framework defined during its early months. The topics of resilience and social cohesion were given a prominent role within the REACH conference in Budapest in May 2018, with the opinions of audience members sought via world cafe discussions, with summaries drawn up to inform project understanding. Two years later, the dedicated workshop in Prague, invited participants to provide a broad spectrum of views and opinions. In the course of participatory pilot and thematic workshop activities, a number of practices were also identified that provided clear examples of resilience and resilient CH.¹⁹

¹⁹ Further details can be found in D7.1 - *REACH findings on Resilient European Cultural Heritage*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/repository/Deliverables/REACH%20D7.1%20-%20REACH%20findings%20on%20resilient%20European%20Cultural%20Heritage.pdf> (accessed 25/2/21)



The ELTE team summarised that in current CH discourses, scholars operate with complex definitions of CH, relativising the role of authenticity and questioning the notion of identity. In these new narratives, heritage is permanently re-created and identities are preserved through change. Some authors stress the role of CH in enhancing cultural resilience with the strengthening of values such as a sense of place and belonging supporting people's collective identity and self-esteem. Others, who foresee the boundedness of heritage in time and space, argue that 'heritage and its manufacture may wane or change as new social and cultural conditions unfold in the future' (Holtorf 2018: 647). While scientific papers and policy reports tend to adduce resilience as a tool for disaster risk reduction and for mitigation strategies (very often referring to the preservation of archaeological or architectural heritage), the REACH project acknowledges that vulnerability is a precondition of existence, while looking to a future that is always already understood as uncertain. In this context, the project team researched examples of flexibility and adaptive changes, in the field of social participation in heritage preservation, (re-)use and management. The project understood 'community resilience' as 'an ability to anticipate, learn from, and cope with past perturbations, while integrating this knowledge to reduce vulnerability to future risks and lessen the likelihood of disaster. This requires a community to draw upon social connections, capacity, resources, and natural or built capital to rebound ('or bounce back') from and reduce future risks' (Ghahramani et al. 2020: 2266).

In the line of reasoning articulated in the latest conceptual innovations of heritage discourse, CH appears as a constantly changing variable. Communities are becoming increasingly aware that they, too, may be responsible or leaders for change. Thus, it means that resilience can be understood as the management of change, according to an approach coming from *within*, from the communities themselves. The preservation, (re-)use and management of their potentials, in this case CH, is key in the process whereby communities face unpredictable, uncontrollable and uncertain global and local trends. This implies that numerous effective strategies and methods emerge from individual cases, so much so that it is difficult to derive a general model. What one can do, however, as the REACH project sought to do throughout its three years lifetime, is to gather participatory methods and good practices from which either communities or professionals can draw ideas to strengthen their own community's resilience and preserve, (re-)use and manage their CH.

Resilience can be viewed as a process of becoming: adapting to uncertainty or managing change (the core of resilience, according to the REACH approach) is not achieved once and for all, as disruptions may always lurk in the background. Learning how to deal with them is key.

Prague workshop host partner CUNI made the following analysis of the presentations made:

- Understanding of resilience: a state/a process/a quality/a capacity/an approach (way of dealing with)
- Subject of resilience: community, group, minority/city, town, landscape/heritage, memory/values, cohesion/actions, policies, measures, plans
- Resilience adversaries (challenges): catastrophes/forgetting, decay/misuse, abuse, overuse/ extremism, social tensions/change, growth, economic pressures/exploitation, touristification/failure, decline, lacking behind/loss of identity, no sense of place/stasis, stagnation, obsolescence
- Relation to change: resilience as adaptation to change, control of change, flexibility or even openness to change versus resistance, conservatism, stasis

- Relation to conflict: conflict as part of (community) resilience/avoidance of conflict in building a resilient community/how to work with conflicts/resilience as capacity to deal with conflict in a specific way



Figure 17 – Budapest conference world café resilience discussion group

Since the REACH project aimed to support and enhance social cohesion and the resilience of communities by means of cultural engagement, and to underline the societal significance of cultural heritage, the concepts of resilience and resilient CH/communities are central, especially for the final REACH conclusions.

