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# Training modules

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# Hello! It's time to learn with HIGHRES

Welcome to the HIGHRES training platform.

If you're interested in intangible cultural heritage, community projects in rural areas, new technologies, or sustainable tourism, among other topics, this is the place for you. The HIGHRES project offers you free training to expand your knowledge in these fields.

This training consists of 6 modules developed by the experts who make up the HIGHRES consortium. These modules are designed to be taken sequentially and will guide you through how to carry out projects in rural areas that highlight intangible cultural heritage as a means to create sustainable development in the community, focusing on tourism as one such pathway. To do this, we will take into account a key factor: digital storytelling – that is, telling stories in digital formats.

With all this, we aim to address two challenges present in some rural areas of Europe and around the world: on the one hand, the digital divide, and on the other, the lack of projects and resources for the socioeconomic development of these territories.

## What will you find in the modules of this training?

Each module is made up of 4 essential parts:

- First, you will find the theoretical material where we delve into concepts and ideas. This section is divided into chapters and subchapters.
- The second part focuses on case studies, presenting examples of other projects that are interesting to explore in relation to the topic of the module.
- Next is the evaluation section, which consists of two parts: the first includes self-reflection questions, and the second is a quiz where you can select the correct answer.
- The final part of the module includes the references used in the theoretical section and a list of additional resources, mostly web links, to help you deepen your understanding.

## Who is this training for?

This training is aimed at anyone interested in cultural topics like the ones presented above—whether related to heritage, storytelling, digital technologies, or tourism. Moreover, the training material is designed to be accessible to people with varying levels of knowledge in these subjects, ensuring that everyone can find valuable information.

More specifically, this training will help you implement cultural projects in rural areas. So, if that's your field of work, you'll find the content highly relevant to your needs. Any cultural or social agent working in rural communities can use this content to face the current challenges surrounding rural development.



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# Module 1

IDENTIFICATION AND CATALOGING OF  
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN  
RURAL AREAS



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## MODULE 1: Identification and Cataloging of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Rural Areas

On many occasions, when the word heritage comes up in conversation, the first thing that comes to mind is those historic buildings that, over time, have gained symbolic meaning and cultural value for humanity, places we've often visited and photographed. We also frequently think of works of art, archaeological findings, museums, and other valuable material elements. But sometimes we overlook the expressions, festivals, traditions, or knowledge that also form part of a society's cultural heritage.



*Fig. 1 Bobbin Lace tradition in Peniche, Portugal. Source: HIGHRES Archive.*

This module introduces Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) based on the UNESCO Convention (2003), highlighting its importance for identity and cultural continuity in rural areas. It presents ICH categories, participatory techniques for identification and cataloguing, and ethical principles for its safeguarding. Contemporary challenges are

discussed, along with valorization strategies such as heritage education and community-based tourism. The case study of the Corvo Ecomuseum illustrates the connection between memory, territory, and participation. Finally, it proposes self-assessment tools to foster critical reflection and local empowerment.

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# Introduction

## Abstract

This module invites reflection on the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) present in communities. It highlights the importance of listening to, mapping, and valuing living cultural practices in rural contexts. The aim is to develop practical and critical skills to act as a cultural mediator and mobilizer, recognizing local knowledge and strengthening community bonds.

Have you ever thought about how many types of knowledge, traditions, and cultural practices exist around you — often not easily seen, but essential to a community's identity? This module invites you to explore and reflect on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), which UNESCO recognizes as a shared and ever-changing treasure, passed down from one generation to the next.

The aim is to give you a clear understanding of the main ideas behind ICH, its categories, and why it is important to protect it, especially in rural areas. As you go through the module, you'll find examples, tools, and participatory methods that help identify, record, and appreciate these living cultural practices. You'll also think about real stories from communities that keep their traditions alive — stories that show how territory, memory, and emotional ties shape intangible heritage in daily life.

This module is not just about learning what ICH is. It's also about building practical and thoughtful skills: learning how to listen to communities, identify their knowledge keepers, map their traditions, and understand the ethical responsibilities involved.

By the end of the module, you should feel more ready to act as a listener, mediator, and supporter of living culture — helping to recognize the territory, memories, and voices that keep your community’s intangible heritage alive.



*Fig. 2 Exhibition Dutch Centre of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Source: HIGHRES Archive.*

## 1. Intangible Cultural Heritage

### Abstract

This chapter presents the concept of ICH according to UNESCO, emphasizing practices and knowledge collectively recognized. It stresses that safeguarding goes beyond technical documentation, requiring intergenerational transmission and adaptation. It values the role of listening, dialogue, and collective action in preserving cultural diversity.

Let’s start with a key question: what does your community do, know, or celebrate that should be seen as heritage? Often, things that seem simple — like a traditional recipe, a group song, or a local celebration — have deep cultural meaning.

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) includes “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.” (UNESCO, 2003). This recognition comes from the community itself and is rooted in daily life and a shared sense of identity (Florêncio et al., 2016, p. 16).

Protecting ICH is more than just documenting it. It means keeping it alive, passing it down through generations, and allowing it to grow and change – especially when facing challenges like migration, globalization, or the loss of traditional knowledge (Florêncio et al., 2014). Supporting these cultural practices helps preserve diversity, encourages dialogue between cultures, and strengthens community ties (Council of Europe, 2005).

As Freire (2005, p. 80) said, “no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught, people teach each other, mediated by the world.” This idea also fits with ICH: it is a shared process of listening, respecting, and passing on culture together.

## 2. Types of Intangible Cultural Heritage

### Abstract

This section explores the five main ICH categories outlined by UNESCO: oral traditions, artistic expressions, social practices, knowledge related to nature, and traditional craftsmanship. It highlights how these categories often intertwine in living practices and must be recognized based on community perspectives.

Have you ever noticed how culture shows up in different ways in your community? Some parts are easy to see, like festivals and celebrations. Others are more hidden – found in everyday habits, gestures, knowledge, and words passed down over time. This is what Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) aims to recognize.

The ICH categories aren’t strict or fixed. Instead, they help communities identify what they value in their cultural life. The UNESCO Convention (2003) lists five main areas:

**Oral traditions and expressions**

Stories, songs, proverbs, and legends shared in families or community gatherings, including languages.

**Artistic expressions**

Dance, music, theatre, and other performance traditions.

**Social practices, rituals, and festive events**

Harvest celebrations, weddings, and religious festivals.

**Knowledge and practices related to nature and the universe**

Farming methods, herbal remedies, or ways of reading the weather

**Traditional craftsmanship**

The making of baskets, pottery, fabrics, tools, and musical instruments.

These areas often come together in rich and complex ways. A single festival may include music, dancing, storytelling, and ritual knowledge all at once. These become even more powerful when told through personal stories — like an embroiderer who learned from her grandmother or a fisherman who sings old songs about the tides. Stories help reveal the deeper meaning behind these traditions, bringing emotion and knowledge together.

The aim is not just to fit practices into boxes, but to honor what the community itself sees as meaningful. As Freire (2005) says, teaching begins with listening. Protecting ICH also means listening, respecting, and creating shared meaning together.

## 3. Techniques for Identification and Cataloguing

### Abstract

This section presents participatory methods for mapping and documenting ICH in rural areas, such as interviews, emotional mapping, and collaborative inventories. It advocates for an ethical, context-sensitive approach, prioritizing community involvement and the recognition of local knowledge.

To identify and document Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) together with communities — especially in rural areas, where ICH is closely linked to the land and everyday life — it is important to use methods based on listening, dialogue, and respect for local realities.

Finding ICH is more than just watching; it means recognizing it along with the community. Over time, many helpful methods have been created. Some of the most used techniques are:

- **Open interviews and community dialogue circles** with local people, especially elders and knowledge keepers, to gather life stories, shared memories, and the deeper meanings behind cultural practices. (Florêncio et al., 2016).
- **Emotional mapping and social cartography**, which help show the places where ICH happens — like markets, gardens, trails, churches, ovens, springs, or gathering spaces. (Sou et al., 2022).
- **Shared field diaries and photo/audio documentation**, created with the community's participation, respecting their pace and always getting clear and informed consent. (UNESCO, 2024; EcoHeritage, 2024).
- **Participatory inventories**, which organize the information in forms, descriptions, and stories, using formats like text, video, or audio. These help give visibility to local voices and guide future actions. (Florêncio et al., 2016; Horta et al., 1999).

Cataloguing should respect oral traditions, different languages, and traditional ways of passing down knowledge. Using videos or audio recordings — always with consent — is a powerful way to tell stories, keeping the emotional and sensory richness of ICH alive. More than a technical task, this is a shared journey of recognition and valuing the living cultural memory of a community.



*Fig. 3 Bobbin Lace School in Peniche, Portugal . Source: HIGHRES Archive.*

## 4. Ethics, Cultural Rights, and Intellectual Property

### Abstract

This section addresses the fundamental ethical principles in documenting Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), with an emphasis on informed consent, community agreements, and the promotion of local autonomy. It highlights the importance of protecting collective cultural rights, shared intellectual property, and digital rights in digital environments, and also explores how storytelling, when used ethically and sensitively, can strengthen listening, representation, and the safeguarding of ICH.

Have you ever thought about who we are talking to when we document a cultural practice or an element of Intangible Cultural Heritage? What gives us the right to do this, and how do we take care in doing it?

Documenting cultural practices is not just a technical activity. It's about building relationships — it requires listening, being responsible, and showing respect to the communities that keep these traditions alive. The first and most important step is getting free, prior, and informed consent. Everyone involved should fully understand the purpose of the work and how the material might be used, especially in digital formats.

To support this process, the following steps are recommended:

- **Use consent forms**, either written or oral, for individuals or groups;
- **Create community agreements** that explain how recordings will be used, stored, and accessed — always considering local values, ethics, and the community's decision-making;
- **Get permission** for using people's images and voices, especially for video or audio recordings;
- **Respect collective cultural rights** and shared ownership of the material;
- **Ask for expert guidance** in cases involving legal or ethical questions.

In today's digital world, it's also important to protect the digital rights of communities, letting them control how their knowledge is shared and shown. Guidelines like the **European Directive 2019/790** and the **Faro Convention** (2005) offer important support, aiming for fairness and community empowerment.

Websites like Europeana.eu set a good example, using ethical rules for sharing cultural content. When done with care, documenting ICH becomes a powerful way to honor cultures — giving communities the chance to share their stories with dignity and visibility.

## 5. Valuing ICH and Contemporary Challenges

### Abstract

This chapter discusses how to enhance ICH through education, sustainable tourism, cultural policies, and digital technologies. It highlights challenges such as rural exodus and the breakdown of intergenerational transmission, proposing community-based strategies grounded in dialogue and collective action.

Valuing Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) means more than just recording it — it's about helping communities continue, adapt, and recreate their traditions. As UNESCO (2003) states, ICH “is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history.” To truly support ICH, it should be included in education, sustainable tourism, local cultural planning, and in the responsible use of digital tools that are easy to access.

Today, ICH faces several challenges, such as people leaving rural areas, global cultural trends, the loss of knowledge passed between generations, and the invisibility of traditional practices — especially in rural and marginalized areas. In response, many communities are taking action through initiatives like:

- Running **intergenerational workshops** where elders share their knowledge with young people in schools, cultural spaces, or local events;
- Organizing **community festivals** that mix performances, craft and knowledge fairs, and traditional foods;
- Creating **cultural and eco-tourism routes** that focus on rural practices, oral traditions, and cultural landscapes;
- Building **digital memory banks** with the community to collect stories, songs, skills, and testimonies;
- Promoting **learning activities** based on local ICH to strengthen identity and a sense of belonging.

Digital platforms can help create spaces where communities share their stories — using videos, podcasts, and other formats — turning storytelling into a way to celebrate culture, connect generations, and build resilience. Freire (2005, p. 83) reminds us that “dialogue is indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality.” When applied to ICH, this means truly listening to communities, encouraging their creativity, and supporting public policies that respect their pace, meanings, and ways of life.

## 6. Case Studies

### Abstract

The Ecomuseum of Corvo is an initiative that promotes participatory safeguarding of ICH on the most isolated island of the Azores. It maps local knowledge and organizes community activities, valuing the territory and residents as curators of their own culture, in line with sociomuseology principles.

### Ecomuseum of Corvo (Portugal)

Located on the smallest and most isolated island of the Azores, the Ecomuseum of Corvo is an initiative focused on valuing ICH, born from the desire to preserve and transmit traditional ways of life in the face of depopulation and the pressures of globalization.

The ecomuseum develops participatory inventories, collectively mapping knowledge and practices such as artisanal fishing, bread-making, and oral traditions related to the sea and land cultivation. It also organizes community exhibitions, guided tours, dialogue circles, and environmental actions that strengthen the connection between ICH and the island’s landscape. The activities developed by the Ecomuseum also integrate storytelling as a tool for cultural mediation — residents share their experiences, knowledge, and memories in the first person, strengthening the link between past, present, and future.

It is a museum without walls, where the territory is the collection and the residents are the true curators of their own culture (Ecoheritage, 2024). This perspective aligns with the principles of sociomuseology, which recognizes the museum as a tool for social transformation and community dialogue (Primo & Moutinho, 2020).



*Fig. 4 Casa do Tempo, Ecomuseu do Corvo, Portugal. Source: <https://ecomuseu-corvo.cultura.azores.gov.pt/>*

# SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

## SELF-REFLECTION QUESTION

- 1) What characterizes Intangible Cultural Heritage in your community?
- 2) What living cultural practices exist in your community?
- 3) Who are the knowledge keepers in your locality?
- 4) How could you begin a participatory mapping of local ICH?
- 5) How can the use of stories and narratives strengthen the recognition and appreciation of ICH in your community?
- 6) What ethical considerations should be taken when documenting a tradition?
- 7) What is your community already doing —or what could it do— to preserve its cultural practices?
- 8) How can different generations be involved in recognizing and valuing ICH?
- 9) What local resources (schools, associations, public spaces) can support a participatory inventory?
- 10) How can ICH engage with local challenges (unemployment, migration, loss of identity)?

