



**CULTURE
LABS**

RECIPES FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

2021

Cultural Heritage for Social Innovation and Migrant Inclusion

Policy paper

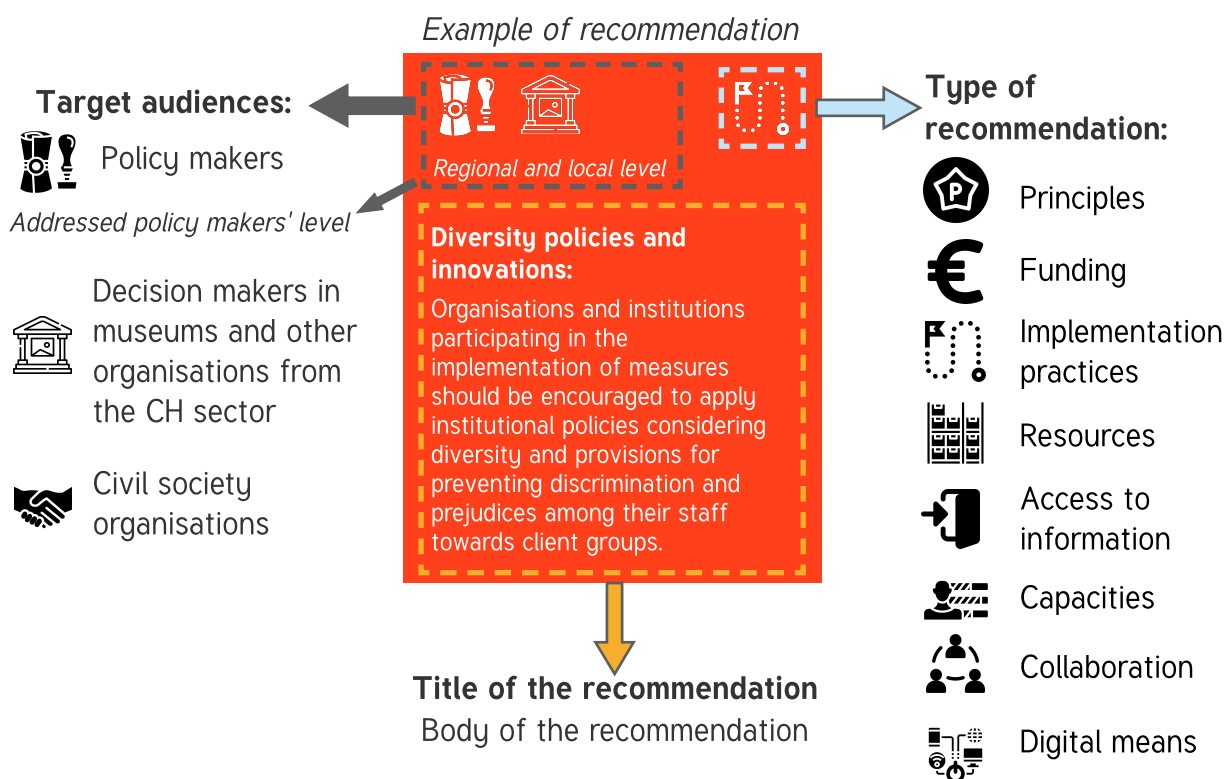
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Abbreviations

CH	Cultural Heritage	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	OMC	Open Method of Coordination (EU)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	UN	United Nations

Introduction

Cultural Heritage (CH) and related participatory cultural activities have the potential to foster social cohesion and innovation in highly diverse societies. This policy paper presents a set of recommendations to policy makers to mobilise this potential. The recommendations are based on the findings of the research and piloting actions of the EU-funded Horizon2020 Research and Innovation project CultureLabs. More details on the findings of CultureLabs can be found on the project website (<https://www.culture-labs.eu>).

The policy paper aims to foster active involvement in Cultural Heritage activities and co-creation with hitherto under-represented or disadvantaged groups to **strengthen social inclusion and social cohesion**. Cultural Heritage and cultural activities have the potential to enhance better mutual understanding, civic engagement and networking, thus contributing to representation and interaction across communities, and promoting self-identification as members of a local, regional, national and European society. The main target groups considered in this policy paper are migrant and refugees' communities, but many observations and recommendations made herein are also relevant to other communities that are at the risk of marginalisation or disconnection from institutional cultural heritage structures. Engagement in Cultural Heritage is not only seen as a means for empowering communities and marginalised groups via participation and co-creation, but also as a vehicle to transform institutions, improve their diversity and inclusion competencies, and ultimately strengthen their social role.

The aim to build bridges between migrants or refugees and cultural heritage institutions should be seen as part of modern integration policies striving to address the barriers that may hinder social participation, social mobility and identification (by oneself and by others) of people with a migrant background. Participation in cultural heritage activities provides **opportunities for migrants and refugees** to learn, widen their social circles, express their views, and to become visible as active contributors and producers of culture, rather than being seen primarily as a deprived part of the population, or the source of societal problems. The nexus of cultural and integration policies also offers opportunities for social innovation by enhancing a wider audience through majority populations which increases the potential of diverse societies for cohesion and prosperity.