Following an analysis of project activities, a series of policy and practice recommendations were developed by COVUNI based upon the *REACH findings on Resilient European Cultural Heritage*.²⁰

- resilience when understood as the management of change requires that cultural heritage organisations, local authorities and local communities acquire adaptive capabilities to respond to uncertainty
- capacity building is required in the form of new economic models, with disruption (such as the Covid-19 pandemic) used to reassess approaches and policies
- critical infrastructures are integral to resilience building and require development frameworks that are inclusive and user-focused
- collaborative working and co-governance structures, including conflict resolution strategies, are necessary to enable meaningful participation
- the shift from a focus on 'risk' to a focus on 'resilience' calls for new heritage management strategies that embrace change and new models of preservation which focus on processes of adaptation – for example, practices of adaptive (re-)use and of rewilding

²⁰ Within D7.1, the list contains 20 bullet points. As some of these were subsequently incorporated into the list of project evaluation recommendations, which are provided in the next section, they were removed from this list to avoid duplication.



- an integrated approach to resilience and sustainability that proposes a thinking of resilience beyond the immediacy of crisis
- a thinking of resilience beyond standardisation models/practices, towards a thinking that is more attuned to the specificity of a site/context and to the needs of the local communities; a thinking that is informed by best practice but is flexible in its application; a thinking that is early in its intervention and that is non-invasive; a thinking that sets parameters, but that does not stifle creativity and potential for adaptation
- support and training can enable communities to initially develop capacity to contribute, and subsequently gain autonomy to be able to influence economic, social, cultural, territorial and environmental policy decision making.

6.3 EVALUATION OF REACH PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES

As outlined in section 3.6 above, the REACH project established a series of participatory models that were to be tested; to confirm, reject or revise initial propositions. At the end of the project, the COVUNI team carried out a detailed evaluation to review outcomes of local encounters, participatory pilot activities and REACH events, aggregating the requirements that emerged from participating users, examining successes as well as determining key factors in barriers to participation and how to overcome these, in order to inform and develop future policy frameworks for participatory preservation, management and (re-)use of CH.

From the outset, the REACH project frameworks and its participatory pilots considered the importance of the bottom-up approach to participation, that has developed out of theories of history and heritage 'from below', aiming to give voice to those histories previously rendered invisible, or only partially visible, by a received notion of 'History'. This is especially important in terms of allowing for the (re-)appropriation of minority heritage, or any heritage that has been lost, misappropriated or even erased due to structural discrimination and inequality (e.g. women's history). As such, bottom-up approaches redressing the balance are preferable to a top-down approach, imposed from above. However, the experience of the REACH participatory pilots has shown that a bottom-up approach, while desirable, cannot always be the case. Here, the model of participatory heritage is relevant, featuring models that require an initial top-down element, but in order to be sustainable, that can ultimately give way to a more bottom-up model when the circumstances are right. No matter the initial model, it is true that there are a number of methods to bring communities into the heart of decision-making processes that as has been consistently proved by the REACH participatory pilots, are vital for the success of participatory activity. Co-creation and co-management methods, as well as crowdsourcing, collaborative mapping and the use of collaborative media, have all been used to bring together different stakeholders with diverse needs, perspectives and priorities to design, implement and sustain successful participatory activities to foster more resilient communities and more resilient heritage.

Within the participatory pilots, examples included student-led local encounter confirms that there is possibly also a less distinct participatory heritage model, sitting somewhere between top-down and bottom-up, where conditions are put in place from above – at an institutional²¹ level - to enable activity from below to emerge, develop and thrive.

²¹ Further details can be found in D3.3 – *Project evaluation report*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/repository/Deliverables/D3.3%20Project%20evaluation%20report.pdf> (accessed 25/2/21)



Another showed this to some extent as well, with bottom-up approaches a driver and an ambition - in terms of models of self-governance and future capacity-building for the communities in question, but with the academy acting first as a broker to support this. Collaborative working and co-governance structures are necessary to enable meaningful participation, but support and training is needed first to enable communities to first develop their capacity to contribute, and then gain the autonomy to be able to influence economic, social, cultural, territorial and environmental policy decision making. Significantly, several participatory pilots raised the further dimension of building a community voice, initially acting as an interlocutor, but then helping communities to take a step further to be heard directly and not through an intermediary (however well-intentioned). In this way, multiple stakeholders have started to organise themselves to overcome challenges through more bottom-up initiatives.

