



# ***HOW TO MANAGE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN RURAL AREAS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES***

## ***OVERALL AIM:***

***Gaining knowledge about the role of Cultural Heritage as a possible driver for achieving a sustainable development in rural areas***



# **Erasmus+**

# The potential of Cultural Heritage in rural areas

- European rural areas embody outstanding examples of Cultural and Natural Heritage that need not only to be preserved, but also to be considered and promoted as a factor of competitiveness and sustainable and inclusive growth.
- Despite their potential and the fact that around 46.5% of European gross added value is created in intermediate and predominantly rural areas, most of them are facing economic, social and environmental problems resulting in unemployment, disengagement, depopulation, marginalisation or loss of cultural, biological and landscape diversity.

# The potential of Cultural Heritage in rural areas

- In most cases, tangible and intangible cultural heritage is threatened.
- By demonstrating heritage potential for sustainable growth, this condition can be overturned.
- Around Europe and in Third countries several good practices demonstrated how Cultural and Natural Heritage can become a factor of development and competitiveness by means of introducing sustainable and environmentally innovative solutions.

# The potential of Cultural Heritage in rural areas

- Even if there is a longer tradition in heritage promotion in the urban context, the recognition of rural areas as poles of excellence in heritage capitalization will allow to overcome traditional urban-rural unbalances and will acknowledge Europe as world-leader in promoting innovative use of heritage for rural regeneration.

# The potential of Cultural Heritage in rural areas

- According to the Council of Europe *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*, there is a clear and urgent need **of emphasising the value and potential of cultural heritage as a resource for sustainable growth and quality of life in a constantly evolving society.**
- The challenges presented by the economic crisis, such as unemployment, civic disengagement, increasing social exclusion -phenomena which are even more intense in rural areas- and at the same time the trials brought by climate changes and environmental degradation are leading to increasing and worrying divided societies. In this context, the contribution of Cultural and Natural Heritage to the three main objectives of sustainable development, has been clearly demonstrated.

# The potential of Cultural Heritage in rural areas

- **Social inclusion:** Cultural and Natural Heritage plays an important role in creating and enhancing social capital through its capacity to inspire and foster citizens' participation, create a sense of belonging towards the region, enhance quality of life and well-being, thus reducing social disparities and facilitating inclusion.
- **Economic growth:** the first consequence of Cultural and Natural Heritage in terms of economic development is linked to tourism. Moreover, recently cultural and creative industries have been increasingly contributing to innovation and smart growth and to the creation of new jobs.

# The potential of Cultural Heritage in rural areas

- **Environmental balance:** promoting an innovative and sustainable use of Cultural and Natural Heritage can deeply contribute to sustainable development of European landscapes and environments.
- strengthening the potential of Cultural and Natural Heritage as a driver for rural regeneration and sustainable growth can contribute to **consolidate the role of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development and a fundamental factor for achieving Europe 2020 strategy goals for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth**, as discussed and approved within the framework of the World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders (2010).

# The potential of Cultural Heritage in rural areas

- Cultural and Natural Heritage can be defined as ‘a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and place through time’.
- Moreover, ‘heritage communities’ consists of people who value specific aspects of Cultural and Natural Heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generation’.
- Within this definition, the term cultural heritage encompasses three main categories of heritage:



# Three main categories of Cultural Heritage in rural areas

- ***Tangible cultural heritage***; monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view (UNESCO,1972, Art.1).

# Three main categories of Cultural Heritage in rural areas

- ***Natural cultural heritage***; natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view; geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation; natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty (UNESCO,1972, Art.2).

# Three main categories of Cultural Heritage in rural areas

- ***Intangible cultural heritage***; means 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. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. (UNESCO, 2003, Art.2)

# Three main categories of Cultural Heritage in rural areas

- These three different aspects of cultural heritage deserve the same careful attention in terms of preservation, restoration, and conservation
- At the same time, **these assets have been recognized as valuable roots for economic and environmental development and regeneration, and major contributor to social cohesion and civic engagement.**
- Rural areas all over Europe, and not only, are indeed facing the same constraints linked to depopulation, reduced number of services, ageing, decline of agriculture income, low accessibility, etc.

# Three main categories of Cultural Heritage in rural areas

- Moreover, rural landscapes are continuously threatened by loss of biodiversity, climate changes effects and short management decisions and perspectives.
- Rural areas are facing prospects of marginalization and remoteness in an age of globalization where the attention of governments and media focuses increasingly on the (lack of) competitiveness of urban and metropolitan regions in Europe.
- On the other side, the role of cultural and natural heritage become even more relevant when it comes to rural areas, since those areas are cradle of civilization, of old dialects and languages, uses, handcrafts skills and social practices.
- Moreover, rural landscapes are continuously threatened by loss of biodiversity, climate change effects and short-sighted management decisions.

# Three main categories of Cultural Heritage in rural areas

- Each Member States in Europe is rich of villages, rural landscapes, forests, traditions, etc. which are very diverse in terms of nature, languages, architectures and activities.
- **Many rural areas have, therefore, searched for ways to improve their position by mobilizing local resources, reinventing business models and governance framework and employing policy tools that are believed to foster indigenous social and economic development**
- In many places, these areas have been nurtured and managed effectively so to attract and retain young people, develop new business, and increase biodiversity.
- These rural areas have benefit from CNH in different ways: from the restoration of historical buildings, to the holistic usage of rural landscapes and biodiversity assets, including the revitalization of ancient traditions, arts, and crafts.

# 6 main areas of innovation in rural areas based on Cultural Heritage

- In the framework of H2020 Ruritage project, led by UNIBO 6 Systemic Innovation Areas has been identified
- Their intersection constitute a European model of heritage-led rural development
- They are:
  - ***Pilgrimage***: Heritage routes to sacral and historical places have demonstrated to be a driver for sustainable and economic growth in many rural areas. Some observers describe ‘route tourism’ as the world’s best hope for securing sustainability in travel and tourism<sup>3</sup>. In this sense heritage routes represent a particularly good opportunity for developing less explored areas with valuable CNH that appeal to special interested tourists.

# 6 main areas of innovation in rural areas based on Cultural Heritage

- ***Sustainable Local Food Production***: Using food, wine and gastronomy as a means to profile rural localities has become widespread to improve the economic and environmental sustainability of both tourism and agriculture and has been linked to the development of “alternative” food networks and a renewed enthusiasm for food products that are perceived to be traditional and local, symbolising the place and culture of the destination



# 6 main areas of innovation in rural areas based on Cultural Heritage

- ***Migration***: Beyond the challenges presented by the migration crisis, especially in the countries most affected by the migrants' arrivals (i.e. Greece and Italy), and by the received application of asylum (i.e. Germany), the arrival of migrants can also create opportunities for repopulation, growth and potential for rural regeneration. In this context, CNH, in terms of local tradition, languages, art and crafts, etc. can play an important role in boosting and accelerating the process of integration and regeneration. Moreover, highlighting the positive contribution of migrants to the development of rural areas can be fundamental for the creation of an inclusive society

# 6 main areas of innovation in rural areas based on Cultural Heritage

- ***Art and festivals***: festivals, arts' exhibition and museums have been used as a mean to attract tourists and as an economic resource in many rural areas<sup>6</sup>. Festivals related with ancient local traditions, open-air art exhibition and landscape museums are continuously growing and represent an important source of tourism and jobs creation.

# 6 main areas of innovation in rural areas based on Cultural Heritage

- **Resilience:** damages to CNH can put the livelihoods of communities at risk, as CNH is often a source of employment, income, ecosystem goods and services and element of historical and symbolic importance. Post-trauma reconstruction of tangible and intangible CNH has raised as a crucial topic in the light of the increasingly frequent climate-change related events (floods, extreme weather events, etc.) and in connection with geological disasters (i.e. earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, etc.). Any reconstruction should not just try to erase the trauma but create something valuable for a specific future. The strength of the affected communities to cope and react to natural hazards and the sustainable integration of natural and cultural capital will increase their resilience and contribute to foster the responsibility and the ownership of CNH in rural areas.

# 6 main areas of innovation in rural areas based on Cultural Heritage

- ***Integrated Landscape management***: According to the European landscape Convention (2000), public is encouraged to take an active part in Landscape protection, conserving and maintaining its heritage value, helping to steer changes brought about by economic, social or environmental necessity, and in its planning. Successful examples of participatory landscape management built on heritage -also through their integration in regional and Smart Specialization strategies- demonstrated to be an important driver for rural renaissance.

# 6 main areas of innovation in rural areas based on Cultural Heritage

- In in this perspective, based on 6 innovation areas, heritage is considered as an income factor, mostly in terms of tourism income generation and construction industry revenue;
- heritage is addressed as part of a broader definition of cultural ecosystem services and the impact of intangible benefit provided by CNH (aesthetic, well-being, etc.) is underlined.
- The transposition of living labs, innovation hubs, and co-creation process to rural areas represents another key element of innovation

# 6 main areas of innovation in rural areas based on Cultural Heritage

- Through collective community-management Hubs similar to the ones already included in the EU Heritage Hubs network, it is possible to gather stakeholders and local communities in a new form of collaboration through a co-creation process fostering collective management, responsibility and ownership of Cultural and Natural Heritage in rural areas.



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