Within this framework, the briefings and recommendations in this policy paper provide a basis for realising participatory activities in cultural and integration policy. Their aim is to **help policy makers and organisations** by providing knowledge, criteria and ideas to support decision-making and the design measures for much debated issues in the field of social innovation and societal change. They are also meant as support for informed decision-making on the allocation of scarce resources and the effective use of existing tools in an increasingly complex social setting in Europe and in the Member States, rendering benefits for the entire society.

European policy framework

CultureLabs is rooted in the 2nd priority of the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 of the Council of the European Union, “Cohesion and well-being”, which states:



“Access to culture and participation in cultural life promote individual empowerment, democratic consciousness and social cohesion through exchanges with other people and civic engagement. (...) A stronger orientation towards the interests and needs of specific groups, such as young people, older people, people with disabilities, people with a migrant background and people living in poverty or material deprivation, is necessary. Digital technologies are an asset for audience development and innovative methods of participation. Cross-sectoral cooperation with other areas, such as education, social care, healthcare, science and technology, and regional and urban development, has a significant effect on cohesion and well-being^[1]” .

The subjects of the current Work Plan for Culture have been preceded by years of policy work at the European level, aiming to acknowledge, strengthen and reshape the social and economic role of the cultural sector and cultural heritage in society. Since the Council of Europe’s Faro Convention^[2] of 2005, holistic approaches centred on individuals and communities^[3], participatory governance of cultural heritage^[4], interdisciplinary work in heritage management, promoting heritage as a meeting place and vehicle for intercultural dialogue, peace and tolerance, and encouraging and assessing citizen participation practices and procedures^[5] have increased in importance. These principles culminated in the introduction of the European Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century by the Council of Europe in 2017.

The European Commission’s New European Agenda for Culture (2018) emphasises that culture is an ideal means of communicating across language barriers, empowering people and facilitating social cohesion, including among others refugees, other migrants and host populations^[6] and seeks to **create and strengthen links between culture and education, social affairs, urban policy, research and innovation^[7]**. Building on the experiences of the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018, the European Commission released the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage, which “*promotes and puts into practice an integrated and participatory approach to cultural heritage, and contributes to the mainstreaming of cultural heritage across EU policies^[8]*”.

Cultural Heritage and participation in the cultural life of a community constitute an important dimension for the public life of a society as a whole: As the EU Open Method of Coordination working group on intercultural dialogue in the context of the migratory and refugee crisis stated, cultural policy should foster trans-sectoral coordination at transnational, national and local levels, boosting cooperation among different government departments^[9].



Intended audience of this policy paper

The recommendations provided by the policy paper are applicable to initiatives which seek to involve both the under-represented or excluded communities such as migrants and refugees as well as the majority population, in their response to increased plurality and diversity. Both are considered participants in and co-creators of cultural activities on the one hand and recipients and responsive audiences on the other.

The intended audience of the policy paper includes:

 <p>Policy makers at the EU, national, regional and local level who wish to promote more efficient and effective implementation of participatory approaches for social innovation through Cultural Heritage and participative cultural work.</p>	 <p>Decision makers in museums and other organisations from the Cultural Heritage sector who wish to assume a socially active role and engage with communities and marginalised communities such as migrants and refugees in particular.</p>	 <p>Civil society organisations which look to incorporate cultural and artistic activities in their work. Some of the observations and recommendations made herein may also prove helpful for academic and educational institutions.</p>
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Empirical basis for this policy paper

This policy paper is based on a series of research and pilot activities in relation to participatory cultural heritage practices conducted by the CultureLabs project (2018-21). An extensive needs analysis, conducted through a series of surveys and indepth interviews, identified the perspectives, challenges and expectations of cultural sector stakeholders, non-governmental organisations, and representatives of migrant and refugee communities^[13] with respect to participatory and collaborative processes in cultural heritage activities. The needs analysis is also supported by literature research on previous and ongoing participatory projects that represent good practices as well as by hands-on experience and data collected from the four CultureLabs pilot projects which involved different migrant communities. The findings of these multi-level activities confirm the potential of cultural heritage knowledge and resources for addressing social and societal issues related to migration. They also found some fundamental challenges at institutional and organisational level calling for certain specific policy interventions.

The paper is organised in five thematic sections, each of which starts with a brief overview on the policy framework (concepts, goals or strategies defined for the key area, primarily at the EU level), elaborates on the identified challenges and relevant issues, and concludes with concrete policy recommendations addressed to policy makers at the EU, national, regional, local or institutional level.





1) Principles for Participation in Cultural Heritage Activities

The guiding principles for involving individuals in participatory activities on Cultural Heritage are rooted in a values-oriented approach based on Human Rights, shaping the relation between human beings, their society and its institutions. Article 27 of the UN Declaration of Universal Human Rights demands that **everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of a community**, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. An EU-wide study by the OMC working group on the role of cultural policy for social inclusion and cohesion concluded in 2017:

“Culture is the medium through which we communicate who we are, what is important to us, what has formed us and what aspects of ourselves we uphold as we move into the future. Identity is often defined in cultural terms, just as otherness is. It is therefore necessary and natural to move into the sphere of culture and the arts when there is a need to get to know the other, with the aim of forming an inclusive society, which can learn how to benefit from diversity^[14]”.