The analysis and evaluation of the four participatory pilots and thematic workshops has also revealed a number of overarching themes that must be taken into consideration when developing participatory frameworks, strategies and approaches for the successful preservation, management and (re-)use of a resilient CH. These themes include:

- community empowerment and meaning-making
- tangible and intangible cultural heritage
- forgotten heritage and unwanted heritage
- ownership, ethics and Intellectual Property (IP)
- education and knowledge exchange (including cross-cultural, intergenerational and interdisciplinary)
- responding to societal change changing populations (depopulations, aging population), ecological crisis, climate breakdown, the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic
- resilience: adaptation rather than resistance to change
- using new technologies: digital approaches
- top-down and bottom-up approaches – moving towards self-governance.

These themes have, in turn, opened up a number of important lessons learned and considerations to be borne in mind when designing participatory approaches for a resilient cultural heritage that also develops social cohesion.

These considerations can be summarised as follows:

- connections need to be built between individuals and groups facing similar challenges, to enable interdisciplinary knowledge exchange and strengthen communities' voices
- there must be a clear recognition of the importance of both tangible and intangible heritage
- as regards diversity, equality and minorities, policies and practices need to be inclusive to raise awareness and provide guidelines to address inequalities
- gender policies and practices need to recognise the historic contribution that women have made to cultural heritage, as well as encourage further their empowerment
- there is a need to generate initiatives to protect the memory and heritage of former communities and residents, following periods of societal and institutional discontinuity and adaptation to new regimes, policies and practices



- community and public consultation is needed to debate approaches to unwanted heritage buildings and monuments, as well as to new heritage developments; public involvement in both short- and longer-term decision-making provides empowerment and enhances social cohesion
- there must be both short and longer-term plans/strategies – for a participatory project to be fully successful and impactful, it is essential to incorporate long-term strategies that involve participants in planning and decision-making
- education and training initiatives should be interpreted in their widest forms, including investment to develop research networks and dissemination activities, and informal community activities, including workshops, demonstrations, arts, dance, language and performance. There must be a recognition of how valuable intergenerational and cross-cultural activities are in order to pass on and protect memory, as well as those traditional skills and knowledge that are in danger of being lost
- institutions such as museums must become even more accessible community-hubs for communities' cultural engagement and spaces of collaboration, dialogue and exchange. This point will be yet more pertinent once museum doors open fully again, post COVID-19 and post-trauma, although the potentially devastating long-term effects of the pandemic on the GLAM sector as yet remains to be seen
- in terms of the challenges of cultural heritage and over- and under-tourism, community-led cultural tourism, or even 'creative tourism' can enable greater cultural visibility and awareness, based on authentic local knowledge and shared values, stimulating interest and making cultural heritage relevant
- heritage calls for adaptive management. There should be sufficiently flexibility within activities to enable them to develop organically and not have to follow a prescriptive, and potentially restrictive, initial plan
- new technologies and digital and social media can enhance, but importantly not replace, interpersonal and physical encounters with cultural heritage
- CH participatory activities are often overlooked, but have intrinsic, economic and societal benefits; as such, they must be promoted as an asset, not a liability, and as a benefit, rather than a cost.



INTERLUDE 4: PARTNER PERSPECTIVES

Perspectives in this section address the reflective stage of the project that drew conclusions and made recommendations.

Tim Hammerton, COVUNI

Tim was the COVUNI based project manager, who liaised with partners across all tasks and supported the writing of their deliverables. He was involved in the development of both conferences, organised and co-hosted the Coventry workshop, and developed the projects participatory models. He (co-)wrote the quality, data, models, workshops, evaluation, resilience and sustainability deliverables.

“The REACH project has been fascinating. I have discovered so much over the course of its lifetime, across all aspects of its work. Learning more about the Roma communities and the difficulties that they face in Hungary, realising my poor level of comprehension about rural heritage, that institutions are going through a period of immense transformation and the value and importance of the role that small towns play for heritage and society. To work with colleagues to help them to explain their findings within their deliverables has been both educational for me, and an opportunity to maximise the opportunity to share this understanding more widely.

I have enjoyed each of the REACH project events, that have covered such different ground, with each expert speaker providing a new dimension of cultural heritage. My challenge was to examine their contributions and to look for common threads, either of good practices or lessons that need to be learned, and to put together REACH participatory models, findings and recommendations. At the beginning of the project, it looked impossible to find links between such diverse pilots, but by the end, we had results and recommendations that were equally applicable. These have been challenging, yet extremely satisfying tasks.