## SELF-EVALUATION TEST

- 1) When visiting a traditional fair in a rural village, you observe the exchange of old recipes, musical performances, the sale of local crafts, and storytelling. This scene is an example of:
  - a) A leisure event with no heritage relevance.
  - b) Popular folklore disconnected from living culture.
  - c) An expression of Intangible Cultural Heritage, involving multiple categories such as social practices, performing arts, and traditional knowledge.
  - d) A sporadic event with little relevance to ICH inventories.
- 2) A community group decides to start mapping local ICH through dialogue circles with knowledge keepers, emotional mapping, and audiovisual recording with consent. This approach aligns with:

- a) Formal techniques intended exclusively for academic research.
  - b) Participatory methodologies for identifying ICH, based on listening, dialogue, and community empowerment.
  - c) Technical processes led by specialists with no local involvement.
  - d) Archiving for commercial or touristic purposes.
- 3) The territory is the collection and the residents are the true curators of their own culture. This idea, inspired by the Ecomuseum of Corvo, expresses that:**
- a) Curation should be carried out by professional museologists.
  - b) ICH is lived and built collectively, grounded in daily life, community ties, and memory.
  - c) Culture is only preserved when kept intact by formal institutions.
  - d) The traditional museum is more effective in preserving ICH.
- 4) During a workshop, a resident shares knowledge about medicinal plants used by her grandmother. Before recording her on video, the facilitator should:**
- a) Record quickly to avoid missing the content.
  - b) Ask for permission afterward, if needed.
  - c) Clearly explain the purpose of the recording and obtain free, prior, and informed consent.
  - d) Avoid any formality, since it's an oral tradition.
- 5) In a community with significant youth migration, a school proposes workshops with local masters, memory banks, and cultural tourism routes. These actions mainly aim to:**
- a) Replace traditional practices with more modern cultural forms.
  - b) Value and transmit ICH, strengthening intergenerational bonds and promoting community belonging.
  - c) Turn ICH into a centralized tourist attraction.
  - d) Preserve knowledge solely in institutional archives.

**Solutions**

- 1) C
- 2) B
- 3) B
- 4) C
- 5) B

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## Additional Sources

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<https://www.ijih.org/>

<https://www.ichngoforum.org/>



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# Module 2

COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT AND  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



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## Module 2: Collaborative Management and Community Engagement

If you live in a community, you'll know that the relationships among its members are strong bonds essential for healthy coexistence and for achieving common goals that improve life and preserve the community's culture and identity.

This module is all about collaborative management and getting your community involved in heritage projects, especially through ecomuseums and other local initiatives. We'll look at how sharing decision-making and having locals actively participate can really help protect both the physical and cultural sides of heritage in a sustainable way.



*Fig. 1 Community territory exploration at Lis Aganis Ecomuseum (Italy). Source: Lisa Pigozzi*

You'll get a mix of theory and hands-on tools to help you understand what it takes to manage heritage together with communities. By checking out real examples and doing interactive exercises, you'll learn how to support communities in creating and running their own heritage projects. The module shows how local involvement

doesn't just preserve heritage: it can also boost sustainable tourism and help local areas thrive.

Plus, it's made to give rural communities better access to quality education, with flexible online resources that anyone can use.

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# Introduction to Collaborative Management

## Abstract

This chapter introduces the idea of collaborative management in heritage conservation. It explains the main principles and why it's so important, especially for ecomuseums. You'll learn about the different roles played by local governments, NGOs, businesses, and residents when they work together to take care of cultural and natural heritage. We'll pay special attention to ecomuseums, which Maggi (2002) describes as "a pact between a community and its heritage" — a great example of how participatory heritage management works. Plus, we'll look at some official documents that support sustainable heritage management.

Collaborative management means that different people and groups share the responsibility of making decisions and taking care of resources together. Unlike the old-fashioned top-down way, this approach gives local communities the power to really own and protect their heritage, helping it last in the long run. If you think about how you interact with your neighbors or other members of your community, you'll realize that relationships built on horizontal, peer-to-peer connections and a democratic working logic help achieve common goals for the good of the community.

On the other hand, over time, the idea of cultural heritage has grown a lot, and now it needs experts from many fields working together to protect both tangible things (like buildings or artifacts) and intangible ones (like traditions or stories).

A big step forward was the UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy from 2015. It brought sustainability into how we conserve and manage World Heritage sites, making it clear that protecting cultural and natural heritage has to support sustainable development goals, just like the United Nations 2030 Agenda says.

Using this global policy as a guide, no matter what kind of heritage you're managing (tangible or intangible, natural or cultural, local or regional) we'll point out the main ideas to keep in mind for successful heritage management.

Indeed, the UNESCO policy is structured around four key dimensions that could be useful for reflecting about the participatory methodology you want to apply for managing your heritage. These are:

- 1) Inclusive social development: promote the active involvement of local communities in site management, respect human rights and indigenous cultures, and intergenerational equity.
- 2) Sustainable economic development: encouraging economic activities compatible with heritage conservation, including responsible tourism, local craftsmanship, and sustainable agriculture.
- 3) Environmental sustainability: emphasizing the protection of biodiversity, responsible use of natural resources, and resilience to climate change.
- 4) Peace and security: recognizing heritage as a tool for intercultural dialogue, social cohesion, and conflict prevention.



*Fig. 2 Territory exploration at Lis Aganis Ecomuseum, 2021. Source: Lis Aganis.*

This UNESCO policy aims to guide State Parties, site managers, and stakeholders toward an integrated approach in which heritage conservation and sustainable development reinforce one another. Successful examples include partnerships between municipalities and local associations that ensure cultural sites remain active

and relevant to both locals and visitors. Ecomuseums could be a practical example of best practice in this field, as they work engaging local communities in heritage caring and enhancement, involving stakeholders at different levels (local, national or even international).

## 1. Together We Thrive: Community engagement strategies

### Abstract

This chapter is all about getting communities involved in heritage conservation projects. We'll explore hands-on techniques like participatory decision-making, collecting oral histories, and collaborative storytelling, all tools that help people feel connected and actively engaged in protecting their heritage.

Getting your community involved is key to building a strong connection between people and their heritage. Techniques like participatory mapping, workshops, and storytelling help locals share their knowledge and traditions. There are plenty of great examples where ecomuseums, among other initiatives, have used these methods to create lively, ever-changing heritage experiences that benefit both residents and visitors.

In this chapter, we'll look closely at how community engagement helps protect intangible cultural heritage. Using successful ecomuseum examples, we'll focus on practical tools like mapping, storytelling, and workshops that give people the power to document, interpret, and keep their heritage alive. These inclusive approaches build a shared sense of ownership, strengthen community ties, and make sure heritage stays meaningful today. Building on the previous points, it is now time to outline a set of concepts that will lead us into the following sections::

- **Participatory Decision-Making Models:** Techniques for inclusive governance in heritage projects, ensuring community voices shape outcomes.

- Community Mapping and Oral History Projects: Practical methods for documenting local knowledge, landscapes, and traditions through collective memory.
- Engaging Youth, Local Businesses, and Volunteers: Strategies to involve diverse community members in heritage activities, from co-creation to promotion.

## 1.1 Engaging Youth and Volunteers in Heritage Projects

Getting young people and volunteers involved in heritage projects isn't always easy, but it's really important for reaching a wider audience and making sure heritage is preserved for the long term. Engaging young people in heritage management takes creativity and ongoing effort to bridge the gap between generations in the community. Involving youth and volunteers is key to making these projects sustainable and successful. When young people help protect cultural traditions, it helps them feel connected to their community and proud of their local heritage. Here are some actions that can help involve young people in community-led heritage management:

### 1. Heritage workshops

They provide young people with the opportunity to actively participate in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. By engaging in hands-on activities youth gain a deeper understanding of their heritage and become advocates for its conservation. Some ecomuseums use Parish Maps to raise awareness on local heritage.

### 2. Partnerships with schools:

Collaborating with schools helps to integrate a wide idea of heritage that could contribute in raising awareness on local heritage, tangible or intangible. Students can participate in projects such as creating oral histories, mapping local landmarks, or conducting research on community traditions. These partnerships not only educate

youth but also encourage them to take an active role in the preservation of local culture.

### 3. Digital Engagement Campaigns:



*Fig. 3 High school students as heritage guides at Ecomuseo Casilino (Rome, Italy, 2021). Source: Lisa Pigozzi.*

With the rise of digital media, there is an increased use of social platforms to connect with younger audiences. Digital storytelling, virtual tours, and online heritage challenges allow youth to engage with their cultural heritage in innovative ways. These campaigns expand the reach of heritage projects and encourage a global conversation about the value of preserving traditions.

By incorporating these strategies future generations are informed about their heritage but also actively involved in its preservation. Volunteers, especially young people, become the driving force behind a sustainable and dynamic heritage movement. Volunteering is here a way to present different work perspectives to students.

## 2. Participatory Heritage Management for Sustainable Tourism and Local Development

### Abstract

The rise in communication and the wide range of travel options, both between countries and within the same region, have led some places to experience an overwhelming increase in tourism, often with negative effects on the local communities hosting it. But what if we imagined a kind of tourism that doesn't harm the host, but instead becomes part of local life and identity?

This chapter looks at how collaborative management can help create sustainable tourism. It highlights ways to balance welcoming visitors while keeping the community's well-being in mind. You'll also see how getting locals involved makes cultural experiences more authentic and meaningful.

Getting local communities involved in managing their heritage is key to building sustainable tourism and boosting local development. When people have a say in preserving and promoting their cultural and natural assets, the benefits of tourism are shared fairly, and locals play a central role in decisions about their heritage.

Ecomuseums, for example, play a big role by encouraging local businesses, like selling crafts, offering traditional food experiences, and guided tours led by locals. Real-life examples show how these efforts help communities stay economically strong while keeping their culture alive.

### 1. Community Involvement in Decision-Making:

In this approach, communities take an active part in spotting, protecting, and showcasing their heritage. Through local councils, meetings, and workshops, residents can help decide how their heritage is cared for and used. This way, heritage projects truly reflect the community's values, needs, and hopes.

### 2. Heritage as a Tool for Sustainable Tourism:

Tourism thrives when local people feel empowered to manage and explain their heritage. Encouraging responsible tourism that respects traditions and the

environment helps protect the cultural and natural integrity of the area. It also encourages visitors to connect with local culture in a meaningful way, creating a win-win for both tourists and residents.

### 3. Economic Benefits for Local Development:

When communities lead heritage management, they can benefit directly—whether it's through guiding tours, selling crafts, or offering hospitality. This helps build a sustainable local economy, giving communities more independence while keeping their cultural and natural heritage alive for the long haul.

By weaving participatory heritage management into tourism plans, communities become stronger and more resilient. This approach protects cultural heritage and supports a tourism model that's inclusive, sustainable, and beneficial for everyone involved.



*Fig. 4 Territory exploration at Lis Aganis Ecomuseum, 2021. Source: Lis Aganis.*

## 3. Challenges and Solutions in Community-Led Management

### Abstract

Collaborative management comes with lots of benefits, but it's not without its challenges. Issues like conflicting interests, limited funding, and complicated governance can get in the way. This chapter dives into these problems and shares some smart solutions. Some of the biggest hurdles include juggling different stakeholders' expectations, finding steady financial support, and dealing with volunteer burnout. To tackle these, it's important to have clear and open decision-making, explore diverse funding options, and invest in training and capacity-building. We'll also look at lessons from real-world examples around the globe that show how communities have successfully overcome these obstacles.

Community-led heritage management is key to keeping heritage alive and boosting local development. But it's not always easy — there are some common challenges communities face, along with possible solutions:

### 1. Challenge: Lack of Resources

Volunteers help a lot, but long-term funding is essential for sustainability. Partnering with government agencies, NGOs, and international organizations like UNESCO can provide both funding and expertise. Local businesses and tourism operators can also be great allies, creating income streams that support heritage projects.

### 2. Challenge: Conflicts of Interest Within the Community

Heritage projects often involve many people with different priorities, which can cause conflicts. It's important to get everyone involved in decision-making. Holding consultations, community meetings, and workshops helps bring different viewpoints together and makes sure decisions respect everyone's perspective. This open communication can prevent disagreements from turning into bigger problems.

### 3. Challenge: Limited Capacity and Knowledge

Sometimes communities don't have the technical skills or knowledge to manage heritage sites effectively, especially if they're not already involved in recognizing their heritage. While it's tough to include everyone, reaching a wide audience is better for good preservation and sustainable practices. Offering training sessions and workshops can boost community skills. Bringing in experts like conservationists or tourism managers to mentor locals also helps build stronger knowledge and confidence.



*Fig. 5 Heritage identification with high school students at Ecomuseo Casilino, 2021. Source: Lisa Pigozzi.*

#### **4. Challenge: Over-tourism and Commercialization**

Tourism can definitely boost the local economy, but if it's not managed right, it can also harm the cultural heritage by causing overcrowding and making things feel less authentic. That's why sustainable tourism is so important. This means managing visitor numbers carefully, encouraging tourists to come during off-peak times, and making sure the local community gets a fair share of the benefits. Finding the right balance between welcoming visitors and protecting heritage is key.

#### **5. Challenge: Ensuring Long-Term Sustainability**

Keeping community heritage projects alive in the long run takes planning and commitment. Without these, projects can lose steam or even fall apart. Setting up

formal groups like heritage management committees can provide structure and keep things moving forward. It's also important to have clear legal support and build long-term partnerships with organizations or local authorities to make sure the projects last and keep thriving.

While community-led management faces challenges, the solutions lie in fostering cooperation, building local capacity, securing resources, and ensuring that both the local community and the heritage site thrive together. By overcoming these obstacles, communities can take ownership of their cultural heritage and create sustainable, dynamic heritage tourism experiences that benefit all involved.