“Cultural rights are an integral part of human rights (...) All persons have therefore the right to express themselves and to create and disseminate their work (...) Freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, equal access to art and to scientific and technological knowledge, including in digital form, and the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of expression and dissemination are the guarantees of cultural diversity^[15]”. The signatories of the quoted UNESCO declaration committed themselves to fostering the exchange of knowledge and best

practices in regard to cultural pluralism with a view to facilitating, in diversified societies, the inclusion and participation of persons and groups from varied cultural backgrounds^[16]. Authentic participation from all societal groups, and absence of structural exclusion are substantial and important desiderata.

These fundamental values and orientations have to be realised among concrete practices implemented by institutions and organisations which are shaped by historical evolution. Contemporary societies have been formed by long-term processes resulting in substantial internal diversity (old-established ethnic minorities, territorial centres and cultural nodes preceding the contemporary nation states, by multiple languages and different tangible or intangible cultural heritages). Traditionally, Cultural Heritage and educational institutions reflected this internal diversity of local hegemonic traditions, but often applied a homogenisation agenda related to nation building processes, contributing to a dominant societal self-identification.

Modern migration around the two world wars, de-colonisation and globalisation processes after WWII changed the demography of most European societies, resulting in increased cultural diversity among their populations. Integration policies emerged at the local level linked to general and specific social policies. Cultural heritage and educational institutions are still struggling to adapt to this new diversity, to include migrants and refugees into their work, and to expand their related competences and practices, despite their high potential for addressing the issues related to culture, cultural diversity, identities and their expression.

Culture - both in its tangible and intangible aspects - is a constituting factor for human beings at the individual as well as on the collective level; it is a central component of most human activities, and entails both, liaising as well as differentiating aspects. Migration processes tend to result in new patterns of exclusion; they create fundamental challenges to the societies' institutions, social cohesion and integration processes. It seems that "Culture" became to a relevant degree both a superficial cure-all remedy for palliating deep-rooted socio-economic problems^[17] as well as a cause of trouble and pretext for trivialising complex and multidimensional challenges.

These challenges take effect in the midst of major societal change, competition for resources, housing and employment, and various conflicts within the host society not necessarily related to the migration processes. Under such conditions, "Culture" in its nexus to individual and collective self-identification may become an idealised token, contributing to discourses of group-related hostility against humans. This results in opportunities for political mobilisation gaining from polarisation and conflict escalation.

Such processes may result in a serious impact on politics and on the leeway for sound policy making, striving for the public good and prosperity in a pluralistic and democratic society. A clear rooting in humane values, convincing arguments and good communication are crucial to prevent polarisation. In face of an essentialist misuse of "Culture", alleging cultural differences to be the prime cause for societal problems, a differentiated **concept of Culture linking it to human practices** may be helpful: *Cultural Heritage*, as general repository of past meanings, symbols and cultural traditions manifested also in the dynamic practices of



living heritage; *Cultural Creativity*, as the making of new meanings and symbols through discovery and creative activity in the arts; and, *Cultural Symbols*, as the set of symbolic tools (repertoire of beliefs, practices, understandings, and modes of behaviour) from which individuals construct their ways of living^[18]. All three dimensions of the practices related to aspects of Culture are relevant for formulating and realising values or normative approaches for cultural policies and practices, and especially in increasingly diverse societies with substantial migrant populations. Considering this differentiation, ongoing research on the intersection between cultural policies and integration policies proposes a combination of two approaches: the incorporation of diversity into the mainstream cultural policy and the incorporation of culture into the mainstream integration and diversity policies^[19].

This **intersection between cultural policy and integration policy** - supported by digital technology for communication, information access and organising participatory activities - offers new opportunities for improving the social cohesion and the prosperity of contemporary societies. Via the EU Erasmus programme, a very substantial increase of intercultural awareness and exchange has already been achieved, which contributes to competences for realising a European polity among all EU citizens. Similarly, at the local, regional and national level, promoting intercultural competences among mainstream institutions as well as inclusive practices involving resident groups with different cultural backgrounds offer an opportunity for rendering relevant contributions to conflict prevention and to the prosperity of plural societies.