It has not been an easy project to manage, given the changes in personnel and loss of a colleague, that has made things difficult and disrupted project planning and timescales. I have had to continually push partners to make and maximise their contributions, but ultimately, I am delighted to say that the project has undertaken valuable work within multiple communities and produced strong transversal results and a legacy for others to follow. As a project manager, I can't ask for more than that.”

Marie-Louise Crawley, COVUNI

Marie-Louise was part of the COVUNI team and reviewed and enhanced several of the participatory pilot deliverables. She was also co-author of the best practice and evaluation deliverables that provided final project recommendations.

“Although my involvement with REACH has only been for the last nine months of the project, it has been a valuable experience in widening my knowledge about participatory approaches in relation to CH and ICH. The project's research chimes with my own research interests and particular specialism in dance (as ICH) and museums, and I have particularly appreciated making new connections to up-to-date museum research and with museums researchers and professionals from across Europe.

Furthermore, the richness of interdisciplinary encounters with other REACH colleagues whose work is related to, but outside of, my own specific field, and the sheer breadth of the project pilots have been especially revealing. Discussions have deepened my understanding about what makes for the effective preservation, management and (re)-use of a wide range of resilient cultural heritage.



The project has enabled me to develop my own thinking about resilience and what that might mean for intangible culture (especially where this co-exists with tangible, material culture) and for a range of communities. This has offered me a new lens through which to view what might be happening for museum visitors, for example, when dance enters the museum space. In particular, I have now been able to input the wider understanding about heritage that I have gained from the various knowledge exchange opportunities offered by REACH into the research enriched learning developments that I am currently involved in at Coventry University, most specifically in curriculum development for a Cultural Heritage and Public History module as part of a proposal for a new M.A. in History.

I have been particularly struck by the concerted efforts of the project to make a clarion call for embedding 'history from below' and 'heritage from below' into bottom-up participatory approaches, in order to give voice to those histories and heritages which have been previously hidden lost or deliberately erased from 'History', due to endemic, structural discrimination. In particular, the project's emphasis on gender considerations speaks back to my own thinking as a feminist scholar about the urgency of how previously (mis)-appropriated female bodies and histories can be given a new, alternative visibility in museum and heritage spaces. Similarly, in the current global socio-political context, the project's powerful call to find ways to support minority communities in re-appropriating their own history and culture seems more urgent and necessary than ever. In its remit to design and implement participatory approaches to cultural heritage that build towards social cohesion, tolerance and diversity, the project has accomplished some essential socio-political work."



7. THE LEGACY OF THE REACH PROJECT

7.1 DISSEMINATION OF REACH PROJECT RESULTS

As described in section 3.1, the activity of the REACH project has been reflected through its web presence. Managed by Promoter, this has been provided in multiple forms, including the dedicated project website, and blog, both of which will remain available for five years after the end of the funding period.²²

At the end of the project, the reach-culture.eu website contained 165 pages, providing details of all activities that have taken place during the project's lifetime, including selected pages that have been translated into the languages of partners to increase awareness of the project's work and increase the dissemination of results.

Social Media was active within the project providing regular news of project activities and events:

- Blog: 236 posts
- Twitter: 288 tweets, 828 retweets, made by its 367 total followers.
- Facebook: 263 posts, with 1,550 Likes received from its 290 followers.
- YouTube - 41 videos published on the REACH channel.

The number of videos includes those made by partners to share project results, including one for each of the participatory pilots and another on the topic of gender representation in the CH sector.²³

REACH network building activity included:

- 22 Memoranda of Understanding signed²⁴
- 26 Cooperation Agreements signed
- 2 informal cooperation arrangements agreed
- 585 people on the REACH mailing list
- 7,500 contacts shared with the digitalmeetsculture.net/digitalmeetsculture magazine
- 6 REACH newsletters that were circulated via the mailing list and blog.²⁵

In addition to the brochure that was available during the early stages of the project, 22 further items were prepared, including conference booklets and banners, flyers for open-heritage.eu and posters for the participatory pilots that have been used to highlight the work of the project and to support events.

²² Further details are available in D2.3 - *Final report on dissemination activities, community building, and stakeholder consultation*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/repository/Deliverables/D2.3%20Final%20report%20on%20dissemination%20activities,%20community%20building,%20stakeholders%20consultation.pdf> (accessed 25/2/21)

²³ REACH YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTjxbeHm0CEr2-lOb7X-neA?reload=9&view_as=subscriber (accessed 25/2/21)

²⁴ Details of Associate partners are available on the project website: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/team-communities/associate-partners> (accessed 25/2/21)

²⁵ REACH newsletters can be found at <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/News-Letter-Activity-20190613.pdf>. (accessed 25/2/21)



During the project, REACH partners participated in 18 external conferences, 7 workshops, 2 policy and networking events, and 18 other third party events. These are in addition to REACH events and the 37 local encounters held by the participatory pilots.

