



People Places Stories

Building Heritage Community



PEOPLE PLACES STORIES

Engaging with our cultural heritage unites and brings people together across countries and societies. This works best when the focus is not on the divisive aspects, but on the similarities or even commonalities.

People Places Stories (PPS) is an Erasmus + project (2020-22) which focuses on the creation of heritage communities as socio-cultural spaces for creativity, learning and participation. Although inspiration was drawn from the motto of the Council of Europe's Faro Action Plan, also People Places Stories, which was developed to translate the principles of its latest Heritage Convention into practice, our partnership is not tied formally to the CoE's network. The PPS project aims to raise the capacity of citizens, facilitators, and local authorities to engage in these heritage communities.

To reach that goal the project team focussed on the following two outcomes:

Competence Development

People Places Stories aims to raise the capacity of society to exploit cultural heritage as an environment and resource for sustainable social development.

Heritage Community Development ToolKit

Establishing and sustaining a heritage community (HC) is no easy task. People Places Stories has developed an online Toolkit and learning platform to help those interested with practical guideline and real-life examples.



The Goutelas (FR)

Dec 2022, PPS Final Conference Venue

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Background

In 2018, the “European Year of Cultural Heritage” established societal, cross-sectoral cooperation across Europe to increase awareness of the crucial role of culture and heritage for social inclusion and European cohesion. Cultural heritage is very broadly defined and includes cultural, natural, tangible and intangible heritage. The main objectives are set out in the so-called Action Plan of the FARO Convention:

- the strengthening of the sense of belonging to a common European social and cultural space
- the integration of cultural heritage into social, ecological and economic processes
- the development of cultural heritage as a rich and meaningful interdisciplinary learning environment.

These goals can best be implemented and achieved by local groups and initiatives directly in their environment; the heritage communities. Heritage communities are self-organised, self-managed groups of individuals interested in progressive social transformation of relationships between people, places and histories. They are the ideal context for developing key competencies such as cultural awareness, citizenship skills and the ability to learn.

This is also where the new Erasmus+ funded project People, Places, Stories comes in. It develops tools and methods to support capacity building in heritage communities as socio-cultural spaces for creativity, learning, participation and inclusion. The project relies on competence-based training, blended learning and validation of non-formal learning.

People, Places, Stories is targeted at heritage professionals, community mediators, participatory planning facilitators, adult educators, policy makers, citizens and groups. They will be provided with methods to build and expand communities on the ground that are committed to a unifying interpretation and treatment of cultural heritage – in line with the FARO Action Plan.

Faro

The Council of Europe Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro, 2005) focuses on the role of cultural heritage in society. Its principles are taken on board in the European Commission’s “Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century”. Faro works along 4 themes: European identity, social sustainability, regional development, and learning. Cultural heritage is put forward as a vehicle for addressing social challenges and as an ideal ground for sustainable social development. In this view cultural heritage relates to tangible and intangible assets and present habits, customs and traditions which people value and pick up as part of their (common) identity. As such Faro also refers to the right of everyone to engage with the cultural heritage of his choice: the right to participate in cultural life.

Heritage Communities

The Faro approach to cultural heritage crystallizes in one of the key concepts of the Convention: heritage communities. A heritage community consists of (a group of) people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish to sustain and transmit to future generations. The concept places an active responsibility in the group for heritage identification, value making processes and engagement in a common cultural good.

The PPS approach translates in two questions:

- What competences do 'facilitators' need to successfully initiate, develop or maintain a heritage community?
- What competences do community members need for (and acquire by) being an active member of a heritage community?

Facilitators in this context can be:

- Heritage professionals: owners, managers, heritage staff, volunteers, interpreters, heritage workers, association leaders, artists, multipliers.
- Adult Educators: formal and non-formal adult educators, community workers.
- Policy makers: heritage officials, civil servants, planners
- Civil society, community members

The final beneficiaries of the whole process are the community members (citizens), the learners, as individuals. The well-being of this group is the ultimate goal of the whole process. The ICCROM guidance note 2015: People-Centred Approaches to the Conservation of Cultural Heritage expressed this in terms of: "greater sense of ownership; stronger cultural identity; spirituality; increased employment opportunities; increased economic returns through heritage 'added value'; contributions to sustainable development; more sustainable communities; increased cultural and social inclusion and intergenerational integration; more life-long learning experiences; more varied leisure opportunities; poverty alleviation and improved intercultural understanding."



Monastero degli Olivetani (IT)
May 2022, PPS CPD Training

Heritage community contexts

The FARO action plan puts forward a number of requirements for creating a Heritage Community:

- Presence of an active civil society (heritage community) that has a common interest in a specific heritage;
- Presence of people who can convey the message (facilitators);
- Engaged and supportive political players in the public sector (local, regional, national institutes and authorities);
- Engaged and supportive stakeholders in the private sector (businesses, non-profit entities, academia, CSOs, NGOs, etc.).
- Consensus on an expanded common vision of heritage;
- Willingness of all stakeholders to cooperate (local authorities and civil society);
- A defined common interest of a heritage-led action;
- Commitment and capacity for resource mobilisation.
- Readiness of the group to engage in the process of developing diverse narratives based on the people and places;
- Aspirations towards a more democratic socio-economic model;
- Commitment to human rights principles in local development processes (respect for dignity and multiple identities);
- Improved democratic participation and social inclusion of all inhabitants.

These elements not only represent requirements for creating a heritage community but can also be seen as quality criteria and goals for building a successful HC.

The PPS-Competence Framework

The PPS Competence Framework aims to list and describe the competences needed to tackle challenges and tasks in relation to the HC contexts, stages and scenarios.

The PPS competences for facilitators are grouped in four sections:

- Field competences
- Organisational competences and Action Taking
- Social competences and participation
- Personal competences

Heritage community development toolkit

This toolkit is created for people who want to develop, grow or sustain a heritage community in a place or area where they live, work or enjoy cultural life. It is also for those who believe in socio-cultural development through heritage engagement.

The structure of this platform is based on the 6 stages for building and/or improving a heritage community, defined by our project team, that are then linked to the actions and abilities of the PPS competence framework. It comes with practical guidelines and real-life examples. At the end you can also validate your competence.

Access to the toolkit via : <https://pps-eu.org/toolkit/>

Below the individual stages of building a heritage community are listed, as well as the goal going along with each stage and some key questions that are answered in the process of this stage.



Stage 1: Identify the Community

Goal: To identify the place, to define the (type of) community we are going to work with, to scan what is there.

Heritage communities may exist or be formed in many different contexts and so it follows that there are different scenarios for action. There is heritage that is urban or rural, heritage that is strongly natural or cultural, more tangible, or more intangible. The approach used by this PPS partnership has been to build community building scenarios from the perspective of a heritage community's context. In relation to the heritage people value, and according to the various uses they wish to make of it, we have formed three scenarios:

- Community of place
- Community of interest
- Community of practice

Stage 2: Analyse the current Situation

Goal: To bring well-identified elements of the community into the light: governance, structure, sub-groups, networks, STEP or SWOT analysis, cultural mapping

Who are the current communities & stakeholders that are already present in an area/linked to heritage? What distinguishes the groups from each other, what do they have in common? How do people relate to local heritage elements? What do they consider as meaningful for their life, what do they want to share? What is personal space, what is common space, what brings them together? What has a personal value, what has a common value?

Stage 3: Create a Vision and set Goals

Goal: To identify the needs of the community concerning participation in society, in cultural life, in sharing values and heritage and use this to develop a shared sense of purpose / common vision and to set goals for a heritage community initiative.

What are the needs of the people, regarding participation and wellbeing in the local community? What initiatives should be taken to meet these needs? What role has (the local) heritage in this process? Can the Faro principles inspire us? Who are the stakeholders in this process? How can we set up an open dialogue in this respect? How can we identify and invite people to be part of the community building team?

Stage 4: build Capacity, review Skills

Goal: To raise the capacity of the community to meet the goals they set for this HC initiative. To organise competence development and learning for facilitators, stakeholders, and citizens.

What competences do the facilitators need to build, maintain, and sustain this heritage community? What learning/development goals do we envisage in this project? How do we organise learning for the people involved? Can we link up with school or higher education? Can we link up with non-formal adult education?

Stage 5: Engage, Expand, be Active

Goal: To activate and engage the stakeholders, to communicate with the (wider) community.

How do we activate the stakeholders? How do we attract attention and communicate/share the vision of the community? How do we make it exciting & inspiring?

Stage 6: Sustain

Goal: To make the community last beyond the initial (project) activities and results.

How can we establish lasting processes and activities? How can we embed the HC activities in the mainstream social/cultural/economic life of the community? How can we establish a lasting meaning and (added) value for the community?



Goutelas (FR)
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PEOPLE PLACES STORIES



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