Policy recommendations

  <p><i>EU and national level</i></p> <p>Guiding principles for cultural policies and for considering cultural activities in integration policies:</p> <p>Communication about and guidelines for programs or funding schemes should consider the various dimensions of cultural activities, the active participation of hitherto under-represented groups, the potential contribution of cultural policy applying participatory approaches to promoting social cohesion and integration, and should encourage intersectional networking across institutions. Programs should be shaped as general measures considering diversity, and should be specific to groups only in case of imminent specific necessities.</p>	  <p><i>EU and national level</i></p> <p>Legitimation and political support:</p> <p>Measures and projects should be supported by political statements providing orientation; political support is of prime importance. Communications by policy makers should focus on the benefit for the society as a whole. They should anticipate allegations as providing inept benefits for migrants and refugees, and dispute them by convincing arguments based on human rights and their importance for the common well-being. They should take a clear stance in rejecting exclusion and discrimination, and point out the circumstances of life among the addressed communities from their perspective as human beings, without moralising or delegitimising soundly founded concerns.</p>	  <p><i>EU and national level</i></p> <p>Appropriate tools and methods:</p> <p>Means, methods and resources of projects to be funded should be soundly assessed. The approaches and activities should be chosen and designed via co-creation processes and based on the needs and preferences of the participants. Mixed-method approaches should be preferred, and the appropriateness of envisioned tools for the specific context should be considered carefully, in particular if they may potentially create an exclusion (i.e. by overly reliance on digital tools and virtual interactions).</p>
    <p><i>Regional and local level</i></p> <p>Communication and transparency:</p> <p>Programs should be communicated in a transparent manner; their purpose, expected results and benefits for the general population should be explained, their activities and results communicated at the community and regional level. Framing should focus on the participants' competences and capacities instead of deficit-oriented or paternalistic discourses.</p>	   <p><i>Regional and local level</i></p> <p>Diversity policies and innovations:</p> <p>Organisations and institutions participating in the implementation of measures should be encouraged to apply institutional policies considering diversity and provisions for preventing discrimination and prejudices among their staff towards client groups.</p>	



2) Resources for Participatory Cultural Activities

Lack of economic, material and human resources is a challenge faced by most cultural heritage organisations and community associations involved in participatory projects. Commitment to community engagement is a demanding process that requires sustainable funding and careful planning of resource allocation in accordance with local needs. Participatory work by cultural heritage organisations calls for new types of job positions, redefining the roles of the existing staff as well as rethinking how material and financial resources are distributed to support cross-sector collaborations and public participation. **Innovative methods and means in a participatory-oriented context**, such as appropriate evaluation practices or extended use of digital means, require considerable investments.

Building and maintaining relationships with communities based upon trust, especially with disadvantaged communities such as migrants and refugees, requires significant efforts and staff resources, which most organisations cannot afford from their regular budget. Restricted resources and dependence on short-term project funding often leaves participatory approaches being treated as isolated one-time interventions rather than continuous processes that can lead to prolonged partnerships with community partners and become an integral part of organisational strategies. **This short-termism, often coming at the cost of sustainability and legacy impact, may also become a cause of disillusionment among both organisations' staff and community members, as confirmed by some studies^[20]**. Currently, the end of projects' funding periods often results in abandoning achieved results at a point where they actually work well and have achieved integration into the cultural



landscape. Unless appropriate resources are planned for and funded, ongoing effective participatory activities cannot be maintained and their legacy is often lost.

Participatory work and collaboration with other organisations also requires considerable commitment and effort from Civil Society Organisations (CSO), migrant associations and grassroots actors, which often exceeds their capacities and resources, and this can hinder the development of mid and long term cooperation structures. This is a serious challenge in particular for actors relying on volunteer work and for NGOs working with migrants and disadvantaged groups, as they are usually occupied by providing urgent support and social services for their beneficiaries at several fronts (e.g. health, housing, education).

Small actors from the civil society and community associations in particular find it difficult to ensure funding for getting involved in cultural-oriented projects, either because they are considered not competent or professionalised enough or because they are not well versed in existing funding schemes and the required application procedures. This is even more true for migrant associations, which can play a significant role in increasing the participation in cultural heritage activities and processes of social innovation among migrant communities. As the potential of new actors to professionalise and to contribute remains untapped, the creation of novel ideas and networks is hindered.

Grassroot level organisations, and particularly migrant associations, often lack access to facilities for their cultural activities (e.g. exhibition spaces, halls, meeting venues), a problem present in most local contexts, particularly in rural areas. As a result, migrants and their communities' cultural heritage often lack visibility although they form a significant part of the resident population. The lack of visibility is even more relevant for migrants living in remote areas, refugee camps, or being engaged in seasonal work.

A particular fund-raising difficulty for participatory projects is connected with the dynamic character of such projects. In-depth planning of activities and budget for project proposals may conflict with a participatory and co-creation approach, in particular regarding citizen engagement which requires flexibility and collaborative planning. **For realising participatory projects, often rather unconventional resources are necessary for mobilising participation.** Their details become understandable only through physical engagement with the participants (e.g. side programmes for children allowing women from migrant community families to engage, support for public transportation costs).

The resources for the approaches to **social innovation in cultural heritage activities can be considered as investments in capacity building** of the region by stakeholders. This holds particularly true for cities which are competing for achieving prosperity. According to a joint Council of Europe and European Commission project report, *“one of the defining factors that will determine, over coming years, which cities flourish and which decline will be the extent to which they allow their diversity to be their asset, or their handicap^[21]”*.



Policy recommendations



EU, national, regional and local level

Support for long-term collaborations:

Funding elements should give more focus on the establishment of long-term equitable partnerships between cultural institutions, civil society organisations, local authorities and community associations. Support for long-term partnerships can come in different forms, from providing free access to certain facilities up to service level agreements, potentially leading to new organisational and partnership models based on shared authority and tasks. Funding should also be provided to continue effective ongoing project activities with an emphasis on developing sustainability strategies for the future.