Building upon project activities, 11 scientific publications are already available (on an open access basis), with a further 8 due to be published in 2021.²⁶

A feature of the website is the collection of posters and videos that have been submitted by interested stakeholders in response to a specific call made to the REACH network. The opportunity was initiated as part of the final conference, and maintained following the conference's unfortunate cancellation, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Projects and organisations were invited to share good practices and present innovative and interesting CH projects involving resilient communities and social participation. The Digital Gallery²⁷ represents a wide range of results, aligned to REACH project themes, and currently has 62 posters and 25 videos. This is another way in which the REACH project is able to sustain activities and foster collaboration of the CH sector.



Figure 18 – Mosaic of the REACH Digital Gallery available on the reach-culture.eu website

In addition to the project's dedicated digital presence, each of the partner institutions has used its own websites and social media channels to promote the work of the project. This approach has ensured that activities and results have been shared more widely, in partners' own languages, and their availability will not be affected by the conclusion of the REACH project.

²⁶ REACH scientific publications are available at: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/publications> (accessed 25/2/21)

²⁷ REACH posters and videos can be found at: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/posters-and-videos-from-the-reach-community> (accessed 25/2/21)



7.2 THE OPEN-HERITAGE.EU SOCIAL PLATFORM WEBSITE

One of the main outputs of the REACH project has been the creation of the open-heritage.eu social platform.²⁸ This is an independent platform, developed by Promoter, that is freely accessible to the whole community of heritage researchers, practitioners, professionals and citizens that are interested in promoting CH values, supporting its public recognition and encouraging participatory approaches.

The platform offers different types of resources, produced by the REACH project and gathered through its networking activities, including examples of good practices, articles, scientific papers, deliverables research and policy documents, and links to innovation projects. Its objective is to link research and innovation projects in the field of CH, providing a preferential channel for gathering, sharing and making available expertise and results obtained by European initiatives, so that this knowledge can be of benefit for the wider research community.



Figure 19 – Research and policy documents are available on the open-heritage.eu website

Building upon the work outlined in section 3.3 above, open-heritage.eu’s repository comprises 128 good practice records²⁹ of European and extra-European participatory activities in the fields of cultural heritage and the humanities, with an emphasis on small-scale, localised examples, but also including larger collaborative projects and global or distributed online initiatives. Located in over twenty different countries, the activities showcased cover a wide variety of topics and themes, from urban, rural and institutional heritage to indigenous and minority heritage; from preservation, and management to (re-)use of CH. This easy-to-use collection of good practices offers professionals, practitioners, researchers and citizens useful information about activities that can be transferred, adapted, or replicated in new contexts. It also sustains awareness of the results of prior projects that could otherwise be forgotten.

²⁸ The open heritage site: <https://www.Open-heritage.eu/> (accessed 25/2/21)

²⁹ <https://www.Open-heritage.eu/best-practices> (accessed 25/2/21)



Open-heritage.eu has been developed by the REACH social platform as a mean to support the sustainability of the results of the project after the end of the EC funding period. At the end of the REACH project, the site contained 270 pages. Open-heritage.eu will continue to be updated with new resources provided by the network/community of common interest, built by the REACH social platform. As with reach-culture.eu, all information provided by open-heritage.eu is available as open access and can be (re-)used under the creative common license.

7.3 BUILDING A NETWORK OF CULTURAL HERITAGE STAKEHOLDERS

Every year a number of projects take place that explore different areas of CH, either locally, nationally or internationally, each undertaking interesting and valuable work, but not always linking together to share and maximise results. What is more, after projects have ended, these findings are often lost to the sector and not used or built upon by other stakeholders. In the past, some project continuity has been maintained, with one project leading into the next and sharing results, but this has generally been through overlaps in personnel and good fortune. It is clear that there really needs to be something more, a level above this, to maintain continuity and knowledge, to share results and maximise projects' impact.