## 4. Case Studies

### Abstract

In this section, we will look at four local projects—two in Spain and two in the Netherlands—that successfully show how communities engage with initiatives where intangible cultural heritage contributes to both development and the well-being of their members

### 1. Raíces”: Empowering Community Narratives Through Collaborative Art, Spain

*Raíces* is a community research project led by Master's students in Aesthetic Education at the University of Jaén, Spain. It took place in the town of Alcaudete, where local people were invited to share their personal stories, memories, and traditional crafts. Working closely with the Fuente Zaide Neighborhood Association, these stories were collected and turned into a digital documentary that preserves and celebrates the community's intangible cultural heritage. Using participatory art and storytelling, Raíces helped bring people together, gave residents a stronger voice, and boosted local identity. By mixing traditional knowledge with digital tools, the project



*Fig. 6 “Raíces” Project. Source: HIGHRES Good Practices Handbook, <https://highres-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/HIGHRES-handbook.pdf>*

shows how working together can protect cultural heritage. It also highlights how partnerships between universities and communities can build resilience, encourage intergenerational connections, and support sustainable development — all of which can help promote local tourism and economic growth.



*Fig. 7 “Vientos del Tiempo” Project. Source: HIGHRES Good Practices Handbook, <https://highres-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/HIGHRES-handbook.pdf>*

## 2. “Vientos del Tiempo”: Reviving Oral Traditions Through Theatre and Digital Media, Spain

“Vientos del Tiempo” is a cultural project from Torredonjimeno, Spain, that brings local oral traditions and heritage back to life using theatre and digital media. This non-profit group gets the community involved through dramatized storytelling, guided tours, and audiovisual works to keep regional stories, customs, and historical figures alive. By mixing live performances with modern platforms like TV and social media, they make traditional tales fresh and exciting, especially for younger audiences. Some highlights include the “Tiempo de Navidad” series and teaming up with TikTok influencers to spread local history in fun ways. This project not only boosts cultural pride and links between generations but also

helps tourism by making heritage experiences more accessible and engaging. “Vientos del Tiempo” shows how storytelling combined with digital tools can protect intangible heritage while building community spirit and supporting local growth.

### 3. Spotting Intangible Heritage, Netherlands Arnhem

Spotting Intangible Heritage is a cool project run by the Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage, part of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW). Its goal is to get people across the Netherlands more aware of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). They put up QR codes in villages, towns, and cultural spots that visitors can scan to discover digital stories about local traditions and practices. What’s really special is how these stories are made: the Knowledge Center starts with a basic script, but then local communities add their own personal stories and experiences. This teamwork between residents, writers, and media pros makes sure the content feels authentic and engaging. By mixing tech with real community voices, Spotting Intangible Heritage helps bring local culture to life and gets people more connected to where they live.

<https://www.immaterieelerfgoed.nl/en/spotten>



*Fig. 8 Spotting Intangible Heritage Project. Source: Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage webpage, <https://www.immaterieelerfgoed.nl/en/spotten>*

#### 4. The National Holocaust Museum

The National Holocaust Museum takes a hands-on approach by involving Holocaust survivors and their families directly in creating its exhibits. Survivors share their personal stories and experiences, which become a key part of how the museum tells its story. This teamwork helps keep the exhibits authentic and deeply moving, while also honoring the voices of those who lived through the Holocaust. It's a way to make sure the museum's message is respectful, meaningful, and truly connected to real people's lives. <https://jck.nl/en/location/national-Holocaust-museum>



*Fig. 9 The National Holocaust Museum. Source: Photo by Mike Bink, HIGHRES Good Practices Handbook, <https://highres-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/HIGHRES-handbook.pdf>*

# SELF-ASSESSMENTS TOOLS

## SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) Why is collaborative management important for heritage sustainability?
- 2) What are the key challenges of community engagement in heritage projects?
- 3) How can local businesses contribute to sustainable tourism?
- 4) What participatory strategies would you apply to engage youth in a heritage project?
- 5) How does community-led tourism differ from traditional tourism models?
- 6) What governance structures can support effective stakeholder collaboration?

## SELF-EVALUATION TEST

- 1) What is the primary goal of collaborative management?
  - a) Increasing government control
  - b) Promoting mass tourism
  - c) Empowering local communities
  - d) Reducing cultural diversity
- 2) True or False: Sustainable tourism always prioritizes economic growth over cultural preservation.
  - a) True
  - b) False
- 3) Which of the following is not a community engagement strategy?
  - a) Participatory mapping
  - b) Oral history projects
  - c) Excluding local stakeholders from decision-making
  - d) Collaborative storytelling
- 4) What is a major challenge in collaborative management?
  - a) Ensuring all stakeholders have a voice
  - b) Limited financial resources

- c) Governance complexities
- d) All of the above

**5) True or False: Ecomuseums rely on a hierarchical management model.**

- a) True
- b) False

**Solutions**

- 1) C
- 2) B
- 3) C
- 4) D
- 5) B

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UNESCO Training on Collaborative and Integrated Management of Protected and Heritage Landscapes: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/collaborative-management-training/>

Daniel and Nina Carasso Foundation: Committed to the field of civic art, for the development of critical thinking and the strengthening of social cohesion. <https://www.fondationcarasso.org/la-fondation/nos-modes-d-action/>

Framer Framed: Platform for contemporary art, visual culture, and critical theory and practice. <https://framerframed.nl/en/community-learning/>



HIGHRES

# Module 3

PROMOTING A CULTURE OF  
INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY



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## MODULE 3: Promoting a Culture of Innovation and Creativity

When a project is set in motion within a community, ideas begin to flow; questions arise, goals are proposed, and needs emerge. Over time, all these elements start to weave together, connecting in meaningful ways to shape a shared purpose. And then comes that exciting moment: it's time to decide *how* we're going to make it happen, and *what tools* we'll use to bring it to life.



*Fig. 1 Folgarosa vai ao Museu de Arte Popular Portuguesa, Performance e inauguração da obra coletiva de Folgarosa. Source: Gil de Lemos, <https://www.museunaaldeia.pt/obras/folgarosa-vai-ao-museu-de-arte-popular-portuguesa/>*

This module invites you to reflect on how to promote a culture of innovation based on sensitive listening, creativity, and the appreciation of local knowledge. It presents theoretical foundations and practical pathways to foster innovation in both community and institutional contexts, with a focus on creating innovation spaces that are structured, transparent, and participatory. The module addresses collaborative methodologies, participatory management practices, and digital tools such as Padlet, Miro, Trello, and ClickUp, which support the recording and monitoring of ideas. It also

proposes the creation of physical and virtual co-creation spaces, strengthening bonds, a sense of belonging, and collective agency. By the end, you will be invited to imagine and develop innovative actions with your community, respecting the territory, intangible cultural heritage, and collaborative values.

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# Introduction

## Abstract

This module introduces strategies to promote a culture of innovation in rural communities through attentive listening, creativity, and the appreciation of local knowledge. It presents digital tools and participatory methods that can support the process, alongside an inspiring case study. By the end, you are expected to feel motivated to develop innovative and sustainable actions with your community.

How can we work together to solve the challenges in our communities? What tools does the present offer us to work collaboratively and in a horizontal, inclusive way? These are some of the questions we can begin to reflect on as we start Module 3 of this training.

This module invites you to think about how to encourage a culture of innovation and creativity in rural areas by valuing intangible cultural heritage through collaboration, active listening, and trying out new ideas—always connected to the local context and existing institutions.

Inspired by thinkers like Henry Chesbrough (2003), Paulo Freire (2005), René Barbier (1998), Judite Primo, and Mário Moutinho (2021), we look at ways to support joint efforts that make a difference in society and culture. The kind of innovation we focus on grows through participation, open conversation, and respect for different perspectives.

Besides discussing these ideas, this module highlights the need to set up structures that give people autonomy and offer clear paths for involvement and follow-up. Digital platforms such as Padlet, Miro, Trello, and especially ClickUp are introduced as useful tools for planning, developing, and putting ideas into action together.

By the end of the module, we hope you'll feel inspired to imagine and carry out innovative, community-based actions that value and protect local heritage.

# 1. Culture of Innovation and Creativity

## Abstract

In this chapter, we reflect on the concepts and meanings of promoting a culture of innovation in community contexts. Beyond technologies and new trends, innovation arises from attentive listening, experimentation, and the recognition of local knowledge. You will be invited to explore the creative potential within your own community and to understand innovation as a collective, collaborative practice deeply rooted in the territory.

Innovation in our communities goes beyond bringing in new technologies or trends. It starts with truly listening, valuing local knowledge, and building solutions together that are connected to real-life experiences. Inspired by the ideas of Paulo Freire (2014) and René Barbier (1997), innovation means having a dialogue with the land and its people—starting with ethical and empathetic listening as the first step toward change.



*Fig. 2 Co-criacao na aldeia. Processo criativo da obra de Folgarosa. Source: SAMP-11, <https://www.museunaaldeia.pt/obras/folgarosa-vai-ao-museu-de-arte-popular-portuguesa/>*

In this way, a culture of innovation isn't just about inventing something new. It also involves bringing back traditions, rethinking everyday habits, and using different types

of knowledge to face common challenges. Creativity is seen as something we build together over time, supported by spaces that welcome imagination, trying things out, making mistakes, and learning along the way.

Referring to the idea of a Culture of Innovation in museums (Eid & Forstrom, 2021), we see that when environments are open to participation, collaboration, and diversity, they encourage people to get involved and become more flexible. But for innovation to really take shape, it's important to have strong institutional support that helps organize, maintain, and guide these efforts.

That's why setting up an Innovation Department can make a big difference: a team focused on this work, ideally with its own budget and the right tools to promote active listening, manage proposals, and clearly follow the progress of new ideas.

Encouraging a culture of innovation means building trust, recognizing the power of collective creativity, and choosing participatory leadership as a way to bring about positive change—with care, openness, and the courage to start fresh based on real experiences.

## 2. Organizing an Innovative Space in the Community

### Abstract

This chapter invites you to reflect on how to create spaces—physical or digital—that foster the emergence of innovation. More than just infrastructure, these spaces require listening, trust, and inclusion. Strategies will be discussed to transform everyday environments into places for creative and participatory encounters. The proposal to create an Innovation Department within institutions will also be presented, as a way to institutionalize innovative practices and promote structured, collaborative, and sustainable participation.

More than technology or physical structures, the real power of an idea lies in the strength of the relationships that support it. Innovation grows in places — whether face-to-face or online — where people feel listened to, included, and motivated to

create together. These places might be schools, museums, community groups, public squares, or digital networks. If you're someone who is actively involved in your community, you'll know that these practices and spaces for coming together are a common part of everyday life.

Innovation labs, interactive spaces, or online platforms can become hubs for active listening, co-creation, and open conversation. To give these spaces more structure and long-term impact, they can be formally set up as an Innovation Department—with a clear structure, team, budget, goals, and a coordinator responsible for guiding and energizing the process.

This department should be a safe, inclusive, and transparent environment, also welcoming people from outside the institution. Its role is to connect different initiatives and sectors, support shared ideas, and encourage a culture of innovation rooted in listening and shared leadership.

As Henry Chesbrough (2003) points out, good ideas can come from anywhere, as long as the environment is open, collaborative, and inclusive. Creating space for innovation means making sure every voice counts—this is a political choice, a creative effort, and something deeply tied to the place where it happens.

## 2.1 Organizing an Innovative Space in the Community

An Innovation Department helps turn an institution into a more creative, collaborative, and responsive space—one that is truly connected to the needs of the people it serves. This can apply to museums, associations, community groups, networks, or any collective initiative. It encourages participation, organizes ideas, and supports shared solutions to both internal and external challenges.

In addition to managing proposals transparently, the department leads ongoing training efforts and builds stronger ties with the community, making sure its actions reflect the institution's social mission. In short, it proposes, supports, carries out, and evaluates innovative ideas that have real impact, grounded in local reality and people's experiences.

#### How to Set It Up:

- **Define the purpose:** Think about the community's main challenges. The Innovation Department should help improve processes, value ideas, listen to people, and encourage meaningful change.
- **Make it official:** Create the department formally, with a name, clear mission, and a designated space (physical or digital). It's important to assign someone to coordinate, mobilize, and follow up on actions.
- **Ensure support and structure:** Set aside a budget, if possible, put together a support team, and make sure the department is recognized and connected with everyone.
- **Use collaborative platforms:** Tools like ClickUp, Miro, and Trello can help gather ideas, manage projects, and keep the process transparent.
- **Invite broad participation:** Open up ways for everyone to take part—including staff, community members, partners, museum visitors, and public or private institutions interested in cultural projects. This builds a culture of listening and open innovation.
- **Track progress and celebrate:** Keep records of what's learned, evaluate results, and recognize everyone's efforts. Develop and carry out a strategic plan based on these experiences.

## 3. Methods to Stimulate Collective Innovation

### Abstract

In this chapter, you will explore participatory methodologies that help transform ideas into actions. Tools such as design thinking, empathy maps, and co-creation workshops are presented as ways to encourage collaboration and collective solution-building. We will reflect on how to adapt these methods to the realities of each community, respecting local knowledge and practices.

Often, collective innovation happens when people come together to listen, imagine, share ideas, and take action as a group. For this to truly work, it's important to use

methods that support participation, dialogue, and creativity—core elements of participatory management.

These approaches should be part of the Innovation Department, which plays a key role in encouraging and guiding these processes. This department can organize training, meetings, and activities that promote the use of these tools and help maintain a strong, collaborative innovation environment. Have you ever been part of a simple group conversation that sparked a powerful idea?

Following the ideas of authors like Demo (2021) and Tenório (1998), we recognize that innovation depends on active listening, shared responsibility, and respect for different ways of knowledge.

Here are some useful methods:

- **Design Thinking** – A people-centered process focused on empathy and testing new ideas. (More about Design Thinking in Module 6)
- **Empathy Maps** – A tool to better understand how participants feel and see things.
- **Co-creation Workshops** – Spaces where solutions are built together, based on shared experience.
- **Talking Circles** – Open, respectful conversations that value local knowledge.
- **Visual and Sensory Activities** – Creative ways to express and explore ideas.