EU, national, regional and local level

Funds investing in organisational change and in the development of capacities:

There should be investment in support for structural changes and the development of new capacities in CH institutions, enabling them to connect with communities, such as creating staff positions dedicated to broker relationships with the civil society and engage with communities. This may also be supported by staff appointed by local authorities, who can coordinate and facilitate the collaboration between organisations and communities at the local level. Resources should also be allocated for the skills enhancement, implementation of assessment practices and for adoption of new technologies by the staff.



EU, national, regional and local level

Providing low-threshold funding for migrant communities and migrants associations:

Means, methods and resources of projects to be funded should be soundly assessed. The approaches and activities should be chosen and designed via co-creation processes and based on the needs and preferences of the participants. Mixed-method approaches should be preferred, and the appropriateness of envisioned tools for the specific context should be considered carefully, in particular if they may potentially create an exclusion (i.e. by overly reliance on digital tools and virtual interactions).



EU, national, regional and local level

Flexibility in funding provisions:

Innovative participatory processes grounded on genuine and cross-sectoral collaboration require flexible funding and provisions that allow organisations to easily make adjustments so as to respond to the needs of their target groups and to enable their participation. This often includes services that may not be typical in the cultural sector, such as side activities for children of participating mothers or recruitment of community members as facilitators.



Local and regional level

Supporting and promoting the sharing of material resources:

Shared spaces such as exhibition spaces, show and meeting venues as well as other material resources (e.g. devices, furniture) should be made available for use by local organisations and grassroots community initiatives, including migrant associations. Local governments should provide access to such facilities via their regular cultural and integration policy activities. They can also support the creation of pools of shared spaces and resources in which local organisations can both contribute to and rely upon with an equitable booking system.





3) Staff Competences

Findings from the CultureLabs project indicate that organisations involved in participatory projects need to gain a better understanding of the needs, motivations and expectations of the addressed communities and the vulnerable groups among them (women, children, persons with various language competences or educational needs), as well as to increase the intercultural competences of their own staff. Lack of intercultural skills also affects the quality of collaboration between the CH institutions and the migrant associations, which may experience inappropriate or even racist attitudes from their collaborators. In participatory projects, lack of intercultural and social competences among the staff risks wrong assumptions about communities' needs and perspectives, impedes the building of trustful relationships and inclusive group dynamics, and encumbers constructive and effective communication processes.

Being able to support intercultural dialogue and to promote peace and tolerance across communities requires professionals with inclusion-oriented skills, such as respect for diversity, as well as with consideration of ethical aspects and of potential risks for the participants. Participatory processes call for professionals who can demonstrate listening skills, empathy and creativity in order to attract and broaden the audience of the cultural institutions and to encourage new target groups to become actively involved^[22].

Yet, the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) working group report stated in 2019 that the “*training for heritage professionals tends to be insufficient, too theoretical, not interdisciplinary enough and often low quality*”, that there is a “*poor representation of social diversity in heritage organisations*”, and that “*communities are not always involved in an effective and consistent way*”^[23]. The 2018 OMC working group report on participatory governance of cultural heritage stated that “*staff in CH institutions will need substantial training to be able to implement a participatory approach*”^[24].

Expanding the intercultural competences and capacities among the staff members involved in participatory CH activities is also very likely to strengthen the quality of activities serving the general public.

Public and private institutions active in social policies still lack staff members with expertise in intercultural communication, awareness and knowledge about migrants' and migrant communities' needs, as well as legal and administrative provisions considering migrants. Often they are not aware of the role of cultural activities for inclusion and social cohesion. In many cases, they lack knowledge of and access to resources in their local and regional settings for managing diversity and the specific challenges associated with the socio-economic situations of migrant communities (e.g. translator pools, counselling services, trauma centres, educational institutions with specific competences for migrant families and children, networks of professionals on migrants' integration). Access to such services can provide significant support for participatory processes in the cultural heritage sector.

Last, but not least, the use of digital tools also requires training in order to develop novel, innovative approaches for CH activities. As Europeana Foundation et al. recently pointed out, despite the quick response to the COVID-19 crisis from the CH institutions by adopting new methods, there is a need to expand the digital skills and capacities of their staff to be better prepared for digital participation and engagement practices^[26].

Policy recommendations

 <p><i>EU and national level</i></p> <p>Initiating and supporting coordination among inventories of existing competences at the regional and local level:</p> <p>R&I projects should be funded to develop concepts and IT tools for building up and maintaining documentations of regional and local networks, resources and relevant expertise. The development should consider experiences from existing initiatives (i.e. the Integrationskompass in Hessia^[27]), create data structures and thesauri for a cross-regional and -sectoral compatibility, multilingual and automatic translation support, and provide communication infrastructure for stakeholders and practitioners across different levels.</p>	 <p><i>Regional and local level</i></p> <p>Tapping into the regional networks and resources, creating an inventory of existing competences:</p> <p>Regional and local networks, resources of institutional expertise as well as available experts proficient in dealing with specific challenges (i.e. trauma victims, prevention of discrimination, intercultural communication, crisis intervention) should be documented in a structured and easily accessible manner by creating an inventory of existing competences. The database should be made openly available and should be frequently updated.</p>	 <p><i>Regional and local level</i></p> <p>Collaboration between organisations across sectors should be encouraged. The understanding of the benefits of the CH activities should be promoted especially within the social sector. Opportunities to convene and support multidisciplinary teams to work together in a social inclusion context should be promoted. The involvement of migrants' associations in cultural projects should be supported since their active members are usually well connected and respected in the community, being thus able to mobilise participation of individual community members. Collaboration between more established institutions, migrants associations and grassroots organisations is expected to contribute to the capacity of smaller organisations to implement projects in the future (e.g. capacity to handle the bureaucracy related to funding).</p>
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EU and national level