The REACH social platform's mission has been to bring stakeholders together to share areas of best practice. The CH sector is diverse, incorporating humanities, socio-economic sciences, material and environmental science, education and culture, creativity and media, and digital technologies and data science. Although there is strength, due to the broad spectrum of views and activities, the relative fragmentation has also been a weakness, as the sector has not often come together to be heard with a unified voice. This is the objective that the REACH project sought to achieve, through discussions with the main CH sector research bodies, to develop an effective way for organisations and projects to exchange knowledge, support each other and maximise results.

On 20 March 2019, the REACH project held a symposium entitled *Horizons for Heritage Research - Towards a Cluster on Cultural Heritage* co-organised by Promoter and COVUNI. It was hosted by the European Commission and involved many stakeholders from the CH sector. Its aims, devised in conjunction with the Commission (DG Research and Innovation), were to agree on the content of a Joint Statement that would provide the basis for the creation and the sustainability of a research stakeholder cluster on CH and also to inform the developing Horizon Europe programme of the importance of CH.

The aim of this cluster would be to increase visibility of initiatives and provide a mechanism to showcase the results of projects during or after their funding period, establishing a repository of results that can inform future research agendas and provide an evidence base for new projects.



Figure 20 – The *Horizons for Heritage Research -Towards a Cluster on Cultural Heritage* symposium in Brussels

The Joint Statement, produced by COVUNI and Promoter³⁰, was the tool used to gather further stakeholder feedback. A formal consultation was launched on the *Position of Research on Cultural Heritage in Horizon Europe*, with replies sought in June 2019. Following analysis of the response, a Position Paper³¹ about CH research in Horizon Europe was submitted to the Inclusive Societies Unit, DG RTD, European Commission at the end of July 2019.

Two main findings emerged from the consultation exercise: first, that more should be done in the design of research programmes to try to break down disciplinary silos; secondly, that research should be more thoroughly contextualised within developing as well as existing societal challenges. The Position Paper proposed the adoption of a unique facility for bringing together researchers from different countries, to enable advocacy of the sector's needs and requirements and to be a conduit for debate on challenges and expectations, at European and international level.

Follow-up discussions were planned to take place at the REACH final conference³² in June 2020. However, with its cancellation (due to the COVID-19 pandemic), plans were drawn up for an online event to take place during the final months of the project.

³⁰ <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Joint-statement-REACH.pdf> (accessed 25/2/21)

³¹ <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/REACH-Position-paper.pdf> (accessed 25/2/21)

³² The final session of the REACH conference would have been dedicated to the development of a permanent structure towards research and innovation: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/events/pisa-final-conference/pisa-programme> (accessed 25/2/21)



Bi-laterally meetings took place with stakeholders' decision makers, to ascertain their continued commitment, ahead of an online meeting that took place on 26 November 2020, entitled *Horizons for Heritage Research: Towards a multidisciplinary cluster on cultural heritage*. It was attended by a range of important CH stakeholders, including Europa Nostra, ECHOES, VIMM, UNESCO, Eurocities, the University of Barcelona/Coordinator of UNCHARTED project, Europeana Foundation, KU Leuven/President of Photoconsortium Association, Wikimedia, and of course, the REACH Consortium and European Commission.

The meeting achieved consensus that a single voice, via an association/cluster/group, is needed to support the CH research sector. The structure should advocate transdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches to CH research directly to policy-makers and programme managers and to share resources.

On 21 December, a paper was circulated to attendees, reiterating the need and potential, as well as the next steps that are required.³³ The text is reproduced here.

“The nature of cultural heritage—towards a shared research agenda

Cultural heritage has a transversal nature, bringing together, for instance, tangible and intangible, urban and rural, digital and physical, humanist and post-humanist perspectives. Cultural heritage research may be characterised, therefore, as:

- Intersectoral - comprising, among others, memory institutions, academic institutions, and increasingly the cultural and creative industries
- Interdisciplinary - encompassing a wide range of disciplines, with their own specialised conceptual and methodological frameworks
- Inherently chronological-capable of mediating between the past, the present and the emerging future.

Such diversity has to be positioned as a strength, rather than a weakness, by means of collaborative and holistic approaches that facilitate the co-production and creation of new knowledge, and foster the development of innovation ecosystems. Only then will complex societal challenges be successfully tackled.

The Structure- “Membership and leadership”

The coordination structure will fill a gap that has been acknowledged by the participants in the meetings organised by REACH as well on many other occasions.