Storytelling (Lambert & Hessler, 2018) can also be a powerful way to make meaning out of experiences and bring communities closer together. In this light, innovation is not just about ideas — it's a shared journey of listening, creating, and transforming.

## 4. Digital Tools and Innovation Platforms

### Abstract

This chapter presents digital tools that support the organization, monitoring, and collaboration of innovative projects. Featured resources include Padlet, Miro, Trello, and ClickUp, which are useful for recording ideas, planning actions, and encouraging collective participation. It also explores the strategic role of the Innovation Department in mediating these processes, ensuring that proposals are not lost but evolve with clarity and shared responsibility. The use of technology should be adapted to local contexts and always serve inclusion, active listening, and co-creation.

It's not just about coming up with new ideas — it's also about supporting their development, building strong connections, and working together to turn them into reality. For this to happen, active involvement from participants, the use of digital tools, and solid institutional support — especially through the Innovation Department — are essential.

This department should guide and support creative processes, making sure proposals are documented, followed through, and developed with clarity, respect, and shared responsibility. With the help of digital tools, it becomes easier to organize ideas, assign tasks, keep communication flowing, and maintain consistency over time.

When used thoughtfully, these tools help increase participation and make the journey of building ideas together more visible. As Eid & Forstrom (2021) point out, digital innovation should enhance—not replace—real-world interactions, always focusing on inclusion, listening, and teamwork.

When introducing technology, it's important to take into account the local situation: internet access, available devices, and how familiar people are with using digital tools. Offering basic tech support and easy-to-understand training helps everyone feel confident and safe when participating.

Here are some simple and user-friendly platforms:

- **Padlet** – A shared digital board for texts, images, videos, and audio.
- **Miro** – A visual space for planning, collaborating, and mapping out ideas.
- **Trello** – A tool for tracking tasks and setting deadlines.
- **ClickUp** – A full platform for transparent and group-based project management.

More than just connecting devices, technology should bring people together—with care, attention, and respect.

## 5. Sustainability, Collaboration, and Practical Application

### Abstract

This chapter reflects on how to make innovation feasible and lasting. Here, sustainability is not limited to the conscious use of resources but also involves listening to people, respecting local knowledge, and creating solutions that make sense to those living in the territory. Collaboration among different social actors is presented as a key element in turning ideas into ongoing practices.

How can we encourage a culture of innovation in a community?

It takes more than good ideas—it's about creating the right environment so those ideas can take root, grow, and turn into meaningful collective actions. For innovation to last, it must be connected to the place, the knowledge of local people, and the lives they lead. It must touch people emotionally—because without a sense of belonging, true change doesn't happen.

Participatory management plays a key role. As Tenório (1998) points out, it means involving everyone from planning to evaluation, encouraging shared responsibility and openness. Elinor Ostrom (2012) also reminds us of the value of collaborative governance and collective care of shared resources. In this setting, establishing an Innovation Department helps give structure and long-term support to these efforts.

## 5.1 Practical ways to grow a culture of innovation

### Listening and participatory management:

- Set up an Innovation Department.
- Create open spaces for dialogue and listening (e.g., talking circles, cultural cafés).
- Use participatory practices in every step of the process.
- Involve different age groups and communities from the beginning.

### Creativity and collaborative methods:

- See creativity as a shared journey that welcomes mistakes and learning together.
- Support co-creation through workshops, testing, and hands-on activities.
- Apply tools like design thinking, empathy maps, and sensory experiences.

### Technology and sustainability:

- Use simple digital tools (Padlet, Miro, Trello) for documenting and tracking progress.
- Map local knowledge and resources with visual and emotional methods.
- Celebrate what's been achieved and learned together.
- Use feedback circles, experience logs, and journals to reflect and improve.

Building a culture of innovation takes thoughtful planning and institutional backing. But at its heart, it's a shared process of imagining, belonging, and shaping possible futures. These efforts also help protect intangible cultural heritage by honoring living knowledge and collective creativity.

## 6. Case Studies

### Abstract

In this section, we will explore two case studies that perfectly reflect the content covered in this module. Through them, we'll discover two successful examples of innovation and creativity within specific social contexts: the *Museu na Aldeia* project from Portugal and *Concomitentes* from Spain.

### 1. Museu na Aldeia, Portugal

The “Museum in the Village” project, carried out in Portugal, illustrates how urban museums can connect sensitively with rural communities. The initiative began with a provocative question: what if the museum came to the people? From this point of active listening, workshops, talking circles, and artistic creations emerged—rooted in local memories, affections, and knowledge.



*Fig. 3 Grande-Encontro, espetáculo musical apresentado pela equipa.*  
Source: Gil de Lemos, <https://www.museunaaldeia.pt/sobre/#grande-encontro>

Rather than delivering pre-packaged content, the project acts as a mediator between institutions and territories, fostering horizontal exchanges and relationships of trust.

In line with the idea of “participatory museological innovation” (Eid & Forstrom, 2021), it breaks away from the top-down logic of cultural practices and embraces co-authorship.

“Museum in the Village” demonstrates that innovation can be simple: to listen, to welcome, and to create with what is already present. It is a powerful example of how a culture of innovation can arise from affection, deep listening, and genuine collaboration with communities.

## 2. Concomitantes, Spain

Concomitantes is part of a European network of organizations that promote and fund community-based projects which connect a community, town, or civil group with artists to carry out ideas that always respond to the needs and goals of that group.

This project clearly demonstrates how to develop innovative initiatives with creativity as a guiding principle.



*Fig. 4 Futurefarmers son as artistas seleccionadas por “Os contos do leite”.*  
Source: Ana Escariz Pérez y Ana Moure Rosende,  
<https://concomitantes.org/futurefarmers-son-as-artistas-seleccionadas-por-os-contos-do-leite/>


# SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

## SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) Think about the spaces around you that promote innovation and creativity
- 2) Have you ever wondered where the ideas that truly transform a community come from?
- 3) Have you ever been part of a simple group conversation that sparked a powerful idea?
- 4) How can we make sure an innovative idea doesn't get lost along the way?
- 5) How can we encourage a culture of innovation in a community?

## SELF-EVALUATION TEST

- 1) During a talking circle, traditional practices are shared and welcomed with attention and empathy, without interruptions. This attitude contributes to a culture of innovation because:
  - a) It allows ideas to be evaluated based on technical data.
  - b) It ensures that only specialists validate local knowledge.
  - c) It values sensitive listening and creates an environment conducive to community creativity.
  - d) It replaces dialogue with objective records for future consultation.
- 2) In a cultural association, a space was created where residents can suggest improvements for the community, such as revitalizing public squares, organizing workshops, or hosting local events. The innovation team is responsible for organizing the proposals, coordinating resources, and following through with the collective implementation. In this context, what is the main role of an Innovation Department in a community or cultural institution?
  - a) To monitor the use of social media and digital tools.
  - b) To organize ideas, encourage participation, and support the implementation of innovative actions rooted in the territory.
  - c) To execute technical projects without involving the community.
  - d) To ensure that all decisions are made by the central management team.

- 
- 3) **A community decides to use audio, images, and narratives to build an online mural of local memories. This practice strengthens the culture of innovation because:**
    - a) It uses digital platforms for external promotion.
    - b) It encourages storytelling as a tool for mobilization and belonging.
    - c) It prioritizes formal documentation for institutional purposes.
    - d) It replaces manual work with technological solutions.
  
  - 4) **An external project is implemented without consulting the local community, resulting in disinterest and abandonment. This example shows:**
    - a) That innovation relies solely on applied technology.
    - b) That the absence of listening and participation weakens the culture of innovation.
    - c) That technical planning outweighs social involvement.
    - d) That rural communities have limited adaptability.
  
  - 5) **In a community activity, people from different generations share stories and co-create an exhibition of local memories using physical and digital records. This practice promotes a culture of innovation because:**
    - a) It centralizes decisions in institutional leadership.
    - b) It fosters co-authorship, intergenerational dialogue, and appreciation of local knowledge.
    - c) It guarantees technical results for public policies.
    - d) It prioritizes traditional museological formats.
  
  - 6) **A group creates a collaborative online mural with emotional content about food practices, festivals, and everyday objects. This digital tool contributes to the culture of innovation by:**
    - a) Collecting cultural data for tourism purposes.
    - b) Creating a database for public management.
    - c) Integrating technology, emotional connection, and participation as community-based innovation practices.
    - d) Replacing face-to-face gatherings and community rituals.

### Solutions

- 1) C
- 2) B
- 3) B
- 4) B
- 5) B
- 6) C

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<http://www.nouveauxcommanditaires.eu>

<https://www.neueauftraggeber.de>

<https://www.atitolo.it>



HIGHRES

# Module 4

THE CONSTRUCTION OF DIGITAL  
NARRATIVES ABOUT INTANGIBLE  
CULTURAL HERITAGE

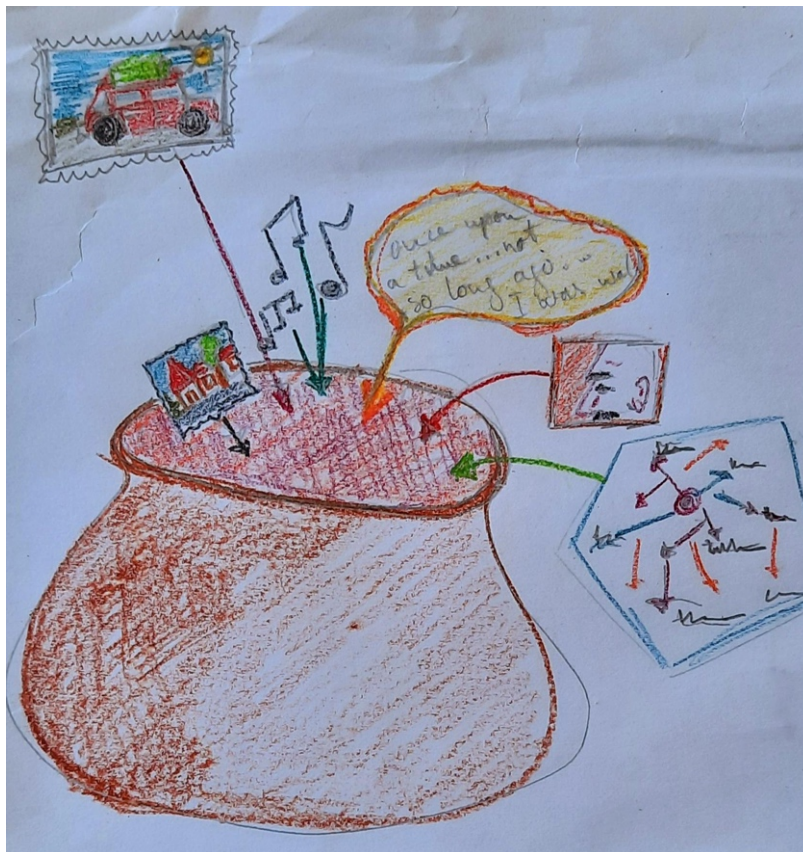


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## MODULE 4: The Construction of Digital Narratives about Intangible Cultural Heritage

Finding an idea for a story might be easy for some people and a nightmare for others. When it comes to finding an idea for a story about intangible cultural heritage, like in the scope of this project, at least this subject provides something of a handle. But then ... once you have decided upon the topic, you have to cobble together a story that not only makes clear what that heritage is about, but is also captivating and inspiring. And when you have all that sorted, there is another hurdle to take: how to make the story useful when it comes to preserving and promoting the intangible cultural heritage? In this module we will address these questions step by step.



*Fig. 1 Preparing a digital story. Source: Private collection*

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## Introduction

### Abstract

The art, or custom, of telling stories is as old as man has had language. The rise of digital storytelling coincides with the popularisation of computers and the internet in the late 1990s. And while there are obviously differences, what traditional and digital storytelling have in common is the eminent importance of the construction of the story. If that construction is weak, the story will limp along. In this module we offer you practical information that will help you construct stories that will help promote your intangible cultural heritage, with an emphasis on those you tell and share digitally.

# Digital Storytelling

=

## Using technology to tell stories



*Fig. 2 Storytelling. Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A\\_fU-f8E1CU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_fU-f8E1CU) by The Learning Portal, licensed under CC BY NC SA.*

Whether you tell stories for marketing purposes, as an art form, to get people excited about something or inform them about something, your story will achieve its purpose only if the listener is captivated by it. Should you doubt the truth of these words, consider, for instance, commercials you see on TV or hear on the radio. There are only a few that “stick”, right? Why do they stick? You may never have given it a thought,

but the reason for this is that they meet certain “storytelling” requirements, such as: the purpose of the story and the perspective from which it is told are clear; the presence of an element or elements that holds the listener or viewer's attention (you can call this the ‘key question’); recognizable emotional content; a voice that personalizes the story and assists in making meaning of the story’s (visual or audible) content; a rhythm at which the story is conveyed that helps sustain one’s attention; the right amount of information (not overwhelming, not too little); the use of images and/or sounds which embellish and complement the storyline; the length of the story (digital stories last up to 4 minutes, often less than 4).

In this module, we address step by step the elements you need to pay attention to if you want to draw attention to intangible cultural heritage through a digitally told and shared story. To this end, we use the following questions: What is the topic? What do you want to tell about it? Who is telling? How will you tell and share your story?

## 1. Finding the story

### Abstract

Some people go crazy when they have to decide on the subject or topic of their story. You probably won't be one of them, because the topic is broadly fixed: “intangible cultural heritage”. This is your premise. Next, you need to decide what you are going to tell about that topic (the plot), which might be more tricky. To this end you will have to think about why you want to tell about this very topic, what it means to you or the community, when did you discover that meaning, what is the reason to talk about this very topic now. But also the narrator (one person or more) and the perspective (talking in the first or third person?) from which you will tell the story will need your attention because this will affect what is told and how. In this chapter we take you through the first steps of shaping your story; the steps that will help you find your story.

## 1.1 The topic

As is mentioned in the second chapter of module one the first question to help you define your subject could be: what do I or does my community do, know, or celebrate that deserves to be recognized as heritage, to be more precise, as intangible cultural heritage?

You likely have already answered this question. After all, because you and/or the people in your community feel that a custom, recipe, traditional craft, or whatever cultural heritage deserves more recognition, you started thinking about digital storytelling in the first place.

It may also be that someone from outside the community wants to work with the community to identify its heritage, often on the assumption of its existence. In that case, there is a preceding process, for which methodologies and guides have been developed which are described in module 1, 'Identification and Cataloging of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Rural Areas', in chapter 4.

## 1.2 What to tell about the topic

Just by determining the topic of the story, you don't have the narrative. What do you want to tell about this topic? To determine this you can ask yourself questions such as: what does this particular heritage mean to you personally? What was the moment that you realised this meaning? Why do you need to tell the story now? What more is there to tell about the heritage itself (research!)? In finding the answers, whether you do it individually or in brainstorming sessions with people from your community, we advise you to make a mind map or an affinity diagram or something alike, on paper or online. Think freely and write down whatever you think might be interesting to use in the story in this early stage of the process. Try to turn off your internal editor! Later on, when you have clustered and edited these ideas, they will help you to put the narrative together.

**Digital storytelling emphasizes personal narratives and individual experiences, often using multimedia elements like text, images, audio, and video to create an engaging and interactive experience.**



## 1.3 Who is telling

Deciding early on who will tell the story will help you in the story creation process. Will the story be told by one person, or by several people in your community? Will people speak for themselves (in the first person), or will the story be told in the third person, a narrator outside the story? And if so, does this narrator focus on the thoughts and feelings of one specific character, or does s-he know the thoughts and feelings of all characters in the story. In other words: who will be the narrator(s) and what will be the narrator's perspective? Keep in mind that each perspective creates different levels of intimacy and detachment, allowing the audience to experience the story from the narrator's immediate, first-hand perspective or from a more detached, omniscient view.

Decisions like the aforementioned you usually make together with the people in your community with whom you share the cultural heritage. Chapter 2 of module 2 ('Collaborative Management and Community Engagement') focuses on involving the community in making decisions like these.

There are a few practical aspects we advise you to keep in mind, such as time required and available, podcast or video and the availability of equipment and programmes and skills or expertise to use those to create a podcast or video. It is also useful to think about the voice and/or presentation of the narrator(s). After all, you want to present the heritage story in the best possible way to which mumbling by someone hiding behind a shawl doesn't help, for one thing.

## 2. Constructing the story

### Abstract

In this chapter, we step-by-step help you develop your notes, thoughts, ideas, mind map(s), in short all the results of the first steps taken, into a storyline. It is important to always keep in mind the purpose of the story, which is to inform people in a catchy way about the chosen topic so that the information sticks and invites them to want to know or experience more. Structuring is key in this phase of the process!

*“Organizing is what you do before you do something,  
so that when you do it, it is not all mixed up.”  
(A. A. Milne)*

By now you know your topic, it is clear who is going to tell the story and you’ve got a mind map, an affinity diagram or just many post-its with notes that will help you give your story content. Time to start working on the storyline, the skeleton of your story. Depending on the situation and/or what you or the community has decided this phase of the process will be an individual or a collective one. But before you enter it we’d like to share with you some basic theoretical information about ‘narrative structure’.

## 2.1 Constructing the storyline

In every (good) story there are at least three phases: a beginning (A), a middle (B) and an end (C). Each phase has a function for the story. In A, the situation is outlined and the character or characters relevant to the story are introduced. And perhaps some more information is given to help the prospective listener follow the story. This phase is called “exposition”. In a fairy tale, it might begin with “Once upon a time, in a far away country, ...”. In B, a problem, dilemma or challenge is introduced and explained how this is dealt with. In a story about Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) this might be the phase in which you explain how you got in touch with the ICH and what that has meant to you. Then, in C, you describe the message of the story, which could be an expression of happiness about the bonding function of the ICH for the community.

You can experiment with the sequence of these phases (some detective stories, for instance, start with C, then go to A, B and to C again). We recommend that you structure your story in these 3 phases and summarize the scope of your story in 3 sentences, one sentence for each phase. If working with several storylines, you do this for all storylines. In that case you also have to decide how you incorporate those into the story: as a complete story within a story and if you do that, what is their order, or do you cluster the A phases of all the storylines, and the B phases etc. This

structuring and summarizing is not an easy task, but it will help you get the story right.

## 2.2 Adding ‘flesh to the skeleton’



Fig. 3 “Story mind map”. Source: private collection

Once you are happy with the storyline(s) you can start adding details, flesh, to the skeleton. But before you do, we'd like you to take notice of some theoretical information related to this. Much research has been done on what makes a good story a good one. In the previous paragraph we already mentioned its construction in three, sometimes slightly more, phases with each a clear goal. Another characteristic of a good story appears to be

that it addresses three so-called domains: the personal, the emotional and the universal domain. To start with the latter: when talking (or telling) about ICH, you could consider general or factual information about this ICH as the universal domain. If your story consisted of only this kind of information, you probably wouldn't be able to hold the attention of your audience for very long. At least, if it's an audience that expects to listen to a story. Adding some personal information, such as a description of your first encounter with the ICH, will undoubtedly help to keep their attention longer. By also telling them about the feelings this encounter evoked in you, you really grab their attention! Why? Because the personal information adds context to which people can relate and the emotional information allows them to feel and to emphasize with the narrator. Without this emotional component, a story loses its power of expressiveness.

Keeping this information in mind, have another look at your mind map or the like. Which details belong where in the story? Don't write out the story yet! Just re-order all your information in such a way that for you the storyline and the content of the story become clear.

## 2.3 Setting up a storyboard

Before you set-up your storyboard, you have to decide about the format of your digitally shared story: just sound or sound and images? We continue as if you've decided on the latter option.

You've got the storyline(s) and have added details. Now is the time to have another look at them and start associating the details with images and sound. For instance: Does an image pop up in your mind when you think about your first awareness of the ICH? Does the moment remind you of music or a sound (like voices, ambient sounds)? Try to be as open as you possibly can and take notes. If you're working with an affinity diagram, whether online or not, add post-its with these notes in the right spot in the storyline(s).

**Digital storytelling at its best will use a combination of carefully chosen scenes, character(s), images and sounds or music to create a full-sensory, emotional experience.**

When you've added this information to your storyline, go to its beginning, close your eyes and try to imagine what the video will look like if you'd add the images? Sometimes an image says more than words. Do you have images that could replace words? Where do you think sound adds to the story? If you're dealing with multiple storylines, would it help insert links in the main story to direct people to another storyline?

Having done the above, ask yourself which images and sounds are already available and which you will need to produce or make. Is the outcome of this realistic? Do you have time and/or money to produce the ones missing? If not, take one step backwards and give it another thought. Also, keep in mind that if you're using images and/or sounds that are not your own, you then have to deal with copyrights. (See also Module 5, 'Technical aspects of digital narratives'.)

Once you have a clear sketch of the story in your mind you can start setting up the storyboard. For this you can use various digital tools like [canva](#), [storyboardthat](#) or [wonderunit](#) (free) or download a [storyboard template](#) to work on a paper version.

## 2.4 Storyboarding

There are a few things you have to keep in mind when giving content to your storyboard (= storyboarding):

1. There is something like a general consensus that a digitally told story should not last longer than 2 to maximum 4 minutes. An audience motivated to learn more about a specific topic might be willing to devote more time to an engaging story and in social media contexts, 30 seconds seems to be best.
2. make sure there are no copyright restrictions on the images and sounds you want to use. If not using your own, look for audio, video, and images online that are in the public domain, royalty-free, or Creative Commons-licensed;
3. make sure you are not 'colouring red roses red' when adding images or sounds to the story (meaning: story and image/sound should complement or juxtapose each other, not duplicate!);
4. when using sound, make sure not to put sound with lyrics under spoken text. Be careful with lyrics anyway. They will distract the audience;
5. keep a keen eye on the rhythm of the story. Making a storyboard will help you in doing this.

And another aspect to think about is how you are going to share your story and if that implies certain restrictions. (See Module 5, 'Technical aspects of digital narratives'.)

*"The storyboard for me is the way to visualise the  
entire movie in advance."  
(Martin Scorsese)*

Finally ... You can start storyboarding! The more precise you do this, the more you will benefit from it when actually creating your digital story. Organizing all the information you have (narrative, images, sounds, music, links to further information or related storylines, transitions from one scene to the next etc.) in a storyboard not only allows you to find out what information might still be missing or is in need of some more

attention, but it also gives other people the opportunity to gain insight into the story and respond to (aspects of) it. And this is very handy when you're creating the digital story with several people, for instance people from the community you share the ICH with.

## 3. From storyboard to digital story

### Abstract

Once you are happy with your storyboard, you can start creating your digital story. "Create" may be a confusing word, because the entire process you have gone through up until this point has been part of its creation. What we mean is that now you can start using digital tools to translate your storyboard to a digital story. Do remember: Digital stories offer the possibility to combine different story layers. This allows you to present information more efficiently and the audience to make connections themselves.

### 3.1 Tools for digital story creation

When you and others involved in the storymaking process are happy with the story's content, rhythm, tone of voice, and so on you can start turning it all into a digital story. There are various tools available to help you. If you go, for instance, to <https://alternativeto.net/> and search for 'digital storytelling' or to <https://www.includedeurope.eu/tools-for-digital-storytelling/>, a long list of options will appear, some of which are free of charge. And don't forget your mobile phone, which is also well suited for audio and video recordings. Before you record the whole story, check the quality of the recordings. If - for instance - there is too much reverberation in the room, you'd better use a microphone with echo canceller, or choose another room.

In this part of the process of creating your digital story you may find out that the quality of some of the image or sound material you want to process is not good enough. This can often be solved with the help of free software that can be found online when

searching for “improve quality of image online free” or “improve quality of sound online free”. (We found programs like [cutout.pro](https://cutout.pro), [canva](https://canva.com), [podcastle](https://podcastle.net), [media io](https://media.io)).

In this phase of creating the story, stay as close as possible to everything you have included in your storyboard. Remember that you have given the construction phase and your storyboard a lot of thought and attention. If nevertheless it turns out that some things are not working as well as you thought, you can still update or replace them now. But don't be tempted to wander; keep your focus and don't forget the purpose of the story!

## 3.2 The end of the story

At a certain point the creation of the digital story has come to an end. Did you credit all sources and contributors? This you can do at the end of the story by means of visual or audible end credits.

Suppose you suspect that your story needs contextual information, then it will depend on the dissemination tool you choose whether that information will be part of the digital story itself or is stated separately. If it will be part of the story, now is the time to put together this contextual information and add it, for instance by means of an introduction. (Not so much an introduction of the story, but an introduction of - for instance - the project in the scope of which the story is shared.)

The topic of the tools you can use to reach your target audience with your digital story will be covered in the next module, number 5, ‘Technical aspects of digital narratives’.

## 4. Case Studies

### 1. Immaterieel Erfgoed Spotten - Strontweek Workum

One of the many video's that form part of the Spotting Intangible cultural heritage project in which image, sound and voice over complement and strengthen each other in telling a clear and engaging story about the subject.



*Fig. 4 “Immaterieel Erfgoed Spotten”. Source: Website KIEN*

## 2. Alūksnes Bānīša stacija

No voice over (except for someone announcing the stations the train passes), just images to tell the story. And it works!



*Fig. 5 «Egīla Žīgura intervija Alūksnes Bānīša». Fuente: Centro de Información Turística del municipio de Aluksnes.*

## 3. Two examples of how NOT to make a digital story

- 1) This video explains in a clear way how one could construct a digital story, but what do the images add to the story?

<https://youtu.be/Jlix-yVzheM?si=5MgymJPRJFUaDdtR>

- 2) This video is an example of 'colouring red roses red', meaning: the story and images do not complement each other, but tell exactly the same thing:

<https://youtu.be/MWKWHNdmkt!?si=uagbAHrs3QGrzZJA>

# SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

## SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) What was the purpose of creating the story?
- 2) Does the story meet that purpose?
- 3) Who is the target audience?
- 4) Are the content and tone of the story appealing to this target audience?
- 5) Does each / the narrator speak with a clear and audible voice throughout?
- 6) Is the rhythm of the story well suited to the storyline?
- 7) Are all sources and contributors credited?
- 8) Will the story need contextualizing information once it is published on a digital platform (or does it speak for itself)?

## SELF-EVALUATION TEST

- 1) Digital storytelling basically means
  - a) creating a story digitally
  - b) no people are involved in the making of the story
  - c) using technology to tell stories
- 2) A digital story takes at best
  - a) no less than 6 minutes
  - b) no more than 4 minutes
  - c) no more than 2 minutes
- 3) You do not have to construct your story if you know what you are going to talk about.
  - a) Right
  - b) Wrong
- 4) A good story stands or falls by its
  - a) Tone of voice

- b) Rhythm
- c) Topic
- d) Construction

**5) A traditional story differs from a digital story in the sense that**

- a) a digital story lacks personal information
- b) a traditional story lacks universal information
- c) a traditional story doesn't need technology
- d) rhythm is not important in a traditional story

**Solutions**

- 1) C
- 2) B
- 3) B
- 4) D
- 5) C

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HIGHRES

# Module 5

BRINGING STORIES ONLINE: HOSTING  
AND SHARING DIGITAL NARRATIVES



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## MODULE 5: Bringing Stories Online: Hosting and sharing digital narratives

Nowadays, the information and data circulating on the internet, in mass media, and on social networks have gained great importance due to their power to shape the way we think and how we live. However, they have also created an atmosphere of disinterest and distrust caused by fake news. That's why our trust in the internet takes a serious hit! Therefore the goals of digital communication today are focused on identifying the right web spaces or dissemination channels to establish truthful and high-quality content.



*Fig. 1 Bringing Stories Online. Source: Design by the authors.*

In this module, we will think about how and where to host our stories. What types of platforms allow us to share stories that empower the Intangible Cultural Heritage of our communities, and how can we transfer our stories in a simple and direct way on the web. Even though this might seem like something only experienced IT pros can handle, after reading this training module, it'll all feel a lot more manageable.

## MODULE INDEX

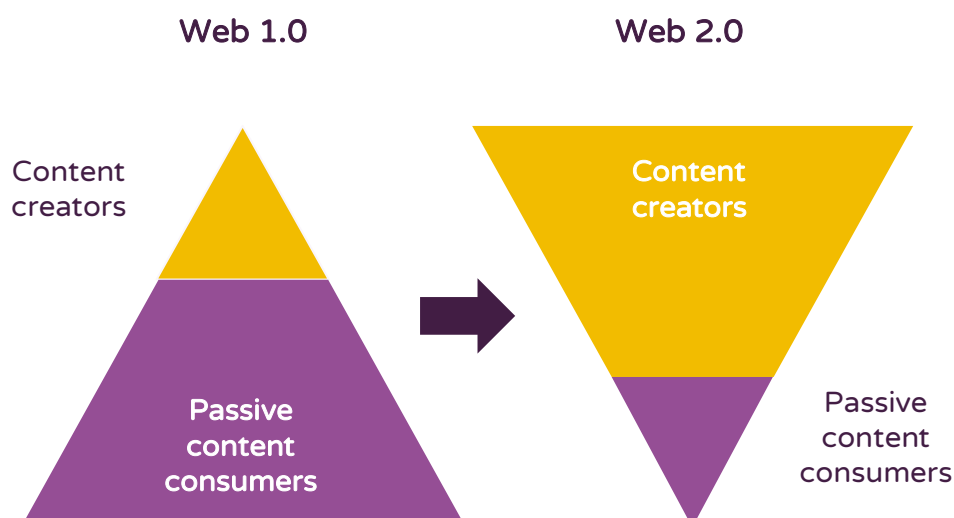
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## Introduction

### Abstract

In this introductory chapter, we will raise the central question of Module 5: How do we think about our relationship with the internet today, and how do we approach the creation and localization of digital content? This question arises from critically examining the current issues surrounding the internet, particularly in relation to *fake news* and the ownership of information.

Do you remember when the Internet appeared in our lives? What you do remember for sure is that since we used the internet, access to and consultation of information has become significantly faster and broader, while also overcoming various barriers, especially geographical ones, granting us access to a wide variety of communication channels across the globe. The evolution from the first stage of the internet, known as “Web 1.0,” to the second stage, “Web 2.0,” starting around 2004, is marked by the shift from users being passive consumers of information to becoming the main creators of most of the content published online (Cormode and Krishnamurthy, 2008).



Imagine the impact this change has had on how we use the Internet today. On the bright side, voices online have multiplied, and sharing content has become so democratized that pretty much anyone can post something on the Internet nowadays. But on the other hand, these shifts have opened the door to fake news and widespread misinformation, and have caused user traffic to become concentrated on just 116 websites owned by for-profit digital technology companies, which absorb a third of all internet traffic (Javier, 2024).

In this environment of change and growing mistrust in information, how should we approach the internet? And how do we approach digital content creation and its localization?

In Module 5 of this training, we will address this question by focusing on the websites where we can host our digital narratives. To do so, we will explore the web to analyze different platform models that allow us to share content and information. This will help us envision our own design, that is, the creation of a platform where we ourselves can publish our stories, thereby empowering the Intangible Cultural Heritage of our territory. In addition, we will learn how to manage content and maintain the platform or user profile.

## 1. Where Do Stories Live Today?: Models of platforms for story sharing

### Abstract

In this chapter, we will explore the different types of spaces available on the internet that allow us to share our own content. We will also look at the advantages and disadvantages of each model.

There are two main pathways through which we can share our own content and information on the internet:

The first is a self-managed model. You create a website with a domain, that is, your own URL (a string of text that identifies the location of a resource on the internet), for example: [www.ourstories.com](http://www.ourstories.com), and then upload your content to the site in the format

of your choice. In this model, the website's interface, meaning how the site looks and is visually presented: its colors, typography, layout, menus, buttons, or images, is fully under our control.

The second option involves creating a user profile within a platform. As we mentioned earlier in the introduction, these platforms attract the vast majority of internet user traffic. To clearly understand this type of platform, we can look at the most familiar example: social media. Depending on the format in which we share our content, there are different types of platforms:

- Written content publishing platforms
- Visual content platforms
- Video platforms
- Audio and podcast platforms
- Social and microcontent platforms
- Collaborative or wiki platforms
- Community platforms
- Institutional or cultural platforms

	Self-managed website	User profile on a platform
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control over interface design and appearance.</li> <li>• Multi-format (content can appear in various formats).</li> <li>• Self-managed content and maintenance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple and intuitive to start (no extensive training required to create a profile).</li> <li>• A pre-existing community.</li> <li>• Easy interaction with other users.</li> <li>• Created content can be promoted</li> </ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and content publishing are not as intuitive as on platforms.</li> <li>• No pre-existing community (user interactions must be sought out).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and functionality standards.</li> <li>• Content control.</li> <li>• Visibility is mediated by algorithms.</li> <li>• Advertising.</li> </ul>

These models are complementary and can even be connected to each other. You can have a self-managed website and also a social media profile at the same time. In that case, try to create links between both spaces: keep a consistent look by using the same logos and colors, share the same information on both platforms, and integrate your social media profile into your website...

## 2. Heritage in Resilience: Design and development of a community digital storytelling platform

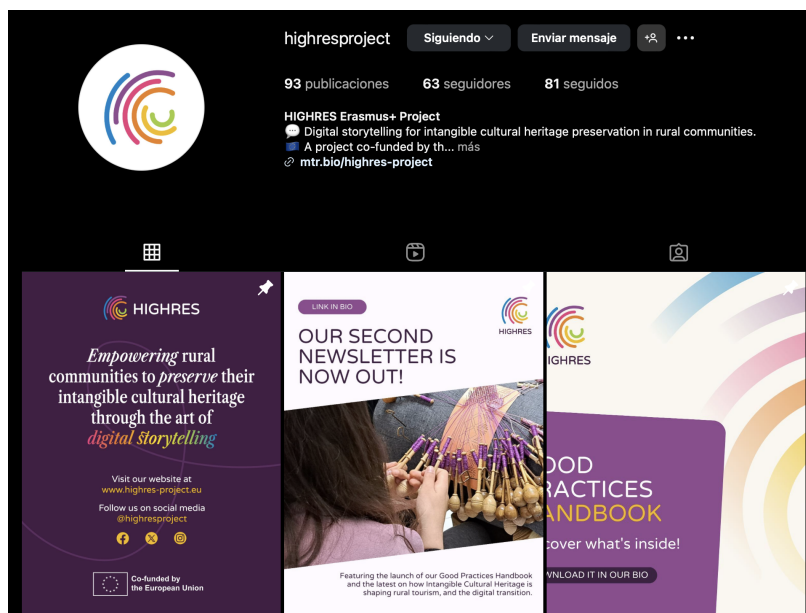
### Abstract

The main objective of this chapter is to learn how to design a web space to transfer and give visibility to our digital narratives. Without requiring extensive knowledge of computer science, we will cover the essential components needed to create such a space. The content of this chapter has a more technical focus.

Following the previous chapter, we will outline the necessary elements for creating a user profile on a platform and, on the other hand, for creating a self-managed website.

Creating a profile on a platform is relatively simple, you just need to provide an email address, set a password, and then design a few elements of the interface, like your profile picture, a short bio, username, and so on.

In the image below, you can see the interface of our profile on the social network Instagram. On the left, inside the circle, is our profile picture, and just to the right is the profile description. Below, you'll find the content we've shared.



*Fig. 2 Profile Interface of HIGHRES Project. Screenshot by authors.*

In contrast, when we talk about a self-managed website, the process becomes more detailed and requires more patience. The essential elements we will encounter when designing a website are the following:

## 1. Create a domain

The domain is the name by which we identify the website, the URL address we enter into a browser to reach the site. For example: *www.digitalnarratives.com* or *www.communityvoices.org*.

## 2. Design the interface

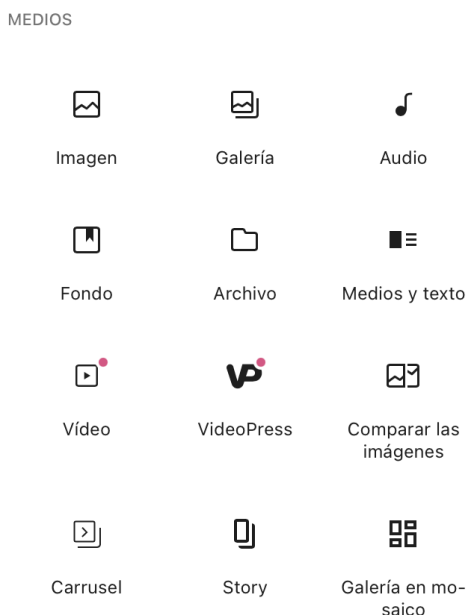
*Content Management Systems* (CMS) allow us to create our own website. Some of them offer a series of pre-designed templates that we can use for our site. These templates come with a predefined structure, colors, and tabs, which in some cases we can edit. If not, we would need to design the entire website from scratch—choosing colors, creating tabs, building a menu, etc. CMS platforms are becoming increasingly

accessible, and in most cases they offer a side menu where you can select the elements to add to your site (fig. 1).



*Fig. 3 Interface of a website in progress. In the side menu, we can see some of the available options. The image shows a screenshot taken from the WordPress editor.*

### 3. Upload content



*Fig. 4 Website editing menu in the multimedia section. The image shows a screenshot taken from the WordPress editor.*

The final step is to upload content to our website. In this case, websites support audiovisual, graphic, and text formats. The menu we saw in the previous image allows us to upload files from our computer or an external drive. Additionally, in recent years, some content management systems have established partnerships with audiovisual content platforms to embed such content directly into the website. In Figure 2, we can see how the editing menu displays the options for adding multimedia content.

## 3. Stories to Remember: Online content management

### Abstract

In the following, we will focus on the content we will offer on our platform, as well as the possibilities we have to create an active user community. Finally, we will discuss platform maintenance and the regularity of content publication.

Over the years, internet content has gained a certain level of specialization and rigor. In fact, in recent years, new professional profiles have emerged in relation to internet content: content creators, content managers, audio and video editors, digital marketing specialists.

As we saw in Module 4 of this course, Intangible Cultural Heritage told through digital storytelling can take various multimedia formats: images, videos, audio, design, art, 3D illustration, etc. These digital media are an essential tool to give visibility to our Heritage and reach a large number of users.

In parallel to the specialization of content, the evolution to Web 2.0, which allows internet users to create their own content, has led to an explosion and massification of online content. This has resulted in platforms and even search engines ranking content based on patterns of interest. Additionally, search engines "keep the final details of their procedures secret, as this information could give them a competitive advantage and, therefore, they consider it an industrial secret" (Codina, 2004). In many cases, the search engines themselves offer advertising services to rank your content by paying a price. Even so, there are various criteria speculated by web analysts.

### 3.1 Sustaining an Active Digital Community

In this vast sea of content, standing out is key. That's why we have a set of tools to help us with this task. They are called SEO tools, which stands for "Search Engine Optimization". There are two types of SEO tools:

- **SEO on-page:** These strategies are aimed at "creating quality content, improving user experience, and increasing accessibility." Examples include: inserting keywords, using internal links, adding images with alt text, and optimizing headlines. (Branch, 2024)
- **SEO off-page:** It is based on "building authority, gaining exposure, and earning trust through links that direct from one website to another (backlinks) and mentions." An example includes being active online by engaging in social media interactions and other web forums, and appearing linked in content on other websites. (Branch, 2024)

In addition to these tools that require a higher level of knowledge in computer science and digital marketing, there are other tools that are accessible to everyone and will help us create a community in our online spaces.

<b>Interactions</b>	Nowadays, the internet is based on interactions, that is, the relationships you create with other users. These interactions increase and generate networks of connection between users. In the case of social media profiles, interactions are fully integrated through reactions to content: likes, sharing content, sending content to other users, commenting on content, following related profiles, etc.
<b>Forum</b>	Forums are a tool that fuels interactions if we have created a self-managed website. Users who visit our site can create discussion forums or comment on the existing content on the website.
<b>Registration</b>	In the case of a self-managed website, allowing users to register becomes a way to build loyalty and create a community within your own website.
<b>Newsletter</b>	Email newsletters are a tool to keep our community updated on the content we publish on our website.

## 3.2 Moving Towards Quality Content

In the introduction to this training module, we discussed the growing distrust and disinterest of internet users in the information circulating online today. This situation

is largely fueled by fake news. In this context, the primary objectives when publishing our content must be grounded in ethical values that ensure the quality of the information. To this end, we can follow the ethical guidelines implemented by UNESCO, which are available on their website: <https://www.unesco.org/es/ethics>

On the other hand, it is important that our content complies with and reflects the appropriate copyright regulations. That is, when using a pre-existing image or video found online, we must ensure proper attribution and clearly acknowledge the author. To ensure this process, we can revisit Module 4: *The construction of digital narratives about intangible cultural heritage*, which explores in greater depth issues related to the creation of digital content. Also regarding copyright, we can adhere to the standards established by the European Union: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/es/policies/copyright>

Finally, we should highlight the versatility of high-quality multimedia content. That is, producing digital content for our website can take various formats, which will make the user experience more dynamic. To carry out this task, we will follow the recommendations of experts from different professional fields, such as those outlined in the following article: “What are the best practices for creating a content style guide that works for you?”:

<https://www.linkedin.com/advice/0/what-best-practices-creating-content-style-guide-works-df25c?lang=en&originalSubdomain=es>

## 4. Case Studies

### Abstract

In this section, we will look at two examples of good practices related to the topic covered in this module. That is, we will explore two websites from projects dedicated to the dissemination of Intangible Cultural Heritage through storytelling. These examples will help us visualize the concepts discussed in the previous chapters and will encourage us to reflect on our own project.

To illustrate all the content covered so far in this training, we will take two projects from the *“Book of Good Practices”* published by our project, HIGHRES, which is freely available at the following link:

<https://highres-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/HIGHRES-handbook.pdf>

## 1. Stories have power

The National Holocaust Museum in Amsterdam publishes on its website and distributes on music streaming platforms a podcast that tells various life stories of people who suffered during the Holocaust in the Netherlands. The podcast is called *“Vergeet me niet”*, which means *“Don’t forget me”*, and it serves as a reference model for how to share content related to Intangible Cultural Heritage through digital storytelling. This example also shows us the possibility of disseminating our content from our own website to streaming platforms, thereby giving our stories a wider window of exposure

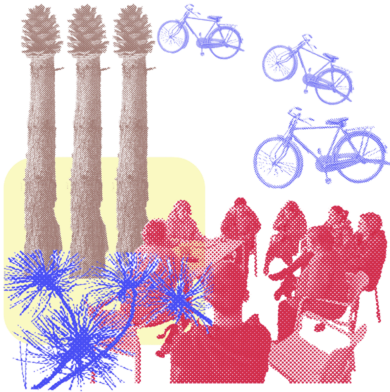
Link: <https://jck.nl/verhalen-en-verdieping/vergeet-me-niet>



*Fig. 5 Image from the National Holocaust Museum of Amsterdam website.*

## 2. An interactive multimedia space for communities

The “Museu na Aldeia” project offers a platform with multimedia content, mapping, and interactive elements in video, audio, and image formats that highlight the traditions and heritage of various rural areas in Portugal. In the link below, we can see



*Fig. 6 Image from the project “Museu na Aldeia” website.*

a specific example — the exhibition “*Sons na Eira*” — where, through text, animated image collages, and audio, the traditions of Moita, Portugal, are narrated.

Link:

<https://www.museunaaldeia.pt/exposicoes/sons-na-eira/>

# SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

## SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) Imagine a website designed to give visibility to the Intangible Cultural Heritage of your region: what elements should it include?
- 2) Which online tools and resources do you think we can use to build a brand or identity that helps give visibility to a locality's traditions?
- 3) Can a connection be created between a social media profile and a self-managed website? How do you think they can complement each other?
- 4) How do you think storytelling and Intangible Cultural Heritage can combat the wave of fake news and low-quality content on the internet?
- 5) Think of tools or actions on the internet that can help us connect with users interested in digital storytelling and Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- 6) In addition to the elements we've already covered in the previous chapters that help keep our web community informed, what other elements do you think could be effective in this regard?

## SELF-EVALUATION TEST

- 1) Select which two models the internet offers us to host our content.
  - a) Network platform and social media.
  - b) Online content network.
  - c) Blogs and visual content platform.
  - d) Self-managed website and user profile on a platform.
- 2) When we talk about internet platforms where we can create a profile and share content, what types exist?
  - a) Professional and non-professional profile platforms.
  - b) Written content publishing platforms, visual content platforms, video platforms, audio and podcast platforms, social and microcontent platforms, collaborative platforms or wikis, community platforms, and institutional or cultural platforms.

- c) Journalistic content publishing platforms, travel content platforms, and entertainment platforms.
- 3) What advantages does creating a self-managed website have over creating a profile on a platform?**
- a) Simple and intuitive at first (requires little training to create a profile), an already created community, easy interaction with other users, the ability to promote the created content.
  - b) Control over the design of the interface and appearance, multi-format (content can appear in different formats), own management and maintenance.
  - c) It has no advantages.
  - d) Advantages for monetizing the content you publish.
- 4) What are the main actions to create a self-managed website?**
- a) Complete a form and you can upload content.
  - b) Create an account on a social network, publish content, and manage SEO tools.
  - c) Just create a URL link.
  - d) Create a domain, design the interface, and upload content.
  - e) Create an email account and complete the data required by the platform.
- 5) To create an online community that visits our website, it is only necessary to create a newsletter. Indicate whether the previous statement is true or false.**
- a) False
  - b) True

### Solutions

- 1) D
- 2) B
- 3) B
- 4) D
- 5) A

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<https://www.museunaaldeia.pt/exposicoes/sons-na-eira/>

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HIGHRES

# Module 6

PROMOTION OF ICH THROUGH DIGITAL  
PLATFORMS TO FOSTER CULTURAL  
TOURISM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT



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## MODULE 6: Promotion of ICH Through Digital Platforms to Foster Cultural Tourism and Rural Development

This module explores how digital platforms can promote intangible cultural heritage (ICH) to support sustainable cultural tourism and rural development. It examines the interplay between storytelling, innovation, and digital tools in enhancing the visibility of local traditions and fostering economic resilience. Topics include sustainable tourism principles, community engagement, creative industries, and integration with the local economy. Case studies and innovation strategies demonstrate how rural communities can use cultural assets to create participatory, future-oriented tourism experiences. Aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the module encourages inclusive, culturally respectful practices that sustain heritage while driving local growth and creativity.

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## Introduction

### Abstract

As we entered Module 6, the final stage of this training, we focused on a key question: how can we use digital narratives about the intangible cultural heritage of our territory to contribute to the sustainable development of our community? What kinds of projects can we undertake in this direction?

Today, rural areas are undergoing a transformation—both in terms of population dynamics and economic activity.

Tourism plays a vital role in rural development, but just as the nature of rural life is changing, so too is rural tourism. Traditionally associated with farming and agrarian experiences, rural tourism is now shifting toward cultural experiences, giving rise to emerging niches such as creative tourism.

Rural areas are often the custodians of rich intangible cultural heritage (ICH) that hold significant value not only for local identity but also as powerful assets for tourism.

In this context, storytelling and digital platforms have become essential tools. Digitalization enhances the visibility, accessibility, and competitiveness of rural destinations by enabling communities to share their cultural heritage with local and global audiences.

This training module explores how the promotion of ICH through digital platforms can foster both cultural tourism and rural development, offering new opportunities for sustainable growth and heritage preservation.

# 1. Preserving Living Traditions through Sustainable Tourism

## Abstract

Have you ever wondered how tourism can bring benefits without harming the environment or the lives of local communities? In this chapter, you will explore the concept of sustainable tourism and its vital connection with intangible cultural heritage (ICH). While tourism can bring valuable benefits to rural communities, it can also pose significant risks to local cultural traditions if not managed responsibly. You will see how sustainable tourism offers a balanced approach—supporting economic development while respecting and preserving cultural identities. By the end of this chapter, you will understand how to approach tourism development in a way that both honors and sustains intangible cultural heritage, ensuring that it remains a living and dynamic force for future generations.

## 1. Concepts. Definition and principles of sustainable tourism; application to ICH

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities.” Additionally, sustainable tourism considers the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development.

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) plays a significant role in the creation of sustainable tourism. If you don’t quite remember the definition of intangible cultural heritage, you can go back to Module 1 of this course, titled ‘Identification and Cataloging of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Rural Areas’. Tourism and ICH have a mutually beneficial relationship. On one hand, ICH is essential in tourism development, as modern travelers seek more than just architectural landmarks and historical sites. They desire immersive experiences that showcase the living traditions of local communities. On the other hand, sustainable tourism serves as a powerful tool for safeguarding and promoting ICH.

While tourism offers numerous benefits, it also poses risks to ICH if not carefully managed. Over-commercialization may lead to the loss of authenticity and the dilution of cultural traditions. To prevent this, a sustainable approach is crucial.

When integrating ICH into tourism development, communities should be the primary decision-makers regarding how their cultural heritage is shared and presented to visitors. Tourism development should be limited to what is comfortable for the local population.

Achieving these goals can be challenging, but not if you do it with the help of others.. These include local communities, heritage practitioners, NGOs, tourism businesses, and local authorities. Through cooperative efforts, tourism can become a vehicle for cultural preservation, economic empowerment, and environmental stewardship, ensuring long-term benefits for both visitors and host communities alike.

## **2. Preservation and Promotion of ICH: Strategies for Valuing Cultural Tourism that Positively Impact the Community**

Cultural tourism is deeply connected to the unique heritage, traditions, and activities available in a given location. Each place offers distinct cultural resources that shape its tourism appeal. Today's cultural tourists are not solely interested in sightseeing; they seek meaningful experiences, deeper knowledge, and entertainment. They are drawn to local heritage, history, people, traditions, cuisine, and artisanal products—elements that are best conveyed through engaging storytelling.

When local communities participate in tourism development, it fosters meaningful exchanges between visitors and residents. Such interactions promote cultural understanding and create an open, self-confident society. Additionally, when tourists appreciate local culture, it enhances the community's self-esteem and strengthens their cultural identity.

Cultural tourism also raises awareness of the importance of preserving local heritage. This encourages communities to actively safeguard, practice, and promote their ICH while also maintaining tangible heritage. As a result, tourism can serve as a catalyst for territorial planning and development. Beyond cultural enrichment, Tourism can attract investment, enhances local businesses, and increases job opportunities. Cultural heritage is not only a major draw for tourists but also plays a crucial role in making a place attractive for long-term investment and sustainable development.

In addition, consider the power that digitalization contributes to this entire framework. Digitalization enables broader access to local cultural heritage, allowing different groups in society to engage with it—even without physically visiting the location. At the same time, it can spark interest in these places, encouraging visits to even the most rural and remote areas. With the rise of social media, tourism providers can reach global audiences more effectively than ever before.

## 2. Culture in Action: Shaping sustainable projects with purpose

### Abstract

In the context of rural development, sustainable cultural projects offer a meaningful way to bridge heritage preservation with economic and social renewal. Rich in ICH, local communities hold valuable resources that, when integrated into cultural tourism or creative industries, can foster inclusive development. Planning and executing cultural projects means harnessing traditions for innovation, income generation, and social cohesion. Successful cultural initiatives are those that involve local communities at every stage – from ideation and planning to implementation and evaluation. This inclusive approach ensures relevance, ownership, and long-term impact. Projects that align with the UN 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can help rural areas meet global objectives while addressing local needs. Sustainable cultural projects must also adapt to contemporary tools and technologies. Whether through digital storytelling, sustainable tourism platforms or e-commerce, rural actors can expand their reach, safeguard heritage, and create meaningful, future-oriented livelihoods rooted in culture and community.

### 1. UN 2030 Agenda and SDGs: Concepts of sustainability and examples of sustainable practices in communities

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, represents a universal call to action to end poverty, protect

the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The Agenda is built upon 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), supported by 169 specific targets.



*Fig. 1 Sustainable Development Goals. Source: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>*

While the SDGs are global in scope, their success depends on local action. While tourism helps to deliver progress across multiple areas, it is explicitly referenced in three SDGs—Goals 8, 12, and 14.

**SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth:** Tourism is a significant global economic driver, generating jobs, income, and entrepreneurial opportunities.

**SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production:** Tourism encourages a more conscious approach to resource use, both by providers and consumers.

**SDG 14: Life Below Water:** Coastal and marine tourism has a deep connection with the health of oceans and marine ecosystems. Protecting marine life ensures that coastal communities can continue to rely on these ecosystems for food, tourism, and cultural identity.

Now think about your own town—there’s surely an example of how tourism helps to highlight intangible cultural heritage. Some examples might include: festivals, folklore, handicrafts, and traditional cuisine. Visitors participate in authentic experiences, while

locals benefit from job creation and the opportunity to pass down traditions (supports SDGs 8, 11, 12).

Once again, think about whether there is an example that includes a digital element. For example: digital platforms to share their stories, promote their tourism products, and sell handmade items globally. This increases visibility, expands markets, and encourages digital inclusion (SDGs 9, 10, 17).

## **2. Sustainable Development and Rural Communities. Relationship between local cultural practices and sustainability**

Sustainable development, as famously defined in the Brundtland Report (1987), is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

As you can see in this definition sustainable development must be deeply rooted in the local context. Cultural tourism and the production of traditional crafts or regional foods open up new economic opportunities that diversify rural income sources. These sectors often rely on small-scale, low-impact activities that are more compatible with sustainable development.

Effective rural development requires cross-sectoral partnerships: between public authorities, private businesses, civil society, and residents themselves. Furthermore, collaboration across generations ensures that traditional knowledge is preserved while embracing the innovative ideas and technologies that younger people bring. This inclusivity also nurtures local ownership of initiatives, making projects more durable and impactful.

As you know, people in rural areas are more likely to form strong bonds with their neighbors and build a sense of community, so in this way it is crucial to create spaces and mechanisms for dialogue and networking. These can include cooperative platforms, local development groups, regional heritage alliances, and digital communities. Fostering communication among rural stakeholders helps break social isolation, encourages collaboration, and aligns efforts toward shared goals.

Innovation is not only about technology—it is also about finding creative ways to adapt traditional practices to current realities. Innovation often emerges from the intersection of cultural heritage and digital tools. By integrating cultural knowledge

with technology, communities can preserve and promote sustainable lifestyles rooted in traditional wisdom. Initiatives such as digital storytelling, online marketplaces, virtual cultural tours, and remote heritage education empower rural communities to share their identity with the world.

### **3. Integration with Local Economy. How cultural tourism can drive rural development.**

Cultural tourism offers an avenue for rural areas to diversify their economies. Rather than replacing existing rural livelihoods, it complements them by integrating cultural expression into tourism experiences. Farmers, artisans, and tradition-bearers become part of a broader value chain that serves the interests of culturally curious travelers. Opening accommodation facilities such as guesthouses, homestays, or eco-lodges, as well as ancillary services like catering, transport, guided tours, and souvenir production, can create a local tourism economy that fosters entrepreneurship and creates jobs at different skill levels.

One of the distinguishing features of cultural tourism is its potential to stimulate local collaboration. By working together—whether as tourism providers, hosts, performers, or producers—community members co-create economic and social value, encouraging more equitable development. Members of the community can find roles suited to their skills and interests, enhancing inclusivity and cohesion.

One of the most pressing challenges in rural development is the migration of young people. Within the framework of cultural tourism young entrepreneurs may find opportunities in digital marketing, tour guiding, event planning, or agro-tourism, while also having the option to work on sustainable businesses that acknowledge their heritage.

Cultural tourists are often keen consumers of local products—whether it be artisanal crafts, homemade preserves, heritage grains, or regional wines. By highlighting these products within the tourism experience, local farmers and producers can gain access to new markets and expand their customer base. This may include direct sales to visitors, participation in farmers' markets, or collaboration with restaurants and lodging providers.

### 3. The Creative Pulse of the Countryside: Innovation in rural contexts

#### Abstract

Rural areas are emerging as vibrant spaces for innovation and creativity, driven by the potential of cultural heritage and community-based economies. The creative economy—encompassing crafts, gastronomy, visual arts, festivals, and other traditional expressions—has proven to be a powerful tool for rural development. Innovation in this context is deeply rooted in cultural authenticity, with local knowledge and skills adapted to contemporary needs. Creative tourism, digital storytelling, and cross-community collaboration are among the practices that support both cultural preservation and economic resilience. As rural communities embrace new technologies and creative models, they open opportunities for sustainable growth, environmental stewardship, and meaningful cultural exchange. This chapter explores how cultural innovation in rural settings can stimulate inclusive development, transform heritage into living practice, and create unique, participatory experiences that benefit both locals and visitors alike.

#### 1. Concepts and Applications: Innovation and creativity applied to rural scenarios.

One of the key drivers of development in rural areas has been the creative economy. As highlighted in the OECD's *Tourism and the Creative Economy* (2014), "Knowledge and skills have become central to the creation of value in the economy as a whole, and the creative industries in particular have become a significant economic, cultural, and social force. They foster growth and employment; contribute to innovation, entrepreneurship, and skills development; support urban and rural regeneration; stimulate exports; maintain cultural identity; and enhance cultural diversity."

Creative economy model encourages collaboration and facilitates the integration of local traditions with contemporary market demands. It also contributes significantly to the appeal of rural areas through creative tourism. This model offers visitors the chance to actively engage in local culture through hands-on, authentic experiences.

In addition to the traditional media channels you're already familiar with, today the internet offers us a wide range of possibilities, as we saw in the previous module: 'Bringing Stories Online: Hosting and Sharing Digital Narratives.' Therefore the integration of technology and digital tools further amplifies the creative potential of rural communities by expanding their reach, improving documentation, and enabling digital storytelling that resonates beyond geographic borders.

Digital storytelling plays a vital role in enhancing creative tourism by bringing local narratives, traditions, and experiences to life through engaging multimedia formats. By combining visuals, audio, text, and personal accounts, communities can share authentic stories that resonate with tourists seeking meaningful and immersive experiences. Technologies help to deepen visitors' understanding of local culture, and encourage respectful engagement with local heritage. For tourism professionals and community members, digital storytelling offers a powerful, low-cost tool to promote destinations, attract culturally curious travelers, and support sustainable tourism development rooted in local identity.

## **2. Tools to Stimulate Creativity: Methods to foster local creativity.**

Take a walk and find a local workspace, a calm and inspiring spot, look at the details, connect ideas with your neighbours—there's no doubt you'll discover countless sources of inspiration right around you.

For creative tourism to thrive, it is essential to establish a strong creative network which can be supported by multiple creative hubs across the region. These hubs should act as anchors for local creatives—craftspeople, artists, performers, and cultural practitioners—by offering space, tools, collaboration opportunities, and visibility. Incentives and supportive instruments (such as grants, residencies, mentorship programs, or marketing support) can encourage creatives to relocate or expand their work into these hubs.

From a tourism development perspective, the strategic location and infrastructure of creative hubs are crucial. Accessibility via road networks, availability of public transportation, and proximity to accommodation options all influence visitor flow.

Repurposing heritage buildings as creative spaces serves a dual purpose. Not only does it provide functional infrastructure for artistic activities, but it also ensures the sustainable reuse of tangible cultural heritage. These buildings, when adapted

sensitively, become focal points of community engagement, creativity, and tourism, adding depth and uniqueness to the regional tourism offer.

A well-structured creative network provides visibility and context, helping practitioners position their work as relevant, valued, and meaningful in a contemporary setting. Through workshops, demonstrations, and co-creation experiences, visitors gain deeper appreciation for traditional knowledge and its modern applications—turning crafts into living practices rather than static displays.

### 3. Innovation Tools: Principles of design thinking, agile methodologies, and social innovation applied to tourism and cultural heritage.

Innovation tools such as design thinking, agile methodologies, and social innovation can be strategically applied to tourism and cultural heritage, empowering rural communities to create meaningful, adaptive, and sustainable solutions.

#### Design thinking

Design thinking is a problem-solving approach that focuses on the needs and experiences of the end user.

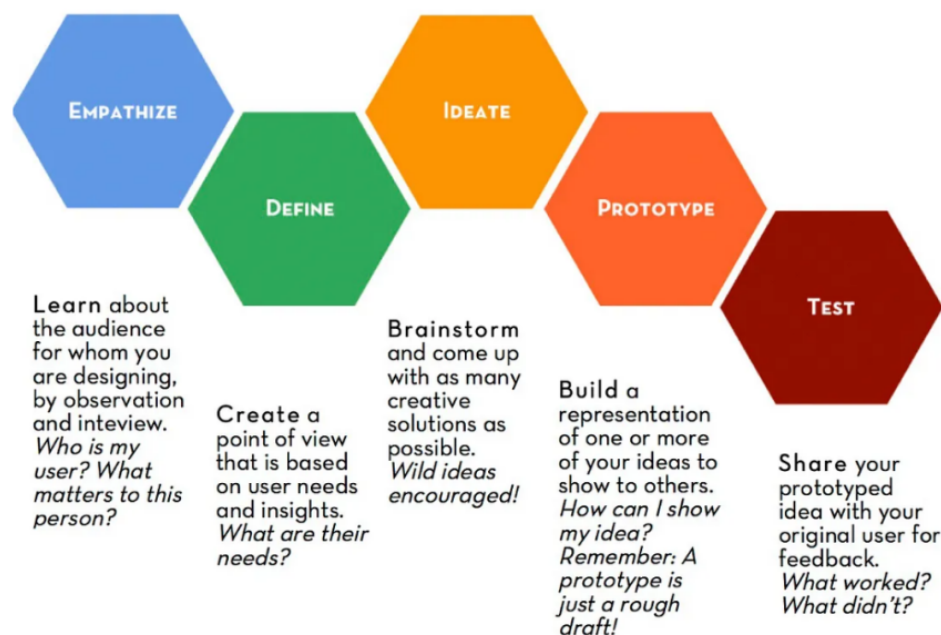


Fig. 2 Design-thinking. Source: <https://vendiclarberg.medium.com/ironhacks-prework-design-thinking-challenge1-4246c8d5c02>

## Agile Thinking

Agile thinking is the ability to find effective solutions in uncertain situations. It is a mindset that values responding to change over following a fixed plan, emphasizes communication and collaboration, focuses on delivering small, usable pieces of work quickly, and supports continuous improvement.

Agile thinking methodologies are rooted in the Agile Manifesto, originally created for software development, but now widely applied across various industries. Some of the most common agile methodologies include:

- **Scrum** – A framework that organizes work into small, time-boxed iterations called sprints. <https://scrumguides.org/>
- **Lean** – A methodology focused on maximizing value while minimizing waste. <https://www.planview.com/resources/guide/lean-principles-101/>
- **Kanban** – a methodology that is focused on visualizing work, limiting work in progress and improving flow. <https://businessmap.io/kanban-resources/getting-started/what-is-kanban-board>
- **Extreme Programming (XP)** – a method emphasizing technical excellence, including practices like pair programming and continuous integration. <https://www.agilealliance.org/glossary/xp/>

## Social Innovation

Social innovation is an approach focused on developing new solutions to social challenges—like poverty, inequality, education or climate change, and improving people's lives. It is centered on communities' real needs, involves multiple stakeholders, aims to transform systems, and incorporates sustainable goals like long-term social and environmental benefits.

Social Innovation Guide in Marginalised Rural Areas:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/enrd/sites/enrd/files/social\\_innovation\\_guide\\_for\\_practitioners.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/enrd/sites/enrd/files/social_innovation_guide_for_practitioners.pdf)

## 4. Case Studies

Here are some real-life project examples where the concepts and ideas from this module are put into practice. Are you ready to dive into the case studies?

### 1. Visit Empordanet

A powerful example of cultural innovation that integrates sustainability, community involvement, and heritage preservation is the creative tourism platform in Spain [www.visitempordanet.com](http://www.visitempordanet.com). This initiative highlights how tourism can be built around

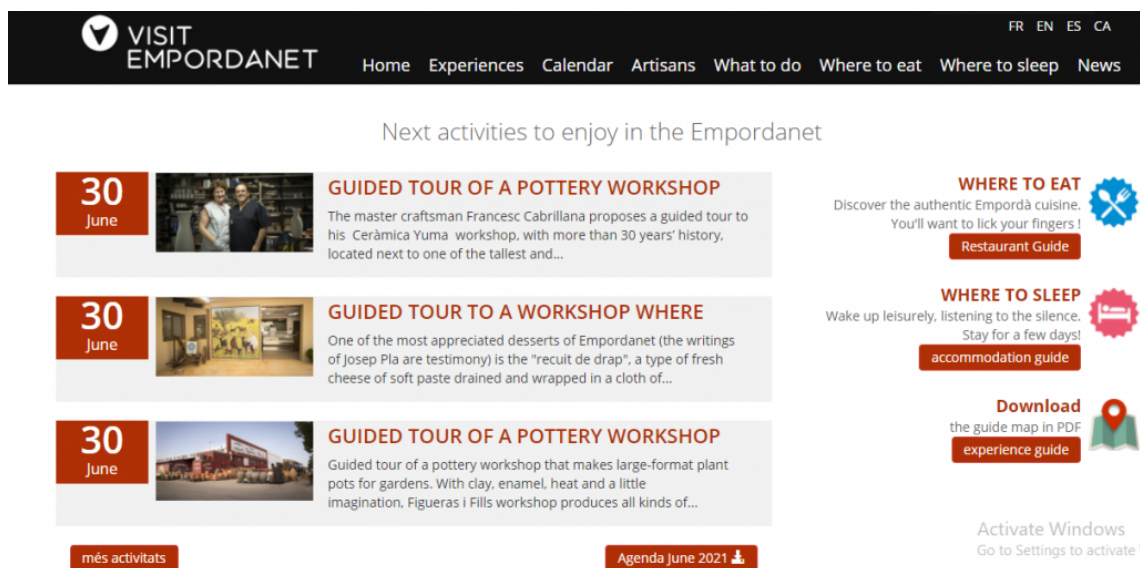


Fig. 3 Visit Empordanet

the intangible cultural heritage of local communities—such as traditional crafts and deep-rooted knowledge of nature. The website acts as a digital catalog, presenting the unique story of the region and offering detailed descriptions of local experiences, hosted by community members themselves. It includes a calendar of guided tours and hands-on workshops, promoting active participation in cultural traditions. By emphasizing storytelling, the platform celebrates the authenticity and uniqueness of each activity, while encouraging visitors to taste, discover, and purchase local products. It is a strong example of strategic tourism planning that not only supports the local economy but also fosters a sense of pride and continuity within the community.



*Fig. 4 Āraiši Lēgendas. Interactive game*

## 2. Āraiši Lēgendas. Interactive game

Using interactive game apps for digital storytelling offers a dynamic and engaging way to promote cultural heritage and support creative tourism. These apps combine storytelling with game mechanics—such as quests, puzzles, and exploration—to immerse users in local traditions, histories, and landscapes.

An excellent example of digital storytelling through interactive game apps can be found in Āraiši, Latvia. There, the interactive game “Āraišu Lēgendas” (“Legends of Āraiši”) was developed as a tourism product using the

game application Actionbound. The app, available for free download, guided players through a map featuring culturally significant sites, each linked to local legends. At each stop, users encountered stories, visual content, and questions that deepened their understanding of the area’s heritage. This interactive format not only educated visitors in an entertaining way but also encouraged exploration of the region, making tourism more engaging and accessible through modern technology, especially appreciated among younger travellers.

# SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

## SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) Think of a tradition, practice, or local skill from your area. How could it be shared with tourists while respecting its cultural integrity?
- 2) Would digital storytelling be effective for this? Why or why not?
- 3) What are the potential risks of promoting ICH through tourism? How can they be mitigated?
- 4) In your opinion, how can we balance tourism growth with the protection of local traditions?
- 5) How can creativity and innovation enhance rural tourism experiences?
- 6) Name a cultural tourism initiative (from the module or elsewhere) that inspired you. What made it successful?

## SELF-EVALUATION TEST

- 1) What are the main components of sustainable tourism, and how do they support intangible cultural heritage (ICH)?
  - a) Promoting only physical heritage through guided tours
  - b) Focus on entertainment and profit through mass tourism
  - c) Economic, environmental, and socio-cultural aspects that ensure long-term heritage preservation
- 2) Which of the following are tools that can enhance rural cultural tourism through digital platforms?
  - a) Outdoor advertisements and newspaper classifieds
  - b) Printed brochures
  - c) Virtual tours, social media, and digital storytelling
- 3) Why is community involvement important in cultural tourism?
  - a) It ensures the community controls and benefits from how their culture is presented
  - b) It reduces the cost of hiring professionals
  - c) It makes tourists feel better

- 4) **What is creative tourism?**
- a) Cultural tourism is only for museums; creative tourism is for festivals
  - b) Creative tourism emphasizes hands-on, participatory experiences and co-creation
  - c) Creative tourism involves watching performances
- 5) **How does cultural tourism support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?**
- a) By encouraging rural communities to give up traditional practices
  - b) By contributing to job creation, responsible consumption, and community well-being
  - c) By discouraging tourism in remote areas to protect them
- 6) **How can traditional crafts and knowledge be innovated for modern relevance?**
- a) By adapting designs and uses while keeping authenticity
  - b) By turning them into mass-produced souvenirs
  - c) By replacing them entirely with new products

### Solutions

- 1) C
- 2) C
- 3) A
- 4) B
- 5) B
- 6) A

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## Additional Information Sources

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