Development of online training modules across sectors:

Professional cultures across the sectors of culture, public administration and civil society differ strongly. To engage in effective cooperation for social innovation, interested individuals from these sectors need concepts, arguments and knowledge which come from different disciplines (from cultural and social studies to ICT and management). Relevant training and information resources across these sectors should be compiled by independent expertise and a low threshold offer for committed professionals and citizens should be provided. The development and maintenance of comprehensive online modules on social innovation methods and practices which involve complementary expert knowledge, different viewpoints, and exchange of practical experiences, should be funded.



Regional and local level

Diversity policies for mainstream institutions:

The diversity of the local and regional population should be reflected by hiring practices through appropriate job announcements and acquisition of services; if necessary, applying quota should be considered in case of similar qualifications. Staff members with migration experience should not be assigned to deal only with migrants as clients but should be assigned to general services. Internal training and promotion practices should be colour-blind.



Regional and local level

Training and skills enhancement

in the cultural sector – but also of social workers and social policy middle managers – on intercultural skills, diversity, ethics and participatory as well as co-creation practices and digital skills, should be promoted and systematically implemented. Available internal programmes for institutions' staff should be broadened and opened for cooperating institutions and external stakeholders. Open access e-learning modules can support that. For the cultural heritage sector, dedicated programmes focusing on issues of decolonising the museums and on the cultural heritage of migrant communities should be offered.



4) Assessment of Participatory Projects

Over recent years, there has been an increasing attention to policies and frameworks dealing with the evaluation of actions in the cultural heritage sector, with a special interest in the assessment of the social impact and value. **The evaluation of participatory projects is particularly helpful for highlighting the targeted and needs-based activities addressing communities**, for developing new evidence-based strategies and activities, and for creating information supporting dissemination. These processes also provide information and criteria for sound decision-making by the policy makers as well as supporting them in communicating good practices. Despite these known benefits, unless an evaluation is requested by the funding body - which is often the case based on the analysis of an OMC group on intercultural dialogue in the context of the migratory and refugee crisis^[10], - the evaluation or impact assessment tends to be neglected or is not sufficiently implemented.

Recommendations and observations on the need for improved evaluation practices in the participatory and intercultural CH projects have been emphasised by the Open Method of Coordination working groups on participatory governance of cultural heritage^[25], on the role of arts in promoting diversity and intercultural dialogue^[28], and on intercultural dialogue in the context of the migratory and refugee crisis^[12]. Following their observations that the current evaluation practices mostly focus on the direct output of the projects or on quantitative indicators, and that the policy makers lack sufficient understanding of the broader benefits of the actions, an OMC working group on intercultural dialogue in the context of migratory and refugee crisis^[10], has suggested that *“more effort needs to be made to develop and/or better communicate methodology to assess the impact of intercultural dialogue projects through culture and the arts.”* **One of the main deficiencies of the**



evaluation practices of the projects is their focus on outputs, instead of outcomes which reflect relevant changes occurred^[11]. Lack of information on past participatory projects and the need for appropriate evaluation and data collection tools have been identified as challenges also by the organisations in the surveys conducted by CultureLabs.

The use of both quantitative and qualitative indicators, as well as measuring both short-term and long-term impact, is important for participatory projects to understand the factors for the effectiveness of processes. Various approaches to assessing the impact of cultural heritage activities taking into account also multilevel impacts have been presented by different initiatives, among them the Europeana Impact Playbook^[29], The Museums Change Lives Initiative by the Museums Association (UK)^[30], and the Happy Museum Project^[31] funded by the Art Council England. Their frameworks provide methodologies based on program evaluation, an established approach in the social policies^[32], which focuses on processes, outcomes and long-term impact of the programmes (i.e. the Toolkit for Museums of the Museum Association^[33]). These methodologies are especially useful for measuring the outcomes of processes that involve complex interactions and external factors that complicate the measurement of the direct impact of the activities. **Such evaluation supports the implementation of participatory projects in the form of regular monitoring activities, giving feedback for steering, and has the potential to render a significant contribution to the measure's success.** At the same time, the documentation and analysis produced in the process can contribute to communicating the project and to the dissemination of good practices.

Assessment approaches limited to a straightforward evaluation of projects' efficiency in producing outputs (direct activities and products) have only little informative value for assessing the complex transformative impact of social innovation projects. The adoption of established methods borrowed from programme evaluation approaches^[32] can offer deeper and less biased insights about the impact of such projects. Programme evaluation is based on a clear definition of the problems and needs to be addressed, a reflection about the assumptions on how the programme should have a desired effect (program theory), and on considerations about indicators for monitoring processes and desired outcomes.

However, when implementing the evaluation frameworks, it is important to maintain the flexibility of the approaches and to allow for diverse methods to be used to cover the needs of different target groups, objectives and methodologies of the participatory projects. A too strict framework - in particular when it focuses primarily on quantitative outputs - may end up in being a burden for the implementers rather than a tool supporting the project's progress and its successful outcome. Process-based participatory projects require especially flexible approaches to monitoring and evaluation, as the objectives and focus of the project may change during the implementation.

Being able to develop systematic evaluations requires significant resources as well as capacities and skills, even when the process is pragmatically implemented into the project's progress. There is a need for practical support about designing and implementing evaluation for the institutions, especially in the initial stages.



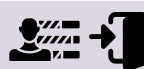
Policy recommendations



EU and national level

Access to Information:

Organisations should be informed about the benefits of a well tailored evaluation and documentation and how its results can render valuable inputs for steering participatory projects, for revising organisational strategies and for dissemination purposes. Open access platforms with information about appropriate monitoring and evaluation methods for assessing the dimensions of social impact and how they are used in different circumstances and for different target groups should be provided, in order to promote sharing of experiences and to increase the visibility of results. Organisations should be encouraged to make their evaluation reports and the documentations of activities openly accessible. Training, workshops, informative lectures, peer-support communities and consultations by evaluation experts are recommended for supporting the CH community.



EU and national level

Development of frameworks, methods and tools for evaluation, impact assessment and monitoring:

Approaches for assessing the impact and social outcomes of the social innovation projects in the field of cultural heritage should be developed via cross-sectoral collaboration. Particular consideration should be given to participatory methods tailored to different target groups and to formulating relevant indicators. Evaluation approaches should not focus solely on outputs and products, but provide methods for assessing the process and outcomes and being flexible (e.g. by providing toolbox modules).



EU and national level

Support by evaluation and impact strategy consultants:

In their efforts to promote the design and implementation of evaluations, cultural heritage institutions would benefit from professional support and having an external and objective perspective on identifying the social impact and its elements in the participatory process. The EU or national level administrations should support a programme through which the organisations could get case by case support from a consultant with experience in the field during their initial steps and the learning phase or to conduct external evaluations. Institutions should receive practical support in using available frameworks.



EU and national level

Support through dedicated budget allocation:

Organisations should be encouraged and incentivised to conduct evaluation, systematic monitoring, and documentation of their projects. To this end, funding and support programmes should provide designated funding elements and foresee that special efforts and resources need to be invested in relevant evaluation activities.



Regional and local level

Improve the connections between academic institutions and actors from the cultural and civil society sectors:

Research institutions working on topics of diversity, integration policy and social cohesion have a growing interest to investigate in practice the processes and results of applying cultural activities in integration policy measures. More efficient networking with local actors, synergies between academic institutions and cultural heritage institutions can lead to the adoption of research-informed methods for evaluation for the mutual benefit of academia and the cultural and civil society sectors.



5) Digitalisation, Inclusion and Diversity

The development of digital services as well as open access to information and resources in the field of cultural heritage offers significant opportunities for the institutions and potential for democratization, participation, engagement, and inclusion. However, it is also crucial to address the digital divide and the exclusion the technology and the practices for digital engagement potentially create for certain social groups, such as communities of migrants, which may lack the capacity, skills and access to equipment to use the new services and resources. **Acquiring digital skills and access to ICT is also important for labour market inclusion, accessing public services, citizen's engagement and for acting in the daily life of today's global society in general.** Digital Cultural heritage content and opportunities to contribute to it provide individuals and groups with practical experiences in using technology.

The digital shift is evident in the cultural heritage sector; a large variety of material and services (e.g. collections, exhibitions, archives, library services, open access exhibition platforms) have been made available for the general public through databases, repositories and other digital platforms (e.g. Europeana and several national level and institution level initiatives) on the Internet, with the aim to improve the accessibility and usability of CH. The important role of digital cultural heritage has been addressed by the Commission's Recommendation (2011) on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation^[34]. The open consultation process concerning the Recommendation in 2020^[35] confirmed that in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic the organisations consider the use of digital technology important for their resilience. The European Expert Network on Culture and Audiovisual (EENCA) stated in its study (2020) that the EU and the Member States "*should intensify their actions to help cultural heritage institutions*



to address the challenges and seize the opportunities of the digital era^[36]". Digitalisation is also considered an important horizontal issue in the Work Plan for Culture 2019–2022 by the Council of the European Union^[1].

While current studies provide a good overview on the issues of access to digital culture across the Member States^[37], **the barriers faced by migrants have not been examined in particular**. Accessibility has been addressed at EU level by the Web Accessibility Directive (2018)^[38] focusing on improvements for disabled persons in accessing websites and mobile applications, part of it being also relevant for other marginalised groups (e.g. with respect to the use of clear language).

In the context of participatory approaches, the use of digital communication tools, such as messaging applications and video calls, is an important aspect of engagement in addition to the use of the cultural heritage-specific platforms and tools. During the COVID-19 pandemic, as efforts have been made to transform face-to-face participatory activities around heritage to online formats, the exclusion of groups who lack digital skills or access to the right technology has become even more acute.

The OMC group on promoting access to digital cultural heritage via digital means stated that *"often when offering cultural content, the institutions do not think of it from a user-orientated perspective, with a clear understanding of a user's needs"*^[39]. In order to overcome exclusion resulting from the digital shift, the content of the digital services and repositories on cultural heritage should be reconsidered to accommodate for diversity and inclusion. While the skills and capacity of migrants to operate in the digital environments and services significantly affects their access to digital cultural heritage, they often also face the risk of exclusion due to content that reflects discriminating and colonialist structures, or, in the case of interactional formats, such as social media sites, content that involves outright hate speech. **Proactive prevention against discrimination and hate speech and awareness of this by institutions and participants is necessary** to make use of the opportunities provided by social media and other interactive platforms on the Internet.

In order to make the less privileged groups in society visible and to enhance their representation, more inclusive selection criteria for the objects and documents to be digitised and made available need to be considered and the priorities set by the institutions in their strategies have to be revised.

While diversity is gaining more focus in the strategies of cultural heritage institutions, the development of participatory strategies for the digitisation of collections parts which are relevant to minorities should receive more attention. As migrant communities are transnational, the digitisation and availability of collections on migrants' cultural heritage may have special value for them. As the Europeana Foundation et al. has stated, *"aggregating collections at the European level can provide key added value, for example by enabling diaspora communities to have a more comprehensive view on their heritage and for that heritage to be more widely shared"*^[25].



Policy recommendations

  <p><i>EU, national, regional and local level</i></p> <p>Access to and use of digital resources:</p> <p>Digital training environments integrated into the regular integration programs for migrants and other groups at risk of exclusion should be developed. Provisions for expanding accessibility and ensuring affordability for digital technologies and services which address communities' specific needs, should be considered. Public institutions such as libraries and civil society organisations have an important role in supporting digital access. Information about the use and access to digital technology and digital cultural content by the various groups of migrants as well as the digital gap in comparison to the other segments of the population in the Member States should be collected.</p>	  <p><i>EU, national, regional and local level</i></p> <p>Integration of digital skills development in cultural heritage activities:</p> <p>Participatory CH projects provide a variety of opportunities for making use of digital tools or digital approaches (e.g. use of CH repositories, exhibitions or communication tools). The use of digital technology for the purposes of self-expression and creativity may form a positive factor for the motivation of learning digital skills. However, integrating such learning processes - formal or informal - in the cultural heritage activities takes time and resources of the projects, which should be considered in the budgeting and in allocating staff capacities. The use of the available digital CH resources should be enhanced in the integration activities organised by other sectors. Digital participatory initiatives should provide access for the participants to the digital tools and to the internet (e.g. by covering the expenses).</p>	   <p><i>EU, national level</i></p> <p>Development of digitisation strategies and participatory approaches:</p> <p>CH institutions should integrate diversity and inclusion into their strategies and plans for digitisation and data collections policies. Participatory approaches and co-creation with communities should be promoted to identify material to be digitised that is considered relevant by citizens and community members, in particular those currently disconnected from the institutional CH. Community-led initiatives at the national and EU level that aim to re-use institutional digital heritage or digitise and promote their own heritage should be prioritised for funding support. The digital CH of migrants in particular should be made systematically available (e.g. via curated digital exhibitions) in order to raise awareness among broader audiences and to make it accessible for the transnational migrant communities of Europe. Resources should be allocated for metadata creation in multiple (also non-EU) languages or in audio format.</p>
    <p><i>EU, national, regional and local level</i></p> <p>Inclusive design principles for accessibility of digital CH:</p> <p>The use of multiple languages, audio formats and subtitles of audiovisual materials (including the metadata), as well as holistic approaches for considering perspectives of groups and communities excluded from the design processes (e.g. Design Justice^[40]) should be promoted. In addition to the technical aspects of accessibility and design processes should consider the impact of power structures on the representation of communities. The perspectives of the latter should be considered in the presentation of cultural content. Provisions for hate speech prevention and suppression should be made.</p>	   <p><i>Local level</i></p> <p>Use of appropriate platforms:</p> <p>In particular for migrant communities, platforms and tools (e.g. relevant social media channels) that they are already familiar with should be used in order to create awareness and engage the communities. Collaboration with digital mediators, such as bloggers and social media influencers may be helpful in reaching out to the communities.</p>	    <p><i>EU, national, regional and local level</i></p> <p>Providing access through means other than digital:</p> <p>Providing direct means of engagement besides digital approaches is necessary for building and maintaining community relationships and for fostering inclusion. In participatory processes, the use of digital approaches should be needs-driven and not imposed on the communities. Non-digital means of engagement should be developed and maintained to guarantee the access to cultural heritage also for the more vulnerable groups of the society.</p>

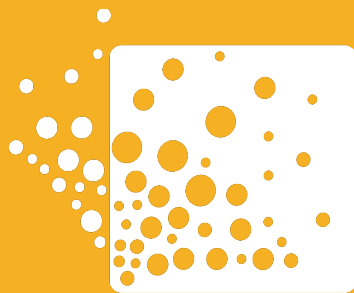
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