It will offer a shared and unique space for research and researchers whether coming from:

- our existing networks, initiatives and infrastructures addressing and harmonising very important aspects of the coordination
- individuals discussing emerging research and innovation agendas;
- those linking together different fields in society – a space of encounter between the academy, cultural heritage institutions, together with business and industry
- those with a focus on the participation and engagement of underrepresented groups, such as minorities, small towns, small cultural institutions and SMEs.

³³ Further details are available in D7.2 – *Sustainability plan*: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/REACH-D7.2-Sustainability-plan.pdf> (accessed 25/2/21)



This coordination space will be beneficial to all, providing evidence of the impact of cultural heritage on the societal and economic transformation underway in contemporary Europe. For example, even if '*Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society*' has been acknowledged as one of the Clusters of Horizon Europe's Pillar 2, when it comes to the European missions, cultural heritage is not included. We need, therefore, to raise a strong, unique voice that advances our collective interests where they have been overlooked or are insufficiently represented.

The plan is to set up a permanent coordination structure for cultural heritage research supported by an infrastructure which will:

- be overarching: coordinate links with already established networks as well as temporary consortia dealing with the implementation of specific projects.
- carry and host information and data: a one-stop shop
- a repository that provides links to the information and data services that exist online and that are operated by members.
- transmit knowledge, act as knowledge-broker: enable contact among members to facilitate knowledge exchange/transfer, participation in others' research, track impact, and debate research directions.
- act as an Advocate: showcase key findings to funders and recommendations to policy-makers, highlight emerging research agendas and associated issues, requirements, and expectations."



INTERLUDE 5: PARTNER PERSPECTIVES

This interlude reflects upon the sustainable legacy of the REACH project and what happens next.

Antonella Fresa, Promoter

Antonella led the Promoter dissemination, communication and network building team, responsible for the project websites and dissemination. She was also integral in the activity that sought to establish a sustainable CH network and played a significant role in organising both the Budapest and Pisa conferences.

“The 3 years of the REACH project represented a very exciting period in my professional career, for several reasons.

Firstly, it gave me the opportunity to systematize many scattered participatory initiatives where I was involved, both in the research field - such as the co-creation task of the RICHES FP7 project - and in the implementation area - such as the pilots on creative re-use of digital cultural content of the Europeana Space Best Practice Network.

REACH was also a wonderful space for meeting with new partners, from Prague, Budapest, Berlin, and Granada, with whom the dialogue on the common interest about participatory approaches in culture was immediately profitable. New initiatives were discussed and eventually had their birth just at the time when the REACH EU funding period is completing. It seems as if they are an expected continuation of a common path that we are walking together. Three cases can be mentioned: a new running Research Project on the values of culture with ELTE University, as well as the Innovation Project on cultural tourism with Granada University and the Generic Service Project with Coventry University on intangible heritage and Europeana, the last two expected to start in early 2021.

And, eventually, REACH was the forge of a new concept of coordination of cultural heritage research; a coordination that looks at the whole route of innovation, from investigation to implementation, connecting the public and the business sectors, engaging public and underrepresented groups. In this framework, the challenge to organise the high-level experts' meetings of REACH was wonderful, and made me feel to be really part of the European community of research on cultural heritage.”

Neil Forbes, COVUNI

Neil was involved in the strategic direction of the project and decision making, including identifying and inviting conference keynote speakers. As the REACH Project Coordinator, he regularly represented the project at events and meeting, sharing results. He was also a leading figure in trying to ensure that work of projects is not lost, by advocating a permanent CH coordination structure that creates more sustainable impact.

“Working with REACH partners has been a fantastic experience, as each has brought its own varied experiences and expertise to the table. The REACH social platform never sought to define what was meant by the term cultural heritage, instead considering it to be multi-faceted, covering aspects of enjoyment, engagement, and (re-)use, and taking a people and society centred approach. It has therefore been interesting to observe the interdisciplinary findings when cultural heritage has been applied to different social contexts.



An important aspect of the REACH social platform is that it has an afterlife. Too often the results of projects, organisations and initiatives are lost when their work ends and this is detrimental to the CH sector. I believe that it would be so much better to have a coordination structure that could share results and identify subsequent impact, for the benefit of both the sector and wider society. For me, this has been an important strand of the REACH social platform to initiate dialogue and use my contacts to bring many stakeholders together.

What would a coordination structure be based upon? Of the many facets of CH, we decided upon research, but even that is a broad canvas. The objectives would be: knowledge production in a societal context; producing outputs that can be assessed and measured; having a significant reach, including engagement with the general public; and establishing a platform that fundamentally supports and enhances academic research. This can only be achieved through partnerships of all kinds and descriptions. A sustainable legacy of the REACH project is that this objective has been defined and that conversations are ongoing. I remain committed to sustaining this work and creating a platform that is beneficial for the sector.”



8. CONCLUSION

The REACH project was intricately designed to provide a flow of activity, with activities building upon prior tasks and then feeding into the work of others. Although this model was followed during the three-year period, inevitably the reality of delivery brings additional and unforeseen variables that have led the project to itself demonstrate resilience and adapt to new challenges. Although situations such as the loss of team members and the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic have certainly impacted upon the project's work, it was important to reassess the situation and identify opportunities, adjusting the programme of work to enable the project to optimise its results (in fact, to Plan-Do-Check-Act.)

Each of the participatory pilots built very strong links with their respective communities, and increased the visibility of stakeholders and their day-to-day issues, bringing them together to meet and form mutually beneficial links. On the face of it, pilots working with minority/Roma heritage in Hungary, rural/agrarian heritage in Spain and Italy, the heritage of multiple small towns in Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland, and that of institutions in Germany, would appear to be so very different, but through the project's work in developing and evaluating participatory models, many areas of overlap became apparent and provided opportunities for expertise and advice to be shared.

The time invested in the assessment of projects during the early months proved to be effective, as the conceptual framework established a number of concepts that were subsequently identified within participatory pilot and thematic workshop discussions, as well as the underpinning theme of gender recognition in CH. The main thread that was interwoven throughout the project was resilience, which although possible to interpret in many ways, was clearly beneficial to the project, using the frame of response to disruption, to adapt and bounce back - or indeed forwards - has added an important dimension to REACH findings and recommendations. In addition, the identification and collection of good practices proved to be such a successful task that four times as many records were captured than had originally been anticipated, as (Associate) partners recognised the value of the REACH database as a valuable resource. Through activities and events further cases were identified, leading to the project adding a new task, to explore them in greater depth and ultimately highlight best practice case studies.

As a social platform, the project had the remit to bring together stakeholders from across the CH sector. This was activity that was of real importance to the project team, having seen the effect of projects ending and their findings being lost, and there was determination to prevent this from happening on a recurring basis. The REACH team proactively approached CH stakeholders and networks to share their vision of a coordination structure that would provide a forum for discussion and knowledge exchange, for measurement of results and impact and for mutual support. A successful symposium was held in Brussels, with feedback refined and submitted to the Commission. Further meetings and a collective online video call in late 2020 once again demonstrated the desire for CH stakeholders to be able to share ideas and represent the sector with a strong single voice.

At the conclusion of the REACH project, it is possible to see how project tasks have interlinked, and how theoretical concepts were formulated and tested in real situations. The project has documented its breadth of experience, provided a valuable set of good practice cases, as well as recommendations for resilience and participatory practices, and has shared these results with its network via two websites, a blog and its social media channels. It can therefore be said with confidence that the REACH project has achieved its objectives and leaves behind a legacy of strong results for others to utilise.



APPENDIX: DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CH	Cultural Heritage
COVUNI	Coventry University – REACH partner
CUNI	Charles University (Univerzita Karlova) – REACH partner
CZE	Czech Republic
ECOVAST	The European Council for the Village and Small Town
ELTE	Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem University – REACH partner
EU	European Union
HdG	Haus der Geschichte House of History
GLAM	Galleries, Libraries and Museums
H2020	Horizon 2020 programme
ICCA	Indigenous and Conserved Communities Association
ICH	Intangible Cultural Heritage
ICOM	International Council of Museums
IFM	Industry- and Film Museum (Industrie-und Filmmuseum)
ISL	Museum for Islamic Art (Museum für Islamische Kunst)
IP	Intellectual Property
MA	Master of Arts
MEMOLA	Mediterranean Mountainous Landscapes: an historical approach to cultural heritage based on traditional agro-systems
MISE	Ministero dello sviluppo economico – REACH partner
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PDCA	Plan-Do-Check-Act
POL	Poland
Promoter	Promoter S.r.l – REACH partner
SSH	Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
SPK	Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz – REACH partner
SVK	Slovakia
UGR	University of Granada (Universidad de Granada) – REACH partner
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization