



# TEHIC

Towards a European Heritage Interpretation Curriculum

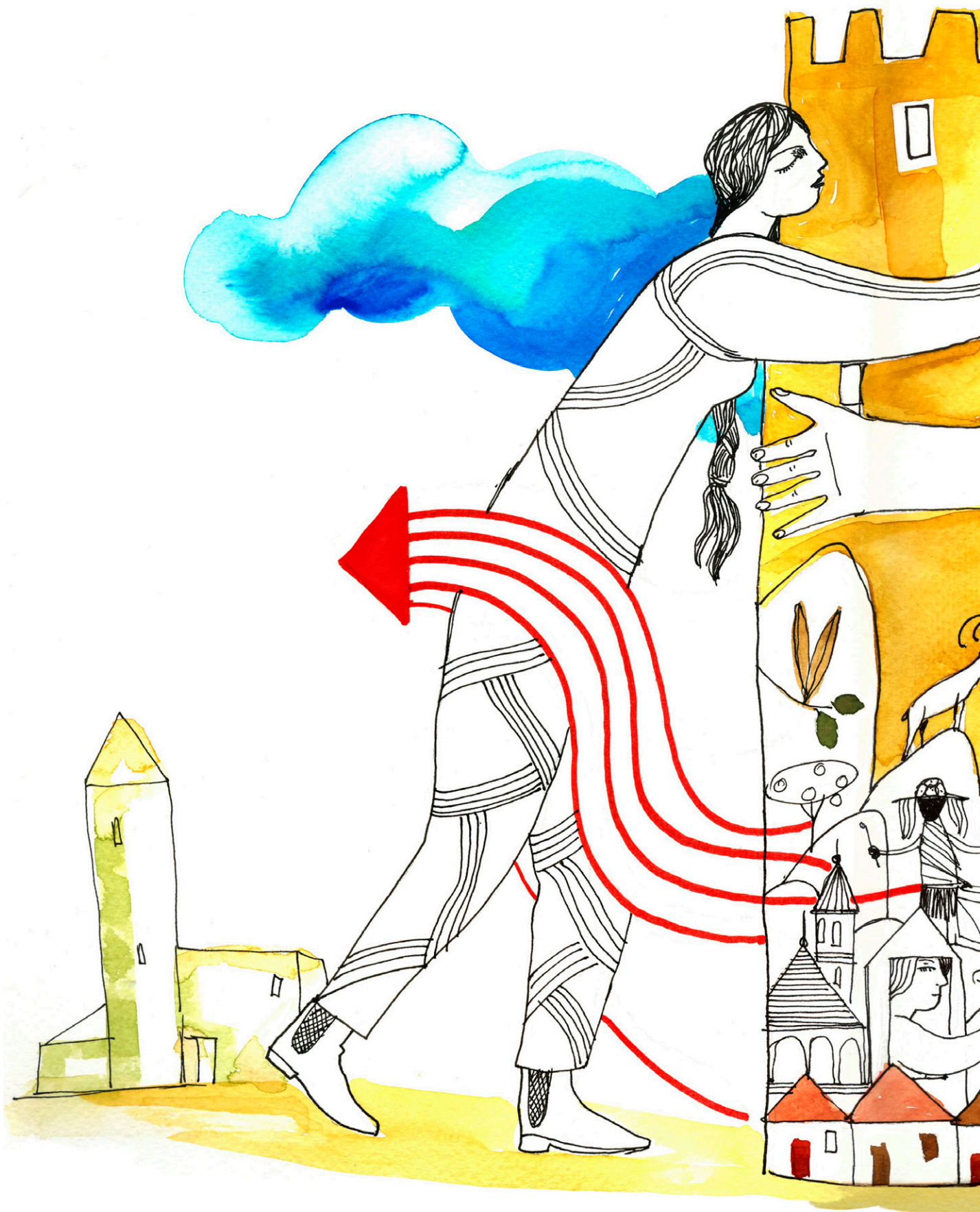
## Heritage Interpretation: a look from Europe

Handbook of **Best Practices**



Co-funded by  
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# TEHIC

Towards a European Heritage Interpretation Curriculum

## Heritage Interpretation: a look from Europe

Handbook of **Best Practices**

**Erasmus + TEHIC-Towards a European Heritage Interpretation Curriculum partners.**  
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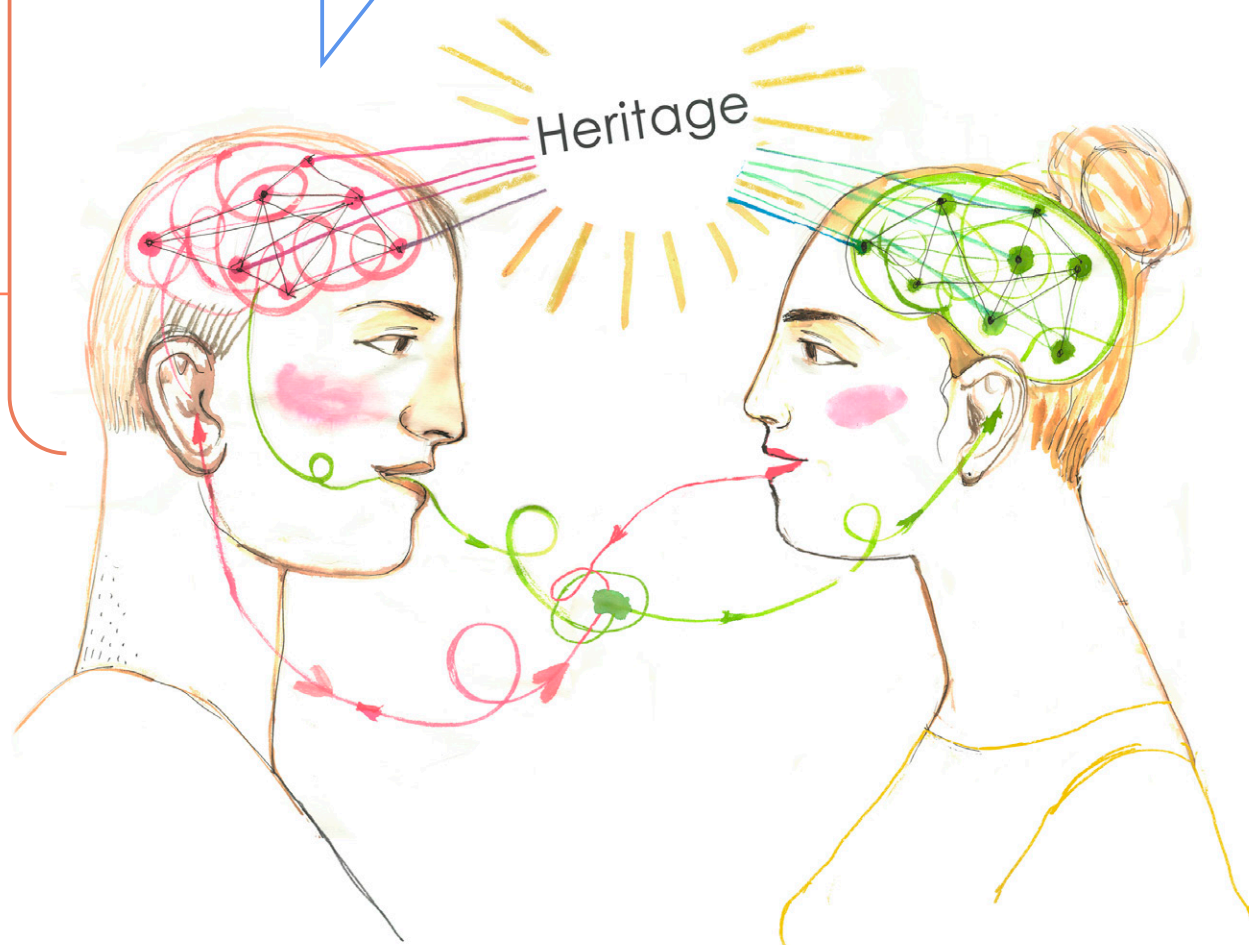
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## Chapter 1

# TEHIC, a project for training in Heritage Interpretation in Europe

By TEHIC team



1. TEHIC, a project for training in Heritage Interpretation in Europe

# TEHIC, a project for training in Heritage Interpretation in Europe. Towards a European Heritage Interpretation Curriculum

By TEHIC team

Effective interpretation is a creative process of strategic communication that forges intellectual and emotional connections between the visitor and the interpreted resource, making them generate their own meanings about that resource, so that they appreciate and enjoy it. (Ham & Morales, 2008)<sup>1</sup>

The Manual of Good Practices in Heritage Interpretation (HI) in the European context offers an innovative approach to interpreters' training and career, as such studies are very uncommon, due to the dispersion of information on interpretation. It also reflects on the future of this sector, which is currently on the rise due to the international community's awareness of the importance of socialising heritage. Heritage communities are responsible for preserving and communicating heritage and thus for transmitting common European values related to cultural identity. Interpretation is a profession related directly to heritage awareness and preservation, as pointed out by F. Tilden: "through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection." (Tilden, 2006)<sup>2</sup>



1 Morales, J.; Ham, S. (2008). *Which interpretation do we mean?* Boletín de Interpretación n.º 19, AIP

2 Tilden, F. (2006). *The interpretation of our heritage*. Asociación para la interpretación del Patrimonio.

## 1. TEHIC, a project for training in Heritage Interpretation in Europe

This work is being conducted thanks to the fact that it is within the framework of a European project to which all the partners have contributed, in addition to the opinion of experts in the field. Prior to this, a document of criteria for good practice in heritage interpretation was prepared in order to select good practice cases. This practical exemplification helps to pool experiences in order to highlight the common conceptual basis for heritage interpretation.

One of the conclusions is that the profession of heritage interpreter is not fully recognised, and its competences are reduced to specific visitor-guide functions. This partial recognition overlooks many fundamental dimensions, as heritage interpreters are focused on education and the transmission of heritage safeguarding values. Full recognition of heritage interpreter as a specific profession would involve understanding the ethics and responsibility of the profession for the preservation of heritage sites and their communication to the public, leading, among other things, to a more conscious perception of heritage as a social construction.

This lack of recognition is due to the unavailability of a comprehensive university curriculum. Currently in Europe there are several training programmes in heritage interpretation or a few isolated university level subjects or courses that contribute to the partial qualification of interpreters. This requires a comprehensive approach to training that promotes professional recognition, addresses students' learning needs, and reduces skills mismatches.

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The project TEHIC, Towards a European Heritage Interpretation Curriculum, which brings together universities, professional associations, and heritage administrations from several European countries, was born from the awareness of this lack. The aim of the project is to develop a syllabus on cultural and natural heritage interpretation for education in the Common European Area and to make it available as an open resource, so that it can be used by universities or institutions wishing to offer postgraduate or other courses in this field. All this within the general framework of the Erasmus+ programme call 2022 KA220-HED, which promotes understanding and integration at European level by supporting education and heritage interpretation.

The curriculum proposal must be committed to this training, promoting employability in a sector that connects areas such as cultural and natural heritage, sustainable cultural tourism, and education, and makes an innovative contribution to the valorisation of European cultural heritage in the context of the Millennium Development Goals 2030.

## 1. TEHIC, a project for training in Heritage Interpretation in Europe

Therefore, the main goal is to reach a consensus on curricular contents in order to develop a qualified training in heritage interpretation at European level, promoting the employability of professionals and the valorisation and conservation of cultural and natural heritage.

### The project's specific objectives are:

- Collecting information from and analysing expert training programmes in heritage interpretation in Europe.
- Gathering and comparing examples of good practice in heritage interpretation training in participating countries.
- Developing a proposal for a European curriculum for training in heritage interpretation

With this project, we will contribute to the achievement of high-level skills and to improve knowledge transfer in the field of cultural and natural heritage in general, and of heritage interpretation in particular.

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The project is structured in six thematic work packages, coordinated by different partners. The main actions include:

- Drafting a Manual of Good Practices as a starting point for discussion and sharing regarding the concept of heritage interpretation and the criteria for selecting good practices in this field.
- The draft of a quality syllabus on heritage interpretation and the adaptation of its contents to a MOOC format, which will primarily serve to disseminate the project contents and the protocols of recommendations to potentially interested universities.
- The content of the MOOC will be tested through an online course for the selected target group.
- Finally, the content of the project will be uploaded to open repositories where all resources can be shared.

The expected result is a European training programme that will help to consolidate heritage interpretation as a recognised profession. To this end, the results of each stage of the project will be assessed in collaboration with the selected target group: students of courses that develop areas related to cultural and natural heritage and professionals working with heritage on an interdisciplinary basis.

## 1. TEHIC, a project for training in Heritage Interpretation in Europe

Therefore, the first step is the preparation of this Manual of Good Practices, coordinated by the IAPH and the AIP with the cooperation of all partners. In a dynamic and changing world, where practice is always ahead of theory, the aim has been to identify some of the criteria that we consider key to define a good interpreting practice. This will provide a starting point for a common approach to establishing interpreting skills at a European level.

We hope that this contribution will be useful for those willing to work to safeguard cultural and natural heritage, by creating emotional and intellectual connections between people and heritage, by fostering a critical spirit to rethink heritage today with the social challenges we are facing.

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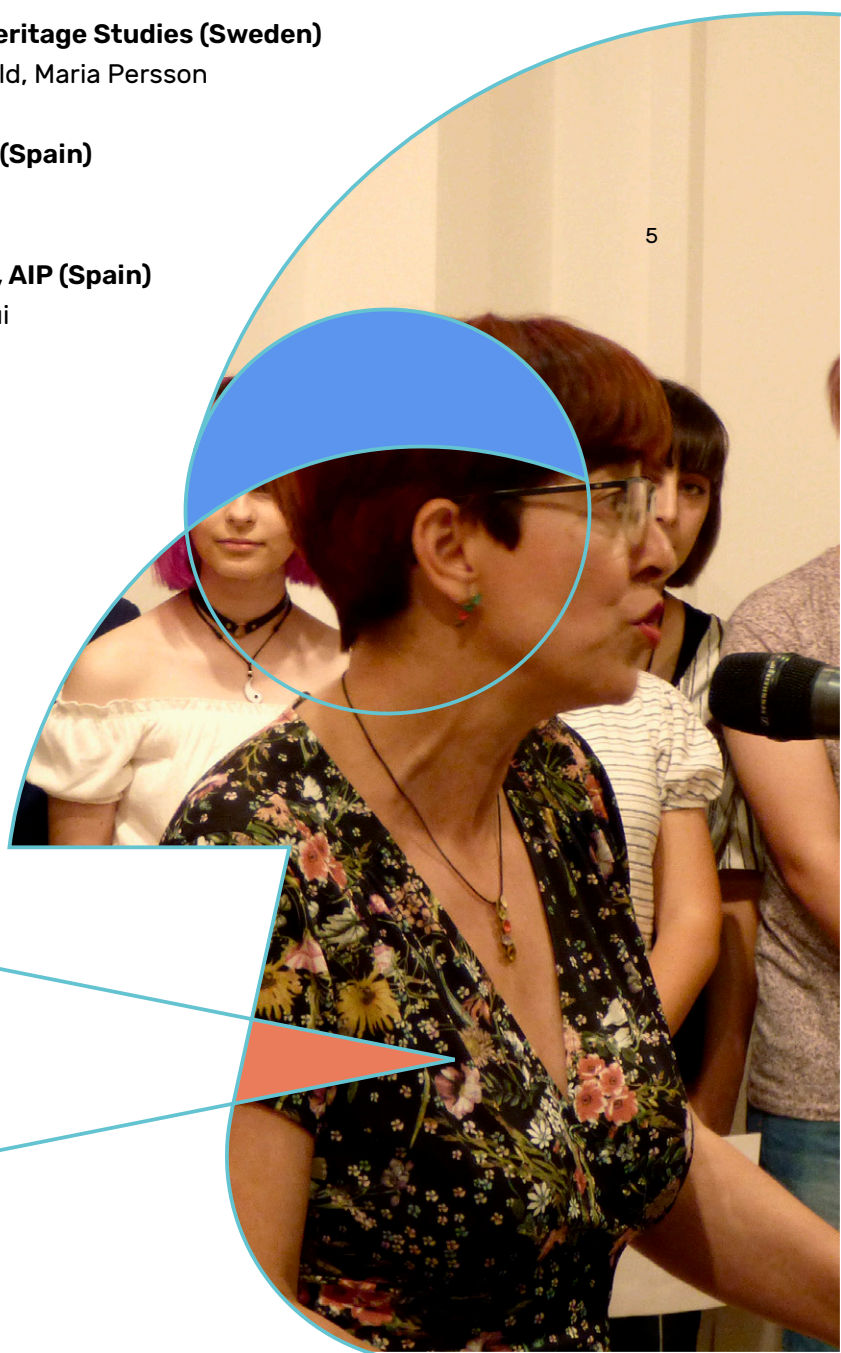
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## Chapter 2

# An overview of the concept of heritage interpretation and its evolution

By Isabel Fernández Domínguez



2. An overview of the concept of heritage interpretation and its evolution.

# An overview of the concept of heritage interpretation and its evolution

By Isabel Fernández Domínguez

Heritage Interpretation can contribute to building a better World.

The principle of healing. Ted Cable<sup>1</sup>

*Global Alliance for Heritage Interpretation 2021*

## Origins of the discipline of heritage interpretation

Heritage Interpretation (HI) emerged at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the same time as the declaration of the first protected natural areas in the USA and various conservationist and pedagogical innovation movements, which promoted learning in contact with nature. (Fernández 2022, 63).

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Two key authors at the onset of heritage interpretation were undoubtedly John Muir and Enos Mills. It is to Muir, a naturalist, scientist, writer, and populariser, that the transcendent meaning we give to the verb to interpret in the discipline is attributed. (1871): “listening, observing, understanding and learning the secrets of the wild, appropriating the deepest meaning of life.” (Brunelli 2019, 16).

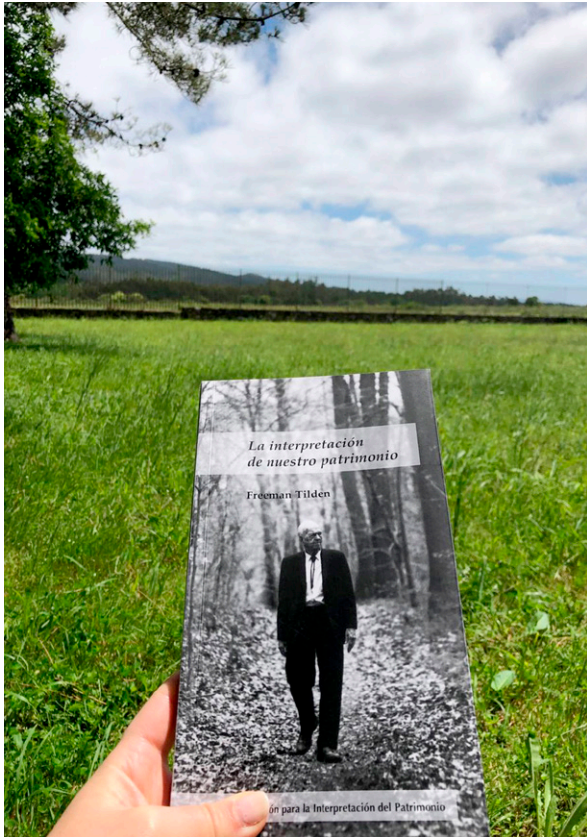
Mills, with a storyteller’s profile, worked as a guide, developing his own method which he taught to other nature guides at the “Trail School”. He is the author of this excerpt, which could well be applied to today’s interpretive guided tours:

“The nature guide is at his best when he analyses facts in such a way that they appeal to imagination and reason, puts flesh and blood on cold data, turns inanimate objects into life stories. He deals with principles instead of isolated information, he provides biographies instead of classifications. People are visiting for recreation and need relaxation, intellectual insights, not boring and sterile data, nor rules and manuals. What the guide tells is basically nature literature rather than an encyclopaedia of natural history.” (Brunelli 2019, 30).

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<sup>1</sup> Any quotation from foreign authors is a translation from the Spanish version. As the original texts are not available, we offer here our English translation, which may not exactly match the original wording.

## 2. An overview of the concept of heritage interpretation and its evolution.



Freeman Tilden's "Interpreting Our Heritage". Spanish version translated by the Spanish Association for Heritage Interpretation (Asociación para la Interpretación del Patrimonio, AIP), 2006. **Picture by Verónica del Río.**

## Tilden's principles

**F**reeman Tilden was a journalist and consultant to National Parks in the USA. He defined the discipline in 1957 in his work "*Interpreting Our Heritage*", which is considered to be the "*Bible*" of heritage interpretation. According to Tilden, heritage interpretation is:

"An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information". (Tilden 1977, p. 8.).

After years observing visitors' behaviour, he drew up a set of principles which, despite being over seventy years since their publication, they still are very much alive:

1. Interpretation should **relate** what is being displayed and described to something within the **visitor's experience and personality**.
2. Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is **revelation** based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
3. Interpretation is an **art** which combines many arts regardless of subject material.
4. The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction but **provocation**.
5. Interpretation should aim to present a **whole**, rather than a part. It must be a **comprehensive approach**.
6. Interpretation for children must be designed specifically for children, and **not simply a dilution** of programs and information for adults.

## 2. An overview of the concept of heritage interpretation and its evolution.

### The concept of heritage interpretation

It is not surprising that a discipline that originated more than a hundred years ago has been the focus of attention of many people who, either from a more professional approach or from a didactic point of view, have tried to define it. A document compiling different definitions of heritage interpretation (Illanes, F., 2022) lists up to 41 different definitions. We will focus on just two of them, as a way of highlighting some aspects that are considered particularly relevant.

“Effective interpretation is a creative process of strategic communication, which forges intellectual and emotional connexions between the resource that is being interpreted and the audience, generating their own meanings about the resource, so that people can appreciate and enjoy it.”  
Sam Ham & Jorge Morales<sup>2</sup>, 2008.

From this definition it is important to point out that creativity, broadly understood, must be always present in the whole process: either in the application of the techniques, or in the participatory approach with the community, or in the adaptation of the methodology to the context and in the final graphic solution, etc. It is strategic communication because it is intentional; we design the messages that we want to convey to visitors. We seek intellectual connections, so that people understand what we are communicating, but also emotional connections, provoking emotions intimately linked to the meaning of heritage. And even beyond that, generating reflection and stimulating thought to get people to construct their own meanings about the legacy. It is therefore not only a conceptual orientation, but also an emotional and even spiritual one, the latter being understood in a deep sense of human enquiry.



Example of an interpretive project, “*Jocs de Dames*”. This is a guided activity where the history of a part of Catalonia’s Pyrenees is reflected from a feminist perspective after a hard research work on the role of women in the territory. Designed by Cristina Simó, guide-interpreter at Ecomuseu del Valls d’Àneu.

Picture by Isabel Fernández.

2 Ham, S., Morales, J. (2008). “¿A qué interpretación nos referimos?” (“Which interpretation do we mean?”), Bulletin of the Asociación para la Interpretación del Patrimonio, AIP (Association for Heritage Interpretation, Spain) No 19. p. 7.

## 2. An overview of the concept of heritage interpretation and its evolution.

"Interpretation is a purposeful approach to communication that facilitates meaningful, relevant, and inclusive experiences that deepen understanding, broaden perspectives, and inspire engagement with the world around us." (National Association for Interpretation, 2021).

This definition reiterates the idea of intentional communication. Here it is important to stress this "facilitate", in the sense of providing the means for these experiences to take place, to make them possible. That they are meaningful and relevant means that people can relate it to something that is within their experiences and knowledge, and that they feel that, in some way, it has something to do with them, also from an emotional point of view. It is perhaps the last part that provides the newest features. In terms of being more inclusive, it seeks to integrate other voices, narratives, and groups from an intersectionality approach, but also to reach a diversity of audiences. The part regarding "to deepen, broaden, inspire and engage" is aligned with a clear goal of social transformation.

Interpretive Activity at Ras Nouadhibou, Mauritania. **Picture by CBD-habitat.**



2. An overview of the concept of heritage interpretation and its evolution.

## Heritage interpretation is a strategic communication aiming to provoke emotions

As noted in the previous section heritage interpretation is a strategic activity in the sense that it works with the creation of a carefully designed message that is identified prior to the interpretative intervention.

The ultimate goal of heritage interpretation is to preserve the legacy, generating a sense of stewardship and respect for the resources. As in any heritage intervention, a series of objectives linked to the resources and the place, to the visitors, to the community and to the institution itself are outlined.

In addition, for each interpretative intervention there are a series of objectives that we must draw up, and of course reflect later on in our intervention: these are the **specific heritage interpretation communication goals**. These have a peculiar format of writing, and we can identify three different types (Veverka 1994); an example of a guided tour in a *castro*\* is also included:

- **Conceptual or knowledge goals** – “I want visitors to understand ...”  
E. g.: “I want visitors to understand the strategic relevance of the location of this *castro* in the territory.”
- **Emotional or affective goals** – “I want visitors to feel...”  
E. g.: “I want visitors to be surprised by the similarities between the way of life of the people who inhabited the *castro* in ancient times and the current communities living in this area today.”
- **Attitudinal or behavioural goals** – “I want visitors to do (or not to do)...”  
E.g.: “I want at least 50% of the visitors to actively participate in a dynamic that the guide will propose at one of the stops to recreate the organisation of the community within the *castro*.”

It is important to emphasise that every time we design an interpretative intervention, we not only want people to understand key information about the place, but we also want to provoke a series of emotions linked to the heritage and to encourage appropriate and participatory behaviour. If the experience has been transcendent, that behaviour is more likely to be extended beyond, into other similar contexts and experiences.

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\* *castro*, from Latin “castrum”. In Spain, a fortified settlement, usually pre-Roman.

## Heritage interpretation as a communication tool

One of the best-known aspects of heritage interpretation is that it is a valuable communication tool. It is important to understand that, in order to have an impact on our target audience, one of the keys lies in the knowledge of such audience. Sometimes we start from visitor profiles that have been developed by the organisation by collecting direct information or we have been able to talk to the person in charge of the group to give us more information about their needs and interests. Of course, we have to know much about what we are going to work on, the legacy we are going to show, always trying to be up to date, incorporating new research and new findings. Once we have these two "legs", we must select those techniques that are most appropriate to achieve both a conceptual and affective connection with visitors, and to create the right atmosphere for an interpretative opportunity. Some of these techniques include comparisons, metaphors, similes, personalisation, enlarging the scale of time or space, among others.

Sometimes this scheme is represented graphically by a triangle in which the three sides are balanced: an equilateral triangle. Another way of reflecting the same idea is with a three-legged stool. Each of the legs must have been carefully designed, cut, and assembled so that the stool will stand up without wobbling and can serve the purpose for which it was built.

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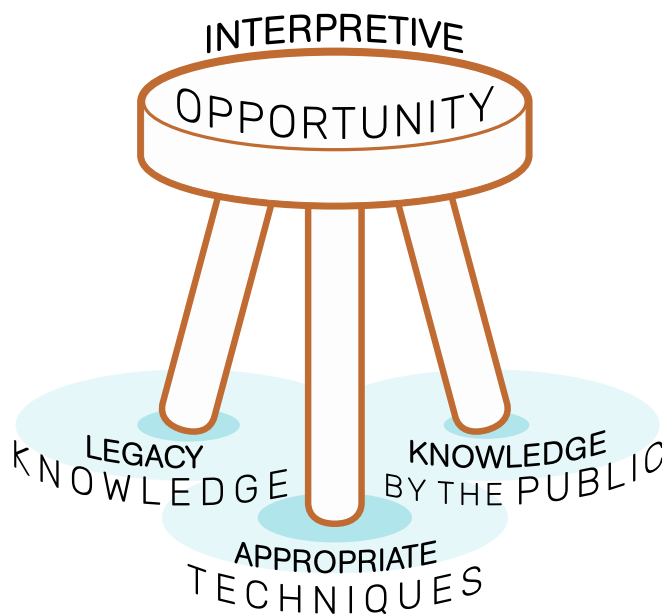


Image representing the three "legs" of heritage interpretation. Source: Isabel Fernández.

## 2. An overview of the concept of heritage interpretation and its evolution.

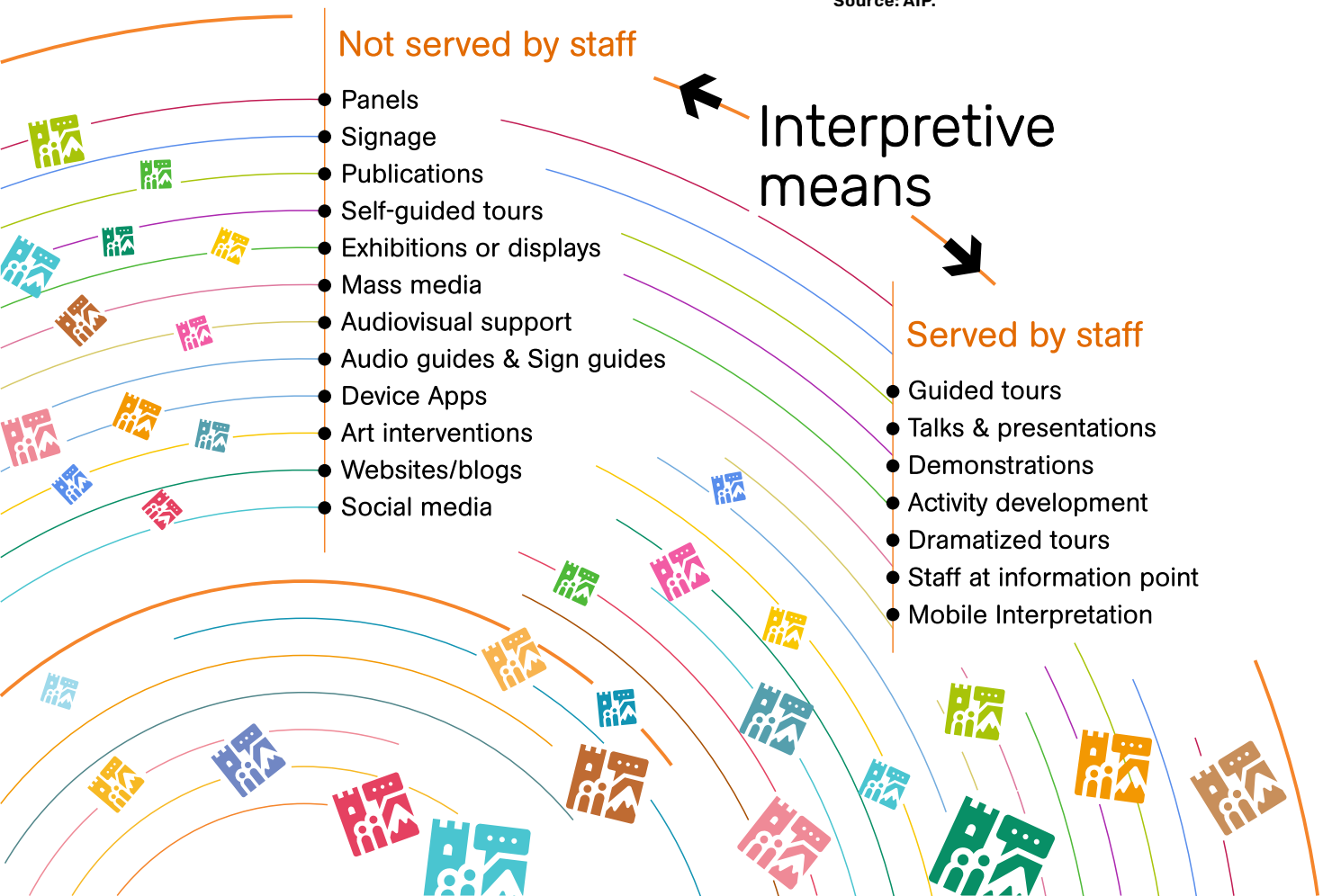
### Sequential and non-sequential communication

Although there are several authors who have worked, and still keep working, on Tilden's principles and go on the discipline's research, one of the most relevant is Sam Ham. Sam is professor emeritus at the University of Idaho, he has taught seminars around the world, and has published books and articles that inspire interpreters around the worldwide.

One of his most relevant contributions has been the differentiation between sequential and non-sequential communication. For this purpose, reference should be made to the classification of the interpretative means. These can be split into staffed and unstaffed facilities:



Cover of the book by Sam Ham "Interpretation. Making a difference on purpose." Spanish version by Asociación para la Interpretación del Patrimonio (AIP), 2014.  
Source: AIP.



## 2. An overview of the concept of heritage interpretation and its evolution.

Sam Ham connects sequential communication with staffed facilities and non-sequential communication with non-staffed facilities.

In the case of **sequential communication**, the person planning the interpretative activity can design the message to be conveyed in such a way that it has a sequence, i.e., that person decides what to tell first and what to tell later so that the narrative can be better understood. In addition to this, visitors, as these are staffed media, will receive the message in the same order as the interpreter decides.

In the case of means unattended by personnel, as interpreters we cannot know in which order visitors will receive the messages we design, for example, in the case of an itinerary with interpretive panels. Even assuming that the trail is one-way, as it is a self-guided format, we cannot be sure that people will read each and every panel. This is the reason it is **non-sequential communication**, since, as interpreters, although we design a message to be conveyed, we cannot be sure that the message will be received in a given sequence.

The relevance of this is that, as interpreting professionals, it conditions the way we work in the design of interpretative messages and means.

## The *TORE* model and the universal concepts

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Another highlight in the evolution of the discipline has been Sam Ham's development of the *TORE* model, which summarises the four qualities that interpretation must have in order to be effective, which will be explained in reverse order later on:



By **enjoyable** he means that it must be able to attract and hold the attention of the public. It does not mean that it has to be fun, although of course it can be, but a guided tour of a concentration camp that talks about human pain, dignity and cruelty can also be enjoyable.

It is **relevant** if, on the one hand, it has meaning, i.e., people are able to relate it to something they already have in their minds. As interpreters we work to trace "paths" between nodes, between something new we want to show them and the knowledge they

## 2. An overview of the concept of heritage interpretation and its evolution.

already possess. On the other hand, it must be relevant to the ego, i.e., people must feel that what we are telling them has to do with them, with their life and their experiences.

This concept is absolutely key for communication in heritage interpretation, for those experiences to be truly meaningful. To this end, a number of issues are addressed, one of the most important of which are the so-called tangible, intangible and universal concepts.

**Tangible concepts** are those related to the legacy to be interpreted that can be perceived by our senses, which can be measured, touched, weighed, etc.; such concepts are data, information. In a gallery forest, the following are examples of tangible items: the river, the water, a mill, a bridge, stones, trees, a path, and so on. Intricately linked to these are the **intangible concepts**, which are those abstract attributes that reveal the true meaning of the resources. Some examples of intangible items are harmony, pollution, biodiversity, ecosystem, work, relax, life, culture, joy, love, family, death, purity, and so on. Within the latter, we select those that have a higher relevance: they are the **universal concepts**. Their name comes from the fact that they are important for everyone, but it is essential to understand that each individual goes through the world with "his or her own baggage", containing our values, experiences, and culture. For example, we all have an idea of the concept of "death", but this will be screened by our own experiences of it, as well as the values associated with it in our family, social environment, and culture. Continuing with the examples listed above, we might select work, life, culture, joy, love, family, and death.

People understand information better when it is **organised**, as it is easier to process. Simple examples of how to organise information are, on the one hand, to tell stories chronologically, for example, at an archaeological site, from back forwards, or from the end backwards. Also, with regard to the structure of texts, whether for unattended environments or for oral interventions by a guide; as interpreters we tell stories, and it is important that these stories have a standard format containing an introduction, a development and a conclusion or closure of the message we want to convey.

One of the most distinguishing features of heritage interpretation is that it is **thematic**. A Theme is the core idea that we want to convey to the visiting public and that we want them to remember and believe when they finish reading a panel or participating in a guided tour. People retain messages better when it is a complete idea expressed in a sentence format with subject, verb, and predicate. Examples of themes are: "Women weave on land, thread by thread, the history of work at sea", "Rivers used to give bread to families" or "Villages are born from the earth".

## Heritage interpretation as a management tool

In addition to this approach to heritage interpretation as an effective communication tool, it is undoubtedly also relevant as a management tool in places of heritage interest. To this end, it is important to highlight some issues about the approach to be developed that make heritage interpretation particularly valid for this purpose:

- The aim is for visitors to become allies in the preservation of the legacy, without diminishing their enjoyment of the experience.
- The community must be involved, both in the development of contents and in the more emotional part, linked to the meanings of the legacy.
- It is also important that, in approaching these projects, the local population is involved in direct or indirect decision-making related to the management and dissemination of heritage resources, not only by implementing interpretative projects for the community, as these can also arise from or within the community itself and can be supported from technical aspects of the discipline by heritage interpretation professionals.



- Heritage interpretation can help, together with other tools, to make visible and give some social legitimacy to other silenced narratives and voices present in social conflicts throughout history.
- A well-planned and executed heritage interpretation, with a vision that integrates different perspectives and with a medium and long-term vision, can collaborate, in a differentiating way, with the socio-economic development of the territories and their communities.

Example of training in the methodology and techniques in heritage interpretation for shellfish gatherers of the Confraría de Pescadores (Fisherwomen's Guild) de San Telmo (Pontevedra, Spain), within the framework of a programme for guided tours created by shellfish gatherers themselves, in the aim of dignifying and raising awareness of their profession. **Picture by Isabel Fernández.**

## 2. An overview of the concept of heritage interpretation and its evolution.

In short, this managerial vision of heritage interpretation therefore fosters:

- The conservation and management of legacy and territory.
- Community involvement, care, and development.
- The visitor experience.

## Some aspects of the evolution of heritage interpretation as a discipline

Just like any other discipline, heritage interpretation has evolved since its origins, adapting to the times, to new knowledge, research, approaches, and social changes. Obviously, not all transformations are equally fast and do not have the same permeability in different contexts and cultures; in fact, many of them continue to establish themselves in society, thus, in a sense, forcing their inclusion in the different disciplines and professions. Of course, heritage interpretation is not, and should not be, immune to these. Other transformations are likely to have a long way to go, and many are still to come.

The following table summarises some of the main changes and developments in heritage interpretation over the years. It is important to note that not all of them are perfectly defined, but rather they reflect a trend. Some refer to philosophy and principles, others are based mainly on the methodology of implementation.

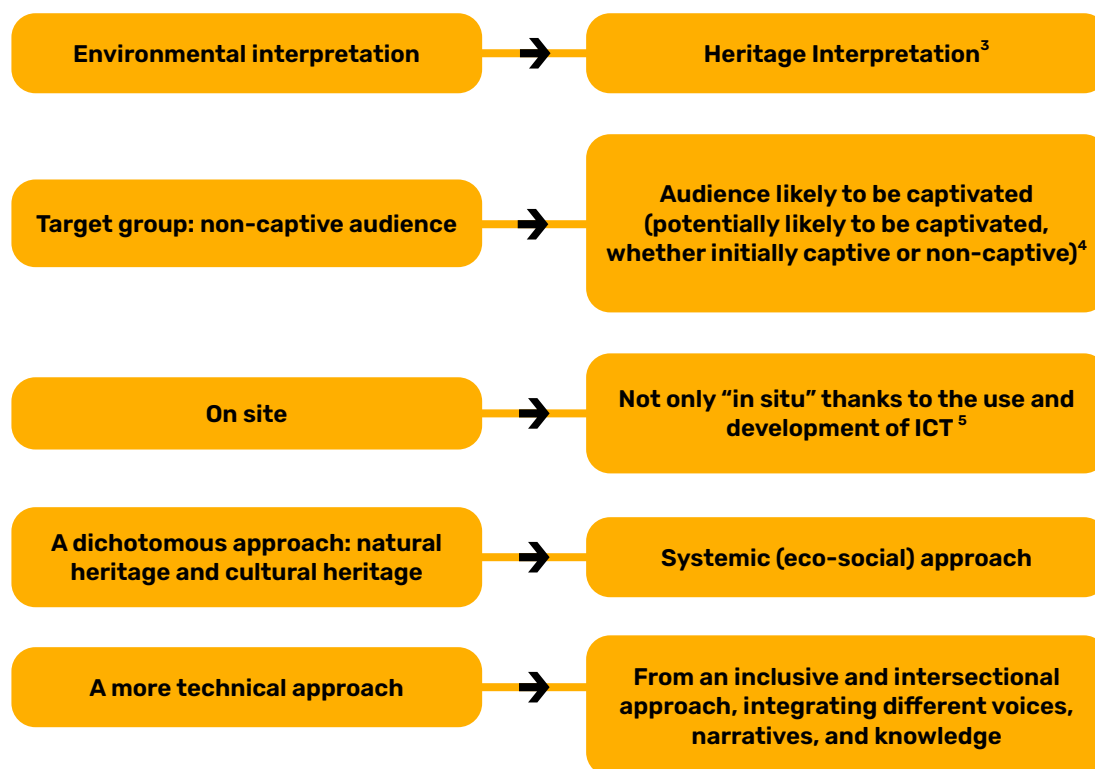
As this discipline emerged in the context of the declaration of the first protected natural areas, it was initially called "environmental interpretation", but in 1985, the Canadian Congress decided to change the name to "heritage interpretation". Without a doubt, this vision is much more inclusive than the previous one, as it includes distinct types of heritage: natural, cultural, industrial, archaeological, and so on: these, in turn, are interrelated with each other. Nevertheless, this does not overcome the idea of the dichotomic vision between the natural and the cultural, as two aspects separated from each other, which certainly does not reflect reality, where such a separation does not exist, or is very blurred, or even cannot (and should not) be separated for a deep understanding.

This is why for some years now and at a more general level, a more inclusive approach has been promoted, in which both environmental and socio-economic aspects are reflected: it is the so-called eco-social approach, and it is intricately linked to emerging concepts, such as ecosystem services or cultural rights.

## 2. An overview of the concept of heritage interpretation and its evolution.

This vision must also be embraced by heritage interpretation in order to continue evolving positively and helping people to understand the world by integrating the four aspects of sustainability: environment, society, economy, and politics.

### Evolution of heritage interpretation



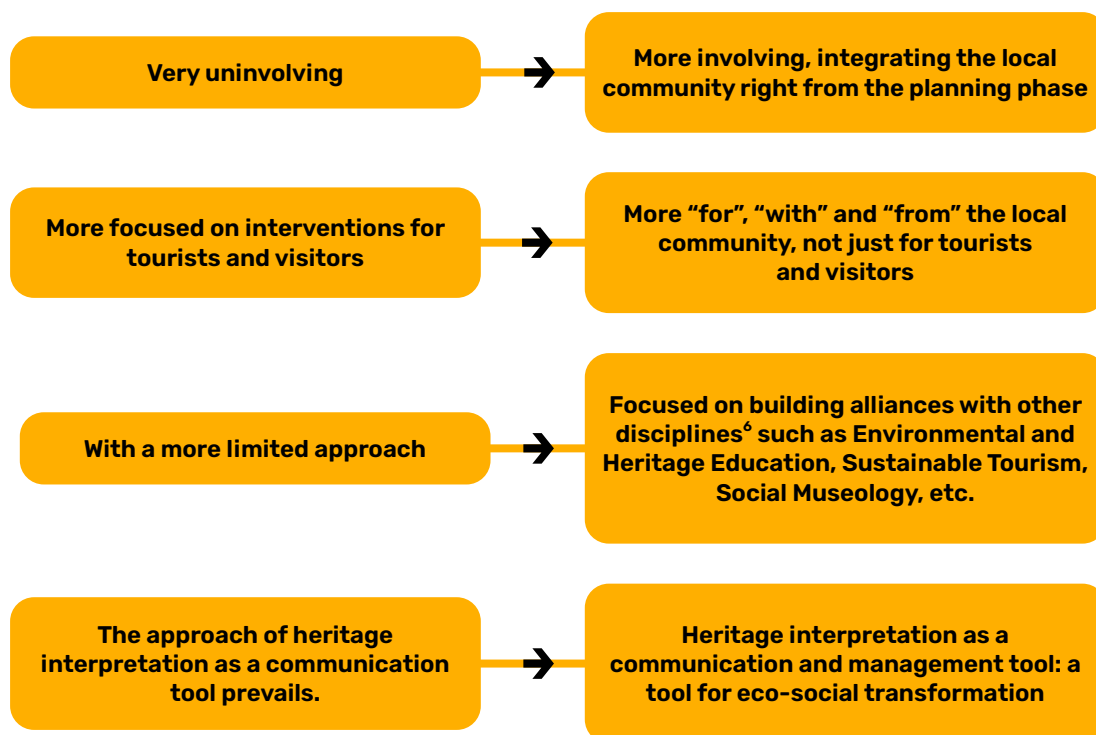
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<sup>3</sup> World Congress on Heritage Interpretation held in Banff, Canada (1985).

<sup>4</sup> Conclusions of the XXI Conference of the (Spanish) Association for Heritage Interpretation, Seville (2022). P. 26. *"Interpretation can be addressed to people in their free time, but also in formal or informal educational contexts, since the provocation sought by interpretation does not depend on whether the audience is a school audience or a general public, but on the power of the message, the objectives and the methodology used. Therefore, it is the means that must be adapted to the target audience, to their age, context, and interests."*

<sup>5</sup> Conclusions of the XXI Conference of the (Spanish) Association for Heritage Interpretation, Seville (2022). P. 27. *"It is desirable that interpretation takes place on site (in the presence of the interpretative element), in line with the latest trends of presenting heritage in its original, territorial, and social context. Heritage is not only indissociable from the environment, but also from the community that shares it. However, we do not renounce the interpretation of heritage without presence, in any of the spaces in which it is located (museums, interpretation centres, natural spaces or other facilities), as the message can create the interpretative context that contributes to situating it in its place, time and social environment. ICT can be a good tool for this purpose."*

## 2. An overview of the concept of heritage interpretation and its evolution.



Key issues in the evolution of the discipline of heritage interpretation. Source: Isabel Fernández.



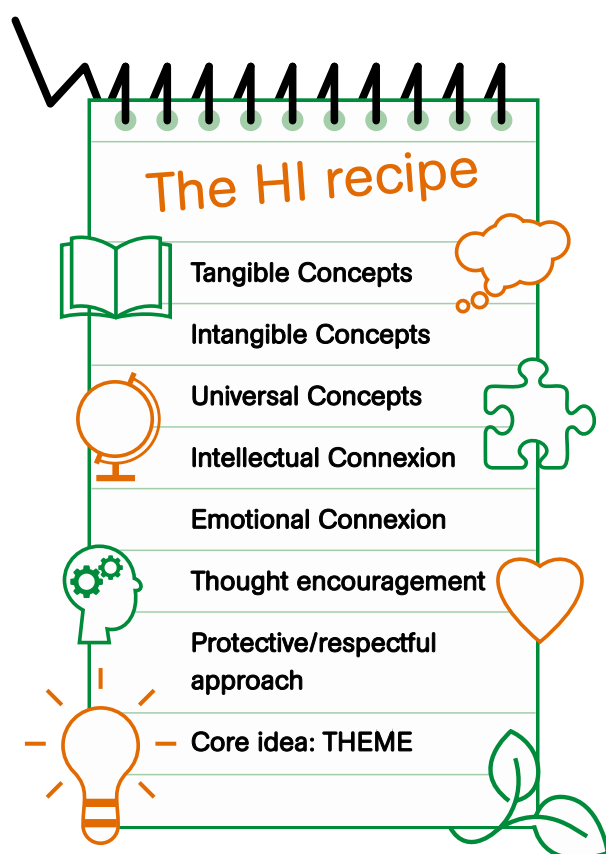
6 Conclusions of the XXI Conference of the (Spanish) Association for Heritage Interpretation, Seville (2022. P. 27. "Interpretation has great potential to build bridges with other areas of heritage with which it shares basic goals, such as museology, cultural mediation, environmental and heritage education, and sustainable tourism strategies, among others."

## 2. An overview of the concept of heritage interpretation and its evolution.

### The heritage interpretation recipe

As a discipline in which creativity is one of its keystones, there is no mathematical formula that, regardless of the legacy, the context, and our goals, can be implemented in a standardised way. Therefore, each project must be unique, seeking its own essence, avoiding commonplaces. One of the most enriching features of human beings, territories, meanings, practices, and traditions is diversity, even if they share certain aspects in common.

Even so, we can extract a series of "ingredients" that must be present in any interpretative intervention, which have been discussed throughout this chapter. They are shown below as a recipe for heritage interpretation:



The heritage interpretation recipe. Source: Isabel Fernández based on the work by Morales, J. Guerra, F.J., Serantes, A. (2009).

The ideal amount of each of these ingredients to be used in any interpretive project is learnt through knowledge, training, and practice, which takes place over time, just as is the case with cooking.

In addition to the above, something that cannot be missing in heritage interpretation (neither in cooking nor in life in general) is passion. As previously mentioned, heritage interpretation cannot be conceived without the emotional part that it entails, both from the people who receive or participate in the activity, as well as from those who have designed it. Passion must be present in what we do if we have a purpose, a way to contribute to building a better world: in this case through heritage interpretation.

In relation to this, and although the quote refers to museums, it could be perfectly applied to any space or place with any heritage interest, regarding the relevance of feeling this passion from the profession of heritage interpretation. (Fernández, 2021, p.134):

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"Passion for heritage resources and their meanings, passion for the communities that have generated them and bequeathed them to the next generations, passion for the diversity and perspectives that they must show, even in the case of conflict and pain, because that too is part of the human being and of the collective memory that must be preserved. But also, a passion to show it, to convey it, to share it, with modesty, generosity and in a thorough way, but also to receive, to exchange, so that it is truly bidirectional; it is not the museum that shows the world, but a small part of the world that is represented in that museum."

## Heritage interpretation as a tool for eco-social transformation



The rights of the visiting public. Source: Seminario de Interpretación del Patrimonio Natural y Cultural (SEMIP), CENEAM, 2014.

Because of its specific features, which we have just described, its origins and the recommendations for its application, heritage interpretation is a tool intimately linked to the search for connections with the human being, both from a conceptual and an emotional point of view.

It is true that what is called heritage interpretation is not always actually heritage interpretation, and this has caused and continues to cause damage to the development of the discipline. Very often, in the name of heritage interpretation, visitors are provided with a lot of data and information, without any previous creative methodological process. At best, this stems from a lack of knowledge of both the psychological and communicative approach to how people process information and how intimately our behaviour is linked to

our cognitive and affective parts; at worst, it stems from an unhealthy need on the part of the professional carrying out the intervention, whether sequential or non-sequential, to show how much he or she knows. Of course, in both cases this is an ineffective approach, to say the least.

7 Seminario de Interpretación del Patrimonio Natural y Cultural by CENEAM. OAPN. *Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica y el Reto Demográfico (Spain)*.

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In relation to this, SEMIP<sup>7</sup> has created a visitor's decalogue, which summarises, in a clear and accurate way, the application of a large part of what has been seen so far in this chapter, from the point of view of heritage places visitors rights.

Many professionals in the discipline have been arguing that heritage interpretation is much more than a tool for communication and legacy management. Heritage interpretation is a powerful tool that, applied from ethics and knowledge, together with other tools such as group facilitation or art, can promote a real eco-social transformation. At the XXI Conference of the (Spanish) Association for Heritage Interpretation, in which the principles and fundamental issues of interpretation were reviewed in working groups, the following conclusions were reached (*XXI AIP Conference, 2022, 26*):

"Interpretation is also a tool for social transformation, promoting critical thought among citizens who are committed to the community and its values."

The following image reflects, expanding on this idea, some of the issues that support it, always from the potential of applying the discipline on the basis of the criteria of good practice, each of which is described in more detail below.



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Key aspects of heritage interpretation as a tool for eco-social transformation. Source: Isabel Fernández.

- **Inclusion:** heritage interpretation is aimed at a diversity of audiences, with diverse cultural levels, abilities, and interests, structured in different degrees of deepening of the message. In this regard, heritage interpretation shares many of the criteria for accessibility and the production of easy-to-read texts. It can also encourage the incorporation of different voices, perspectives, and knowledge, seeking to work from an intersectional vision. Heritage interpretation can help in the elimination of prejudices, myths, and false beliefs, both socio-economic and environmental.

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- **Democracy:** heritage interpretation assists the understanding of the deep meanings and values of our legacy by a diversity of audiences, promoting the socialisation of heritage. Heritage interpretation engages the community in the ethical development of its practice.
- **Social justice:** heritage interpretation can work for the promotion of equity, including a human rights perspective and shedding light on historically invisible collectives and narratives.
- **Participation:** heritage interpretation can encourage the involvement of the community in the various stages of the process: legacy planning, design, and dissemination. Work should be done on the co-creation and identification of the meanings of heritage resources together with the local population. Interpretation helps in making informed decisions about heritage in order to manage it properly. Collaboration with the communities is sought, not only in the development of projects for the communities, but also from and with them, favouring the creation of a social fabric. Interpretation also encourages the audience to be active receivers.
- **Integration:** refers to all aspects of the human being as a whole and not as isolated parts. It can facilitate the eco-social systemic approach.
- **Preservation:** interpretation promotes behaviours related to the custody of the legacy, seeking the preservation of the heritage and the dissemination of its values. Heritage interpretation promotes the involvement of citizens in conservation, at the individual and collective level, facilitating its management.
- **Relevance:** interpretation fosters intellectual and emotional connections within participants, helping them to build their own meanings about legacy. Interpretation aims to make visitors feel welcome, so that they perceive that this heritage has something to do with them.
- **Personal and community development:** interpretation encourages reflection, promoting a critical spirit. Interpretation works with a clearly value-based approach, seeking to generate changes and positive attitudes, encouraging social action; it promotes creativity, understood. Heritage interpretation seeks to promote human development not only conceptually, but also emotionally and spiritually; with a focus on the medium to long term, it can contribute to the socio-economic development of the community.

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In view of the above, the relevance of this **Erasmus + TEHIC** project is clear, as it seeks to support the training and professionalisation of cultural and natural heritage interpretation, as a way of promoting good practices in HI from this approach.

Therefore, **Heritage Interpretation could be seen as a powerful tool for eco-social transformation**, both individually and collectively, as long as it is applied on the basis of ethical principles of good practice, with those of us who are professionally dedicated to HI being active social agents of change.

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Heritage Interpretation:  
a look from Europe  
Handbook of **Best Practices**

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## Chapter 3

# Outlook for heritage interpretation in Europe and future prospects

By Manel Miró Alaix



### 3. Outlook for heritage interpretation in Europe and future prospects.

# Outlook for heritage interpretation in Europe and future prospects

By Manel Miró Alaix

Trying to describe the current state of heritage interpretation in Europe is not an easy task. Above all, the major difficulty is due to the dispersion of ideas, concepts, and realities regarding heritage interpretation in Europe, a discipline that is far from being considered uniformly.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section the issue of training is tackled, the second section is devoted to the content of the profession and the third section talks about outlining future developments in heritage interpretation.

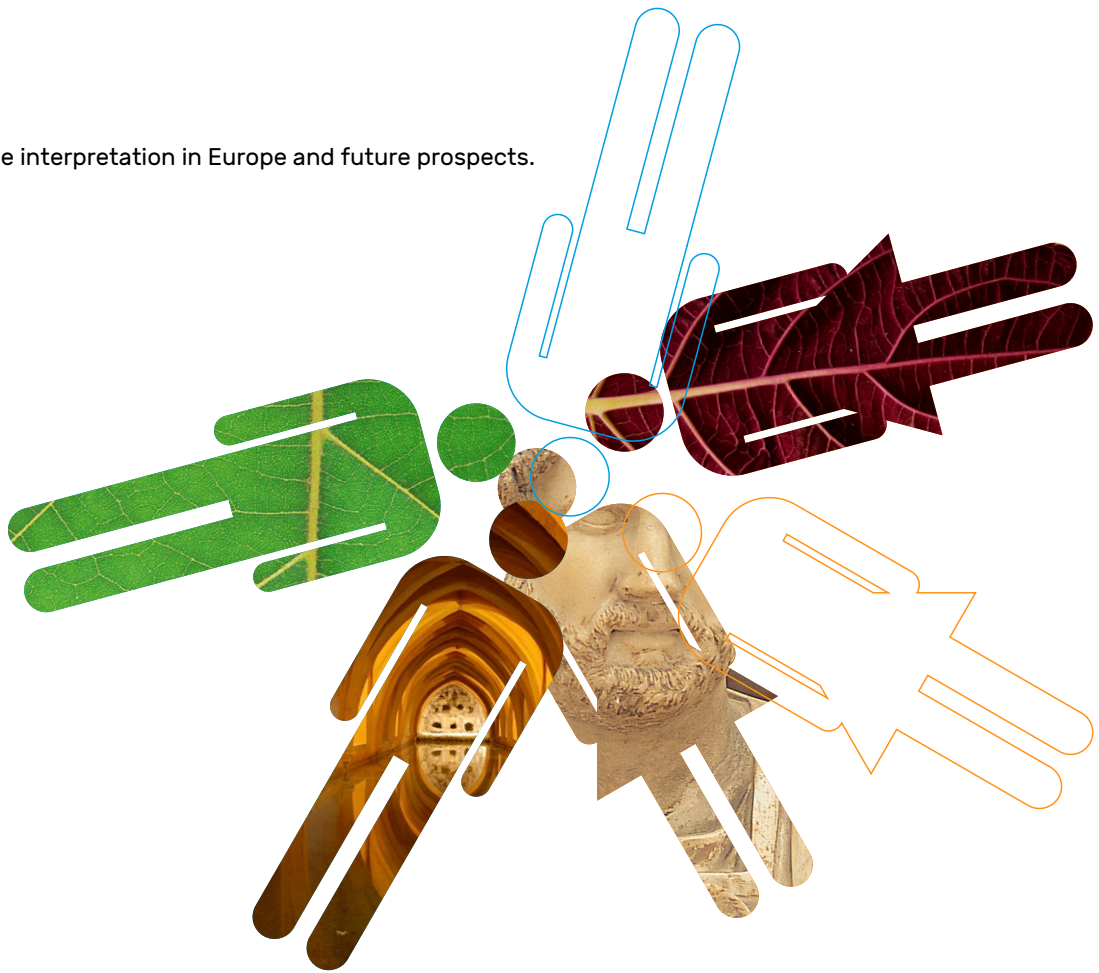
One thing that has been noted in this research is the difficulty of trying to organise a discipline that is characterised by dispersion, both in terms of training and professional concepts. Simple questions such as "What is interpretation?" or "What are interpreters?" do not lead to a single, precise answer, but the answer always depends on the interpretive tradition to which the person providing interpretation belongs.

And this is one of the most relevant pending challenges facing heritage interpretation, with a view to becoming a discipline that is recognised by the academy and distinguishable from other heritage-related disciplines. I am not suggesting setting aside existing interpretive traditions, but to reach an agreement on the consideration of heritage interpretation as a discipline. When we deal with the issues of training and the profession, this problem will appear in its entire appalling magnitude. The future will have to provide the solution, if there is one.

XXI Conference of the Asociación para la Interpretación del Patrimonio, AIP. (Association for Heritage Interpretation) Seville 2022, Spain. **Picture by AIP.**



### 3. Outlook for heritage interpretation in Europe and future prospects.



Currently, we can identify at least two or three traditions in heritage interpretation within Europe: on the one hand we have the **Anglo-Saxon tradition**, which has also spread across the countries around the North Sea; on the other hand, there is a **southern tradition**, which can be found in France, Spain, and Italy, and is characterised by the creation of interpretation centres and itineraries rather than by the drafting of strategic plans. This southern tradition, in turn, draws on what we might call the environmental tradition, inherited from American interpretation, as it was developed by the National Parks of the United States. Although these traditions are specific to certain territories, it is true that projects of all traditions can be found in any country in the world.

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In fact, a quick review of current training offers in Europe shows that there is a very clear distinction between the sphere of **operational interpretation**, focused on communication and the creation of interpretive experiences, and the sphere of **strategic interpretation**, focused on management planning and the social use of heritage. Whereas for many professionals interpretation focuses on its operational side, which answers to the question: how can you create a unique and engaging experience? for many other people, interpretation focuses on its strategic side, i.e., it serves to answer the question: what role can heritage play in local development processes? or how can a heritage process be organised?

Considering that both approaches to heritage interpretation are part of the same discipline, what is the reason for such a distinction? Let us take a look at some training offers in Europe before we attempt to answer this question.

### 3. Outlook for heritage interpretation in Europe and future prospects.

## Training

In the **United Kingdom**, training in heritage interpretation has been linked to training in heritage management, a logical approach considering that heritage interpretation is a discipline concerned with the activation of heritage or, in other words, the enhancement of heritage.

Heritage interpretation training in the UK is based on postgraduate university curricula, particularly through master's degrees. For a long time, one of the most prestigious Masters in heritage interpretation in the UK has been offered by the University of Birmingham, linked to the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust. Currently, the University of Birmingham offers the MA International Heritage Management which is developed around four core modules:

- A Critical approaches to heritage.
- B Heritage conservation management.
- C Heritage management practices.
- D Heritage interpretation.

The last module provides an introduction to the core skills for environmental and heritage interpretation including:

- Interpretative planning.
- Exhibition planning and evaluation.
- Using appropriate language and texts.
- Interpreting objects and collections.
- Interpretation of various heritage types of heritage.
- Interpretation and formal education.
- Creating visitor centres.
- Interpretation through multi-media

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The example of the University of Birmingham helps to illustrate the reality of heritage interpretation training in the UK, the only European country that understands heritage interpretation as a specific academic discipline aimed to enhance heritage.

In the **Netherlands**, a reference country in Europe in terms of museology and museography, heritage interpretation has been somewhat restricted to the field of tourism, as a discipline that had to do with tourist adaptation of heritage sites. Although the interpretive approach in the Netherlands is very similar to that in the UK, in terms of the idea of enhancement planning, this approach had not caught on in the academic world until the recent creation of the Centre for Global Heritage and Development, a partnership between Leiden University, Delft University of Technology and the Erasmus University of Rotterdam. The Centre for Global Heritage and Development builds on its multi-university and interdisciplinary status to go beyond the traditional study of heritage, focusing on how heritage relates to cultural, social and environmental developments and decisions, because, according to the promoters of the project, "heritage studies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century call for a new approach, a partnership between archaeology, architecture, the social sciences, the humanities, law, science, technology and design, and urban and regional studies". [🔗](#)



"Die Wahrheit wird euch freimachen" ("The truth will set you free"). Motto in a building, University of Freiburg, Germany.

According to the *European Association for Heritage Interpretation*, [🔗](#) in other European countries, training in heritage interpretation ranges from non-regulated environmental education courses to higher studies linked to museology. The **Belarusian** State University of Minsk offers a module in cultural and natural heritage interpretation within the studies in International Tourism. In **Croatia**, the Faculty of Humanities and Social

Sciences, Department of Museology, of the University of Zagreb offers a module in heritage interpretation. In the **Czech Republic**, the Masaryk University in Brno, offers a module on "Environmental Interpretation" open to all students of the Faculty of Social Studies, Department of Environmental Studies. In **Germany**, the University Albert-Ludwigs of Freiburg, has a module entitled "Communication Strategies for Conservation: Interpretation of cultural and natural heritage sites," and is offered within the curricula of Environmental Studies and Sustainability. Also in Germany, the Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development (HNEE ) offers a Master in Regional Development and Nature Conservation, which includes a module on "Non-formal environmental education in leisure and interpretation."

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In **Spain**, the University of Castilla-La Mancha offers the “Master’s Degree in Historical Heritage: Research and Management” that includes a module entitled “Artistic and Monumental Heritage: Analysis, Interpretation and Management” taught at the Faculty of Humanities. There are also several tourism faculties and degrees that include courses and modules on heritage interpretation, mainly focused on the environment. Only the University of Seville, in collaboration with the Andalusian Institute of Historical Heritage, offers a specific university diploma in Heritage Interpretation. [↗](#)



University of Seville, Spain

As for **Italy**, the situation of heritage interpretation is very similar to the Spanish one: it does not exist as an academic discipline, but there is a good offer of courses, most of them focused on tourism and environment. As an example, the Department of Education, Cultural Heritage, and Tourism of the University of Macerata offers a course entitled “Heritage Education and Interpretation” which aims to “train interpreters or cultural mediators so that they can plan and provide interpretive services for visitors to museums and cultural sites.”

To conclude this overview of heritage interpretation training initiatives currently available in Europe, we will look at **France**. The concept of Heritage Interpretation in France has had negligible impact, compared to other concepts such as *animation du patrimoine*.

### 3. Outlook for heritage interpretation in Europe and future prospects.

In France, too, heritage interpretation is intricately linked to the world of environmental education; training is not academic and is offered in training environments more linked to tourism or local development.

An illustrative example of the French training panorama is the course "*Contes en balade au Pays du Mont-Blanc*", a training initiative organised by the Association of Municipalities of Pays du Mont-Blanc, aimed at training professionals in the interpretation of



Façade and entrance at École du Louvre, Paris, France.

the territory. The goals of this training are to identify and strengthen cross-border links between stakeholders and territories, to promote Alpine know-how and stories, and to provide professionals with the techniques for telling the heritage story as well as heritage animation techniques.

The poor state of heritage interpretation training in France stands in stark contrast to the wealth of cultural heritage training on offer. Just by way of example, the *École du Louvre* and the *Institut National du Patrimoine* are two international reference centres in the field of heritage. In addition, almost all French universities offer advanced studies in heritage, such as the University of Pau, which offers the "Master's Degree in Heritage and Museums" and the "Master's Degree in Heritage Enhancement and Mediation."

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According to the website of the University of Pau, these master's degrees are taught by university lecturers and professionals: historians, legal historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, geographers, sociologists, museographers... but not even a single professional in heritage interpretation.

## What the profession is all about.

In contrast to the training panorama of heritage interpretation in Europe, which has been quite easy to describe, the professional panorama is more complex. Broadly speaking in the practice of the profession in Europe, we can observe the same twofold path that we have seen when talking about training: on the one hand, we have the world of strategic heritage planning and, on the other hand, we have the world of operative interpretation, albeit from a professional point of view, the borderline between both worlds is quite blurred.

Steve Slack, in his book *Interpreting Heritage*<sup>11</sup> explains that people working on heritage interpretation projects come from a wide variety of backgrounds: from learning and education, public engagement and programming, research and writing, design and creativity, assessment and consultancy, curatorship and libraries, history and science, broadcasting and publishing, management and accounting, foundations and volunteering, and anyone else who wants to bring their skills to interpretive work. In fact, Steve Slack himself confessed that he thinks he has never met many interpreters who have had the same professional track throughout their career.

This variety of backgrounds does not mean that there is no need to learn a "common theoretical corpus" on heritage interpretation. But what is this "common corpus"? And is there really a set of principles, concepts and tools used to develop effective and meaningful ways of conveying information about cultural and natural heritage to diverse audiences? Should this "corpus" include ideas such as the importance of the message, interpretation as a means to connect visitors with heritage, customer service and interpretation planning, among other considerations? Should it also be focused on understanding the visitor experience and developing techniques and skills to present information in a clear and persuasive manner?

There is no doubt that in order to engage in heritage interpretation, professional guidance is essential to effectively convey the importance and significance of cultural and natural heritage. Heritage interpretation, which, in Tilden's words, began as an art, has

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1 Slack, Steve (2021): "Interpreting Heritage. A Guide to Planning and Practice. Ed. Routledge, New York 2021.

### 3. Outlook for heritage interpretation in Europe and future prospects.

become a true area of knowledge and practice. In fact, this is **the area of knowledge and practice that deals with the adaptation of heritage to public visits**. Actually, the discipline of heritage interpretation is our society's response to the phenomenon of "patrimonialisation;" i.e., the creation of "heritage" understood as a set of cultural and natural assets that society has endowed with value and which are a legacy of the past and a legacy for the future. This unique and universal value that we give to heritage is what makes it worthy of being conserved and preserved for the development of our society and its projection around the world.

Any heritage interpretation project almost always gives rise to the "creation of heritage", in other words, it involves what is now known as a patrimonialisation process.

The transformation of "something" (a building, an object, a tradition, a landscape, a trade, an event, a memory, music, a taste, etc.) into heritage always implies a process of *re-meaning*, a process that endows this "something" with a new meaning and highlights it with the intention of protecting it and/or using it to promote development, strengthen identity or generate business. When speaking about heritage, firstly there must be a *patrimonialisation* process; in other words, heritage must be "invented" in the sense that it must be discovered and revealed as such.



### 3. Outlook for heritage interpretation in Europe and future prospects.

Until the 1960s nobody challenged the fact that the academy guided patrimonialisation processes. That decade was key, as it provided an unprecedented democratising boost to heritage creation and, more importantly, to heritage management. Since intangible heritage has been taken into consideration, heritage processes have become widespread.

It was precisely in the 1960s that heritage interpretation was given a new boost by Tilden<sup>2</sup>, coinciding with the rise of the welfare society, and with it the consolidation of a leisure culture that included visits to natural and cultural monuments among its activities. Since then, heritage has been a segment of activity that has been growing in developed countries as the welfare state was extended to larger sectors of society.

In the late 1990s David Uzzell reflected on the need to analyse the four decades since Freeman Tilden wrote *Interpreting our Heritage* (1957). According to Uzzell, "interpretation has played a crucial role in regenerating declining urban, industrial and rural areas through tourism and conservation programmes. Equally though, it has been accused of trivialising history and inculcating within the public a reactionary, superficial and romantic view of the past (...) Can we say with as much confidence that heritage interpretation has played an important role in enhancing people's awareness, understanding and appreciation of time and place?"<sup>3</sup>

David Uzzell's thoughts bring an important issue to the table: if heritage interpretation does not have a social dimension, if it does not have a positive impact on social development, if it does not consider the construction of identities, then heritage interpretation becomes a toy that may be fun but will never be a tool for building democratic awareness. In other words, David Uzzell confronts Heritage Interpretation with the issue of what its mission should be as a discipline devoted essentially to the enhancement of heritage: "facilitating people's access to the enjoyment of heritage, in other words, teaching and helping people to enjoy heritage". It is precisely around this mission that it would be possible and feasible to find the necessary meeting point between the different interpretive traditions in order to project them into the future.

What is certain is that the professional practice of heritage interpretation in Europe is conditioned by the current perception of patrimonialisation processes. Nowadays, cultural heritage and the environment constitute not only an element of identity and collective affirmation, worthy of being preserved and passed on to future generations,

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2 Tilden, F. (1957) *Interpreting Our Heritage*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

3 Uzzell, DL (1998) *Interpreting Our Heritage: A Theoretical Interpretation* in DL Uzzell and R. Ballantyne (eds.) *Contemporary Issues in Heritage and Environmental Interpretation: Problems and Prospects*, London. The Stationery Office.

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but also a source of wealth, social cohesion, and employment creation. Any local and regional development strategy based on comprehensive projects for sustainable growth of cultural and natural heritage must guarantee a twofold effect: on the one hand, the preservation of cultures, monuments, and environments; on the other hand, the triggering of induced effects on the territory, like the development of the tertiary sector, job creation, etc.

However, in order to pay special attention to heritage and to give priority to this type of projects when designing strategies for territorial promotion and development, it is necessary to bear in mind the professional practice of heritage interpretation.

Is there a consensus in Europe on what is meant by a heritage interpretation project? In a broad sense, interpreting is revealing the meaning of something tangible or intangible that needs to be explained in order to be understood by non-specialists. If we apply this broad definition of interpretation to heritage, any museographic approach will be interpretation, even the most academic museography also implies an interpretation exercise, because heritage interpretation always involves the creation of a narrative and an experience. In general, interpretation becomes necessary when understanding is difficult or when meanings are in conflict. The action of interpreting has to do with the ancestral need of human beings to understand the world around them.

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In the field of heritage, there is a first stage of interpretation that corresponds, for example, to the interpretation made by archaeologists of the remains discovered in an excavation: this is the primary interpretation, and it is the basis for all subsequent interpretations. The second stage of interpretation is when a guide-interpreter translates the primary interpretation for the general public. This interpretation has to do with the communication of knowledge and is the one we can find in museums, itineraries, or archaeological sites.

What happens when interpretation is not used for a heritage enhancement project? Basically, we will find the lack of speech, lack of a concept of the visit, lack of visit logic and, as a result, lack of understanding of the site or heritage object. That is at best, because at worst we will find a narrative that lacks the necessary rigour.

Interpretive panel. Fuentes de Andalucía, Seville, Spain. **Picture by Espiral Patrimonio.**



### 3. Outlook for heritage interpretation in Europe and future prospects.

Heritage interpretation always involves a specific narrative in a specific space. The distinctive feature of heritage interpretation, understood as a means of communication, is its spatial dimension. In other words, what makes heritage interpretation unique among media is that it needs to be traversed by the receiver in order for the act of communication to take place.

Within this logic, the interpretive space must be considered as something very significant when designing heritage interpretation, to the point of being, together with the narrative and the exhibition resources, the core of any interpretive project. The narrative is developed explicitly in what the museum or site tells, but it is also implicitly manifested by the setting, the colours, the choice of a male or female voice for an audio guide, or by the layout of a specific itinerary.

Very often, site interpretation is only approached from the perspective of content storytelling. Singularity is sought after and accompanied by a more or less ingenious narrative, but as David Uzzell says: *"The affective and behavioural dimensions, however, have received comparatively little attention in interpretative planning and design."*<sup>4</sup>

Reflection on this evidence leads to the conclusion that, in addition to establishing a content framework, interpretive planning must include a behavioural framework, i.e., the design of an interpretive experience must consider various types of emotional relationship with the people who will experience it.

On the basis of studies carried out on the behaviour of visitors to exhibitions by Frans Schouten<sup>5</sup>, the study by C. Carrier and J. Davallon on the presentation of heritage "on site"<sup>6</sup> and the analysis of effective interpretive experiences such as those developed for the Jorvik Viking Centre or the Mary Rose Museum, a standard scheme for planning and designing interpretive experiences is proposed, consisting of three stages: **immersion, exploration, and synthesis.**

**The immersion stage** is so called because its main purpose is to capture the visitor's attention and serve as a gateway to the heritage site in order to submerge the visitor in the new cognitive universe proposed by the interpretive experience. Immersion, in addition to creating a state of mind conducive to an interpretive speech, helps to set

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4 Uzzell, DL (1998) 'Interpreting Our Heritage: A Theoretical Interpretation' in DL Uzzell and R. Ballantyne (eds.) *Contemporary Issues in Heritage and Environmental Interpretation: Problems and Prospects*, London: The Stationery Office.

5 Frans Schouten (2015): *Managing visitors: helping the frail to prevail*.

6 Christian Carrier and Jean Davallon: *La Présentation du patrimoine in situ: communiquer, exposer, exploiter*. Paris, Expo-Média, 1989.

### 3. Outlook for heritage interpretation in Europe and future prospects.

up the argument that will be developed during the site tour, be it virtual or physical. The expected outcome of the immersion stage is to awaken or increase the visitor's curiosity about the site that he/she is going to visit.

**The exploration stage** is so called because it consists of an exploratory tour of the site. The aim of this stage is to encourage interaction between visitors and the site. This stage usually takes the form of an itinerary or an exhibition of objects and, as in any itinerary or exhibition, the levels of mediation are numerous, ranging from guided tours to leaflets, interpretative signage and multimedia guides. The expected outcome of the exploration stage is the establishment of an emotional link between the site and the visitors through the idea that Tilden so insisted on, that what is known is valued and what is valued is to be preserved.

**The synthesis stage** is so called because it is understood as a space that invites reflection on what has been seen during the visit. The forms this stage may take are numerous. In some cases, in the synthesis stage, we find a classic museum presentation with original objects in showcases. These objects, which perhaps without that introduction would have been regarded with little interest, are now regarded with a greater emotional charge after having gone through the two previous stages. In other cases, as in the "Reconciliation" space within the Gernika Peace Museum, the synthesis stage takes the form of an audiovisual experience that stimulates personal reflection.

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Immersive interpretive activity. Itálica Archaeological Site (Seville, Spain). Picture by Espiral Patrimonio.



### 3. Outlook for heritage interpretation in Europe and future prospects.

## The future

Those of us who practice heritage interpretation have always had the need to define our profession, given the difficulty of defining the work we do. The paradigm of the heritage interpreter has been associated with direct personal interpretation, i.e., interpreter-guides. But the requirements that have been progressively added to the use of heritage have led to interpretation becoming more complex and requiring greater specialisation. Heritage today is being asked to function as a driving force for local development, to be a meeting point for critical debate, to be a philosopher's stone for identities or to become a tourist attraction. With so much diversity, it is not always the person who plans an interpretive experience who executes it personally. Who is the interpreter then? Only the planner? Only the executor, or both?

Although strategic interpretation and operational interpretation sometimes appear to be different disciplines, they both draw from the same source, that of the philosophy of heritage enhancement distilled in Tilden's work. Philosophy summed up in his famous motto "through interpretation comes knowledge, through knowledge comes esteem and through esteem comes conservation."

If we look at it from the perspective of the growing awareness of the need to protect and disseminate cultural and natural heritage, the future of heritage interpretation professionals is promising. Cultural, tourism and educational institutions have begun to understand that heritage interpretation is key to promoting education, sustainable tourism, and heritage conservation. Increasing urbanisation, globalisation, and excessive tourism demand in many parts of the world have created a greater need for heritage management, resulting in a greater demand for trained heritage interpretation professionals. Beyond the tourism industry, companies and governments will also need heritage interpretation professionals to help to share the values and history of their territories. In addition, technology applied to heritage interpretation is also becoming an increasingly used tool in the search for new and diverse forms of communication. Heritage interpretation specialists who can master these new tools will be particularly valuable in the future. What is needed now is to gain recognition for these professionals. How can they be recognised? How do you know if someone has the skills and knowledge it takes to get a heritage project off the ground?

In this sense, unlike most heritage-related professions (archaeology, curatorship, restoration, ethnography, art history, etc.), which have professional recognition linked to university studies and a requirement of knowledge, the profession of heritage interpretation has remained at the level of technical studies, linked to practical courses that do not provide any kind of professional recognition. Only in the United Kingdom master's degrees in heritage management enjoy professional acknowledgement.

### 3. Outlook for heritage interpretation in Europe and future prospects.

In Spain, for example, in the context of public tenders for the drafting of heritage enhancement projects, when experience and professional accreditation is requested from the members of the tendering team, they are never asked to accredit their experience in heritage interpretation, at most, training in cultural management is requested.

Thus, although heritage interpretation is the specific discipline concerned with heritage enhancement or activation, its lack of recognition as a profession shows that there is still a long way to go in terms of the recognition of heritage as a specific sector of activity, which goes beyond restoration, research, and exhibition. In fact, nowadays, and since the 1950s, patrimonialisation processes have multiplied and the people who lead those processes should have specific training, they should be experts in heritage interpretation, and this would avoid clutter or failures within heritage activities.

The “Professional Development in Heritage Interpretation Manual” published by Guy Tilkin [✉](#), claims that tens of thousands of people who engage in the field of facilitating informal and non-formal learning for visitors of natural and cultural heritage sites, monuments, and museums, probably have never heard about the discipline of “heritage interpretation”. Also, according to Guy Tilkin, only a limited number of people working in the heritage field have ever had any training in communication skills targeting non-captive audiences. In many cases, guides or curators started with a research-oriented academic education in one of the heritage-related disciplines, such as biology, archaeology, art, and so on, and then learnt on the job how to explain heritage to non-experts.

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Community awareness-raising activity: “El Alcázar, tu Barrio”. Alcázar of Seville. **Picture by Espiral Patrimonio.**



### 3. Outlook for heritage interpretation in Europe and future prospects.

They are generally highly respected as experts in the field, but they often have little understanding of the principles of professional communication. This frequently leads to poor quality interpretive products at heritage sites. And this is very serious because starting a patrimonialisation process entails a great responsibility: towards heritage itself, towards the academia, the community and the citizens who use that heritage.

It is therefore time to focus on the specific qualifications of professionals in the field of heritage interpretation. What do heritage interpreters offer and what qualifications do they need to be able to deliver it professionally?

Trying to answer the question we posed at the beginning, what is the reason for the divorce between the traditions of heritage interpretation? The solution to this problem shall be the great challenge ahead of us.

As ICOM has done with the new definition of museum, the various stakeholders involved in heritage interpretation should seek some common grounds. Possibly the WHIPIC, the *International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites* under the auspices of UNESCO would be the appropriate body to promote such a common definition. In fact, at its last international conference it concluded by "suggesting a new definition and concept of heritage interpretation and a presentation to contribute to World Heritage sites, with a reflection on the modern understanding of heritage (...) It will ultimately lead to the establishment of a governance system and a framework for a new definition of heritage interpretation and presentation for World Heritage". We shall therefore await the results of this initiative.





Heritage Interpretation:  
a look from Europe  
Handbook of **Best Practices**

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## Chapter 4

# Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

By Matilde González Méndez



## 4. Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

# Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

By **Matilde González Méndez**

Interpretation, far from being a new phenomenon, is one of the oldest practices for cultural transference in existence (Uzzell 1989)

## The state of heritage interpretation in terms of heritage management

There are other definitions of heritage interpretation more canonical and less simplistic (such as those discussed in Chapter 2), but for the purposes of this Chapter we have chosen this one by Uzzell (1989)<sup>1</sup>, which I consider to be interpretive, as it captures the nature of heritage interpretation and brings us to the professional space where interpreters operate.

The Diccionario de la Real Academia Española (Dictionary of the Spanish language by the Royal Spanish Academy) defines the verb to transfer (transferir) as: "to pass or carry something from one place to another". According to the Diccionario Panhispánico del Español Jurídico (Legal Spanish Dictionary), knowledge transfer is "the University's mission consisting in making the results of its research activity available to society through different media". Heritage interpretation goes beyond conveying university knowledge, but if we keep the idea of conveying knowledge and meaning generated by research in order to know and appreciate heritage, this definition is especially useful in order to place heritage interpretation on the map of what we might call the *heritage value chain*.

The heritage value chain has its origin in the so-called "interpretative chain", as defined by F. Criado (1996) in an attempt to organise and integrate the various areas of archaeological work, from research to enhancement, in order to establish a model of heritage management that includes all the fields of archaeological activity, from the production of knowledge to its conveyance. That model organised the various stages of assessment and evaluation of archaeological assets in three stages, examining their original value, their current value, and their potential for present and future use, showing how successive assessment stages were based on the outcome of previous ones.<sup>2</sup>

1 Part of his introduction work for the *Second World Congress on Heritage Presentation and Interpretation*, of which publication he was the editor.

2 González (1999) added some aspects related to revaluation and with Amado *et al.* (2002) it started to be known as "value chain".

#### 4. Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

With Azcárate *et al.* (2009, 606 ff.) this model is renamed as “heritage value chain”, extending its scope to cultural heritage management modelling in general, and deploying seven operational stages that go as far as the analysis of heritage social and economic impact on society, among other effects. As this theoretical model helps us understand management, the value chain of cultural heritage might be extended to all heritage, to any of the forms in which heritage is usually presented, as it shows a logical order of its management where:

- The work is arranged in order to show that the outcome of each stage is the nutrient that provides the knowledge and contents that allow to operate in subsequent stages.
- A multidisciplinary process is illustrated, involving a broad spectrum of professionals.
- Heritage interpretation is placed on the conceptual map of heritage management, at the final stages of the chain.



#### 4. Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

**Table 1.** Situation map of heritage interpretation in relation to the disciplines it draws on.

	Stage of management chain	Discipline	Major tasks	Main focus of action
1	<b>Initial or disciplinary assessment</b>			
	Analysis & research: what, when, why, for what purpose...	Biology, History, Art, Geology, Archaeology, Anthropology, etc	4 Identify, Study, Categorise	Knowledge of heritage assets
2	<b>Heritage assessment</b>			
	Heritage assessment. Analysis of its meaning for today's society and considers its future: preserving, guarding, socializing	Restoration, refurbishment, environmental engineering, territory, land planning, tourism, social mediation, etc	Restores, preserves, orders, use planning, etc	Sustainable asset preservation and use
3	<b>Enhancing</b>			
	Upgrading: Promotes appreciation and use by society	Environmental and heritage education, museology scientific dissemination, Journalism, tourism.	Promotes use by the people, knowledge, and public appreciation	Communication, recreation, education, and public participation

Elements on which the HI triangle is based:	
	Knowledge of the asset
	Knowledge of the public
	Understanding of the techniques

#### 4. Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

As far as we are concerned, in order to place heritage interpretation within the framework of this heritage management conceptual map we refer to the basic version of three stages, according to work by González *et al.* (2014, 12 ff.).

- 1 An **initial assessment** of the original meaning based on regulated disciplines (history, biology, geology, anthropology, art...) that generates an interpretation of the original meaning and significance of the interpretive object: What is it? What are its conditions of existence? Why is it there? What is it for? When or how was it generated or made? and so on. All this allows us to document the item, to know it better and to make an inventory thereof.
- 2 **Heritage assessment** is carried out on the basis of this initial assessment and the current circumstances around the item: state of conservation, originality compared to other items in the same area or of the same kind, social and spatial context in which the item is located, potential for the socio-economic development of the community, etc. Such assessment aims to ensure the preservation of the item over time and to give it a value and a role in today's society, keeping it for future or social use in its different possibilities: with the item's initial configuration, as an original, consolidated, restored, or refurbished item, or with a new purpose, etc.
- 3 **Enhancing:** Social use requires adaptation works, such as consolidation, refurbishing, maintenance, and so on <sup>3</sup>, as well as a work to convey meaning (education, interpretation, etc.) with a view to its preservation and social appreciation. All these tasks are based on the assessments delivered in the previous stages.

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From a theoretical point of view this logical arrangement does not preclude an operational order whereby the work of several stages is conducted simultaneously, as there is constant feedback from one job to the next, and it does not preclude the latter stage from drawing on the previous one. It does not, for example, prevent the interpreter from having to research or document more specifically a particular asset on which he or she is working. Nor does it hinder the development of heritage work outside the professional or regulated sphere (the community, associations, or stakeholders) or the participation of the general public. This scheme just attempts to describe the structural and relational position of heritage interpretation within the heritage management chain, from a professional point of view, by pointing out that in heritage management, initial basic knowledge is interwoven with what we might call technical knowledge and transfer of results to the society in which heritage interpretation is placed.

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3 There can also be protection without public access, or with very restricted access, as in the case of some caves or sites in a fragile state of preservation.

#### 4. Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

The initial source of a narrative material, the storyline of heritage interpretation, comes from previous stages. We will then have to look elsewhere for ways and means of communication to achieve a strong alloy of message and delivery in order to generate meaning and awareness towards heritage.

### The ecosystem for the development of heritage interpretation in europe

Not just any transfer of knowledge generated along the heritage value chain is heritage interpretation, as heritage interpretation is a specific way of conveying its own origin, goals, rationale, and techniques that distinguish it from other forms of heritage conveyance, such as environmental education, heritage education, scientific dissemination, etc.

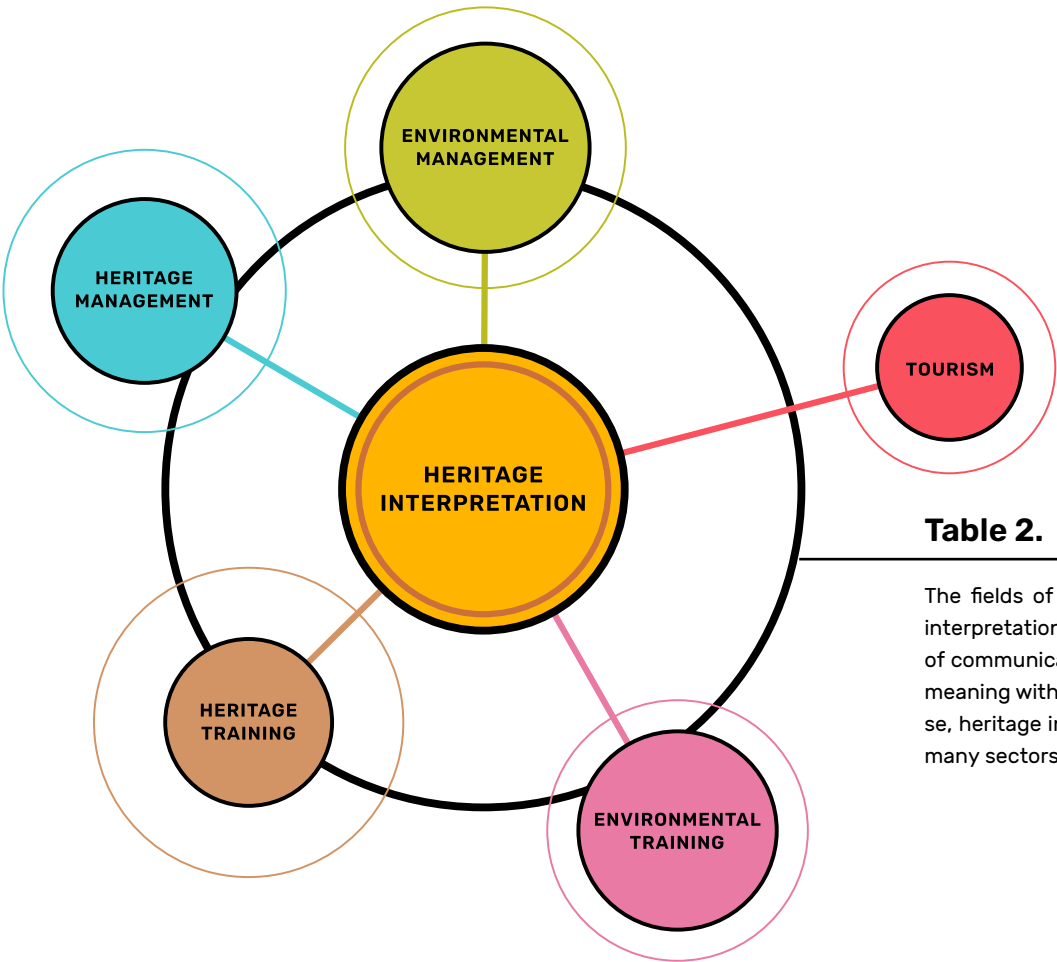
It is well known that heritage interpretation was born within the context of American national parks, spaces protected because of their natural and cultural values, including areas of high natural value along with the cultural assets contained therein, as well as historical sites: archaeological sites, historical parks, and so on. While the existing historic elements within the parks were already considered cultural heritage, this was fully incorporated into the National Parks system with the addition of the colonial settlements of Jamestown and Yorktown, together with Washington's birthplace in 1930 (Pendergrast 1998). All these sites are managed by a Government agency created by law in 1916, which runs all of them with the basic purpose of preserving the natural and cultural resources and their values, for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of present and future generations. To this end, this agency has professionals from all the disciplines involved in heritage management, including rangers or park rangers, who, in addition to carrying out surveillance and custody duties (that we saw in the 1960s cartoon series *Yogi Bear*), develop interpretive programmes for visitor's interest and enjoyment.

In contrast, management of natural and cultural heritage in Europe is handled by separate government agencies and therefore the management of both types of heritages is, in principle, conducted separately, which also concerns the dissemination and communication of their meaning and values. In fact, the transfer is carried out by professionals whose training background is linked to different disciplines related to heritage and heritage management and those with specific training in tourism that qualifies them to develop any tasks related to tourist places planning, design, and performance: from resource cataloguing to visitors, reception, or visitors accompaniment and guiding, which implies conveying a story, a message about the asset in question.

4. Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

Therefore, heritage management and tourism are two of the fields where heritage interpretation is beginning to reveal itself as a useful professional tool, along with education (environmental or museum education); the third domain for which heritage interpretation becomes a tool allowing a better approach to the public. Heritage interpretation is beginning to filter into one of these three fields in every European country. In Croatia, its emergence is linked to the heritage, museum, and tourist sector (Bovic 2023). In Germany heritage interpretation is beginning to gain recognition through environmental education and sustainable tourism (Chatel & Nethe 2023), whereas in Sweden it does so through cultural heritage and education (Fredholm 2023). In Spain, heritage interpretation first appeared in the field of environmental education and shortly afterwards in heritage management. In Portugal it started to be known through tourism and cultural mediation (Oosterbeek 2023).

This multiple and diverse itinerary attests to its spurious acceptance in the sense that it is not the academy or university institutions the place where professionals initially come across heritage interpretation, as heritage interpretation does not have a specific status within the organisation of regulated education but permeates among multiple knowledges that are related to heritage activation and conveyance. However, this spurious adoption by professionals from diverse disciplines and activities demonstrates its interdisciplinary effectiveness.



**Table 2.**

The fields of introduction of heritage interpretation are diverse. As a means of communicating heritage values and meaning with a conservationist purpose, heritage interpretation cuts across many sectors related to it.

#### 4. Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

In any case, the demand for professionals involved with the conveyance and communication of heritage values began to increase significantly at the end of the last century. A number of factors contributed to this, including:

- 1 Increasing access by society and the conveyance of meaning of natural and cultural assets: the protection of more sites with natural values, the restoration of monuments, the enlargement and opening of new museums, sites, and visitor centres, among others, requiring professional assistance.
- 2 The crisis of traditional museum exhibitions and the emergence of new forms (such as ecomuseums) and exhibition methods whose gravitational centre shifts from the heritage object to the individual who relates to that heritage, i.e., the public.
- 3 The spread of heritage values. Heritage values shift from being understood as elements of intrinsic value, with preservation as the main policy of action on them, to being recognised as instrumental values for different economic and social purposes: urban regeneration, economic development, fostering critical thinking within its environment or promoting social inclusion and wellbeing (Charter of Brussels 2010; Greffre 2010; Šraml 2013; Interpreter Europe 2016; OECD/ICOM 2019)<sup>4</sup>, which entails the implementation of actions aimed not only at heritage preservation, but also at heritage use by society.

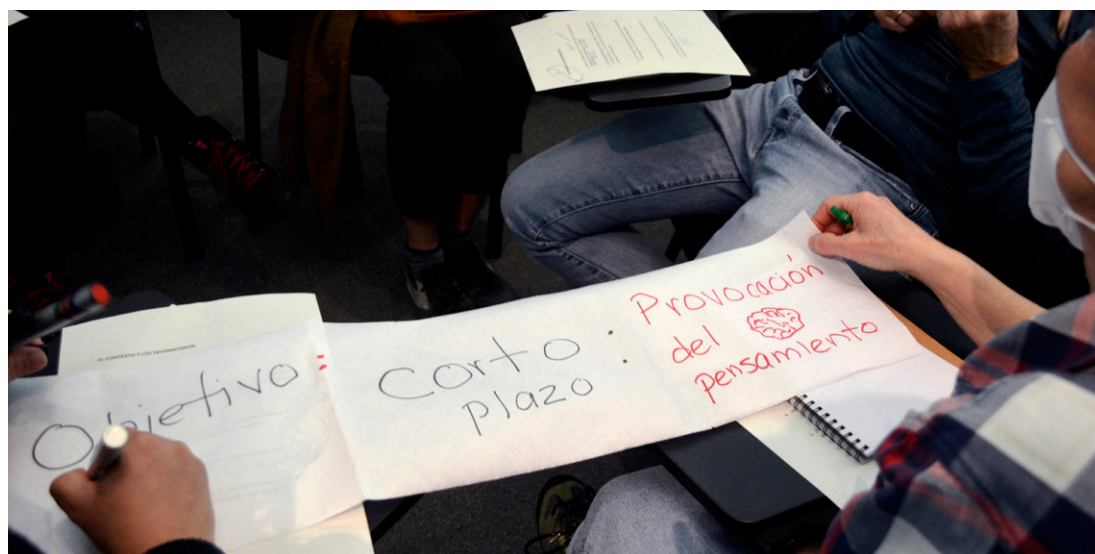
Increased activity in making heritage available for public access generated the need for professionals in management and communication, as the university teaching model did not respond to the expectations and demands of the industry (Miró, Padró and Schouten, 1992). Given the traditional policies of mere surveillance discussed above, such deficiency was evident in all transfer activities. Take Sweden, for example, where a new field of action for heritage professionals has emerged since the middle of the 20th century as the following start to gain recognition: (1) a growing interest in heritage sites, (2) just preservation is not enough and (3) a need by people to be connected to their past. Between 1960 and 1970 the focus of heritage work shifts to a visitor-centred approach, paving the way for the introduction of heritage interpretation. (Fredholm 2023). This summary of the Swedish case could be that of any other European country, with some slight variations.

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4 This process of patrimonial instrumentalization was progressive and there was no shortage of critics in the face of the governments' interest in taking advantage of the growing demand for access to heritage for tourism to sustain the jobs destroyed by deindustrialisation during the 1980s. (Hewison 1987). The period also coincided with the emergence of neoliberal doctrines, such as the one introduced by Margaret Thatcher's Government in the United Kingdom, where privatisation of certain areas or elements of the management chain was promoted in order to reduce costs and obtain some economic return, a vision that finally prevailed. A summary of this topic can be found in González (1999,157-164).

#### 4. Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

In fact, when heritage interpretation began to be known in Europe, professionals from all fields of the chain became interested in it, trying to become qualified workers by any means available; firstly through specific courses run by public institutions or organisations involved in heritage management and preservation, and by joining associations engaged in promoting technical and professional development in this field, such as those existing in almost a dozen European countries: Croatia, Spain, Portugal, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Switzerland or Germany, or by creating professional networks, such as Sweden's *Interpret Sweden Network*.



XXI Conference of the Asociación para la Interpretación del Patrimonio, AIP. (Association for Heritage Interpretation). Seville, Spain 2022. **Picture by AIP.**

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## Outline of the professional framework

We do not have specific, geographically wide data documenting the great diversity of people seeking heritage interpretation training for their professional practice. Our sources come from specific localised areas (Fernández & Soto 2009; Falcó, Rodríguez & Vega 2012; Babic 2023, Fredholm 2023; Interpret Europe 2016; ISN 2021; Kaida *et al.* 2017; Oosterbeek 2023; SEMIP 2022). However, an analysis of such sources has similar outcomes in every European country, as the unawareness of heritage interpretation and the lack of professionals in heritage management and communication, or the shortcomings in their training, are shared by all countries to a greater or lesser degree.

To illustrate the variety of educational and professional profiles of those who work as interpreters in this context, we have a number of sources that vary in their degree of systematicity but which, taken as a whole, allow us to give a sketch of the people working or intending to work in the field of heritage interpretation. These are the following:

## 4. Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

**Surveys carried out by the AIP**, (Spanish Association for Heritage Interpretation) in 2006, 2009 and 2012 <sup>5</sup> and SEMIP in 2020. <sup>6</sup> While the first and the last two surveys deal with the socio-professional profile of people related to interpretation, the 2009 survey is on professionalisation.

**Table 3.** AIP 2012 Survey: Data on HI specialised training obtained from respondents.

Training hours	Self-taught (Response rate)	Specialised training: seminars, workshops, etc. (Response rate)	How important is specialised HI training to become a member?	Response rate
Over 1,500 hours	14 %	5 %	Very important	21 %
500 to 1500	11 %	16 %	Important	47 %
200 to 500	20 %	18 %	Little importance	21 %
200 to 500	18 %	17 %	Minor importance	9 %
200 to 500	17 %	18 %	Not important at all	1 %
200 to 500	5 %	12 %		
200 to 500	9 %	12 %		
200 to 500	5 %	2 %		

5 The 2006 survey was carried out by Antón Lois Estévez. The 2009 survey was provided by Teresa Fernández and Susana Soto within the framework of works for the professional regulation of heritage interpretation and environmental education by the Spanish Government. 97 people responded to this survey (Fernández & Soto 2009). The 2012 survey obtained 76 respondents (Falcó, Rodríguez & Vega 2012).

6 Seminar on heritage interpretation with the support of AIP. This survey was addressed to a wide range of professionals based on an extensive distribution of the online questionnaire. 310 people answered.

#### 4. Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

**Table 4.** AIP 2012 AIP Survey: Occupational status.

(\* As it was possible to select more than just one option, rates may exceed 100%.)

Socio-occupational profile	Response rate *	Place of work	Response rate
		State Government	4 %
Student	3 %	Regional Government	17 %
Free lance	25 %	Local Government	20 %
Entrepreneur	21 %	Consultancy and/or services	39 %
Employed in the private sector	17 %	University	7 %
Employed	29 %	Educational or non-university training centre	8 %
Funcionario	11 %	Fundación	4 %
Unemployed	3 %	NGO	1 %
Other	4 %	None	5 %
		Other	11 %

Table 3 and 4, 2012 AIP Survey (Falcó et al. 2012). Above data on specialised heritage interpretation training received by respondents. Below, employment situation (\*Given the possibility of selecting more than one option, the percentages may exceed 100%.)

The most interesting results for the purpose of this paper are the following:

Most people involved in heritage interpretation have a high level of education: a degree or diploma in science, 2nd degree vocational training or a degree in humanities or

#### 4. Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

tourism. In addition, it is common that they hold a postgraduate or master's degree, and in some cases a doctorate. Their socio-occupational situation is diverse, ranging from self-employed professionals, to employees, employers, and public workers. One of the services they expected from the Association was training in this field.

One of the targets of the 2009 professionalisation survey was to define whether heritage interpretation could be claimed as a professional activity in its own right or as a discipline that should be incorporated into different professions, or both. 82 % of respondents considered heritage interpretation to be a specific profession while 17 % did not. Besides this question and the answers, it was also asked whether heritage interpretation was a discipline that should be integrated into other professions. 94 % answered affirmatively and only 6 % considered interpretation to be an independent profession.

Further to the affirmative answer to the previous question, respondents were asked to indicate in which professions heritage interpretation should appear, offering a list defined by the surveyors in which more than one profession could be ticked, and "other" option in which respondents could add other occupations in which interpretation has a role. Both answers are shown in table 5.

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Interpretive activity with children. Archaeological Museum of Seville, Spain. **Picture by Espiral Patrimonio.**

#### 4. Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

**Table 5.** AIP 2009 Survey (Fernández & Soto 2009)

List of professions proposed which should include HI			
Tourism	97 %	Environmental Education	91 %
Museography	90 %	Graphic design	44 %
Other	20 %	Architecture	31 %
Other professions that according to respondents should include HI			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Production/Management</li> <li>• Any profession related to the design of materials or equipment for general public's leisure</li> <li>• Sustainable Tourism, ethnotourism, religious tourism, interpretation centres</li> <li>• Foresters</li> <li>• Biology</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Social Education</li> <li>• Geology</li> <li>• Heritage Management</li> <li>• Cultural Production/Management</li> <li>• Any other profession requiring interaction with the public</li> <li>• Local development agent</li> <li>• Performing Arts</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Geography</li> <li>• Cultural Management</li> <li>• Leisure</li> <li>• Any other profession requiring interaction with the public</li> </ul>			

2009 AIP Survey (Fernández & Soto 2009).

This result shows that the majority of people linked to heritage interpretation clearly see it as a particular and differentiated profession, based on, or in connection with, different knowledges, disciplines or activities, such as those listed under table 5.

## 4. Mapping the profession of heritage interpreter

**Table 6.** Data on occupational status of HI professionals obtained by the SEMIP 2020 survey (SEMIP 2022)

Occupational Status (Response rate)		Occupational Status (Response rate)		Territorial scope of activity (Response rate)	
Working	91 %	Free lance	31 %	Regional	65.16 %
Unemployed	7.4 %	Employed	34 %	Nationwide	22.26 %
Other	1.6 %	Government	35 %	International	12.26 %

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Results on the socio-occupational situation of heritage interpretation professionals provided by the SEMIP 2020 survey (SEMIP 2022).

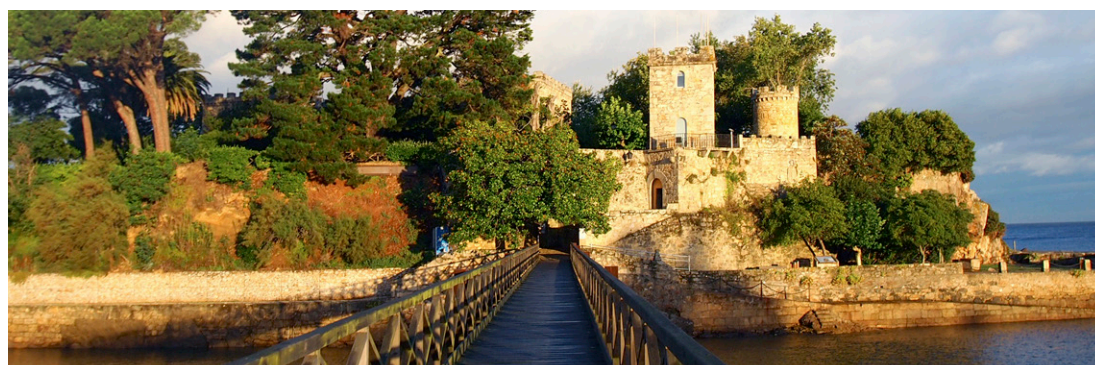
**Survey by *Interpret Sweden Network* (ISN).** ISN is a Swedish informal professional network for the development of heritage interpretation made up of about seventy members. This survey was carried out in 2021. The enquiry was aimed at finding out how they had come to interpretation, what areas of interpretation they found most interesting for their professional development or what their work activity was and in what contexts they used heritage interpretation. Thirty-two people responded to the survey, including educators, museum educators, nature guides and antiquities experts, but also exhibition designers or producers, communicators, and digital producers (Fredholm 2023b), thus offering as varied a profile of the interpreter as can be found in other countries.

**Educational and professional profile of attendees at *Interpret Europe (IE)* annual meetings between 2017 and 2021.** The meetings of this European-wide association are mainly attended by people from Europe and secondarily from non-European countries. After reviewing the curricular presentation of each participant over the five editions held (2017-2021), it is difficult to draw up a systematic picture of their profiles, as in the vast majority of cases the presentation, in the form of a summarised CV, lists education, titles, positions, and occupation together. However, as we shall see in the following section, the profiles are similar to those of the previous cases.

## Places and fields of work

At this point, it can be noted that the range of fields, occupations and jobs performed by people trained in heritage interpretation is remarkably diverse. The survey by SEMIP (2022) shows a great diversity when referring to the main job or occupation, as these are related either to university degrees (biologist, archaeologist...), or to generic categories (teacher, director, guide, etc.) or are associated to any specific area or position (Idem:13).

In order to gather as complete a picture as possible of the training and professional performance of interpreters, a table has been drawn up which brings together information from this study and two other sources. Data on the professional profile of participants to the thirty training courses in heritage interpretation (both presential and online) offered by CEIDA (*Reference Centre for Environmental Education of Galicia, Spain*)<sup>7</sup> between 2006 and 2021 with students mainly from Spain but also from other countries, and the data regarding participant profiles in the three editions of the Natural and Cultural Heritage Interpretation Course, offered between 2016 and 2020.<sup>8</sup>



The Domingo Quiroga Environmental Documentation Centre is a public resource centre for information and documentation on Environmental Education and the Environment. Oleiros, A Coruña, Spain. **Picture by CEIDA.**

Due to the various sources, the data gathered have various formats. However, we have been able to order such data according to the category distribution proposed by SEMIP, 2022 (see Table 7). It was not possible to count how many times each of the items in each column is repeated, but we can see that the educational profile of people seeking heritage interpretation training has broadened in recent years. From the disciplines most

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7 CEIDA is the result of a collaboration agreement between the Regional Ministry for the Environment and Land Planning of the Government of Galicia, the University of A Coruña and Oleiros City Council to promote environmental education in Galicia, to which I am extremely grateful for its kind response to our request.

8 This online training is offered by the *Instituto Andaluz de Patrimonio Histórico* with the support of the AIP. Participants are mainly Spanish with a small number of foreign students.

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closely related to natural and cultural heritage (which might be included in the value chain) to others that, in principle, do not seem so directly related to heritage, such as industrial engineering or sport sciences, which may be indicative of the opening of heritage interpretation to new training profiles, something that is also shown by the ISN survey (Fredholm 2023b).

The curricular references of participants at IE annual meetings can be added to the above information, which, although similar to those provided by the previous sources, show some differences in terms of the larger number of university professors, researchers and consultants or owners of heritage and tourism planning and management companies, in some cases even international companies. We believe that this is due to the context of the source itself, as attendance at a meeting at European and international level tends to concentrate on this type of profile, which illustrates how heritage interpreters can carry out their professional work through university teaching, senior administration, or business management at an international level.

A head of interpretation and volunteers from a British museum should also be noted. In the United Kingdom, heritage interpretation is recognised as such in the organisation chart of English Heritage, the body that manages English cultural heritage, associated to the curatorial department under the category of "interpretation and learning".<sup>9</sup> Finally, it is worth noting that a few of the participants have an interpretation certificate in one or more of the categories promoted by IE or the NAI (National Association for Interpretation, USA).<sup>10</sup>

The increase in heritage enhancement actions and the recognition of new instrumental values suggest further professional development of interpretation in the future. In this regard, it is worth noting the survey on public perception of archaeology and heritage carried out in nine European countries between 2014 and 2015 on a statistically representative population in each country, as its results reveal a positive public appreciation of archaeology and cultural heritage in general, and suggest the need for better dissemination of heritage information in all the countries surveyed. (Kajda *et al.* 2017).

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9 This organization chart shows the organisation relative status, and it is available at [\[link\]](#). Savage and Wyeth (2020) offer an example of how this organisation tackles interpretation at English castles.

10 IE offers courses on guide-interpreting, interpretative writer, interpretative planning, life interpretation and heritage interpretation trainer, all of them attested by the relevant certificate [\[link\]](#). The American association, NAI, offers two training courses for which a certification can be requested (interpretive host and interpretive guide) and for other courses for professionals with over five years expertise: heritage interpreter, interpretative trainer, interpretative planner, and interpretative manager. [\[link\]](#)

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1	2	3	4	5
ACADEMIC TITLE	GENERIC CATEGORIES	CATEGORIES ASSOCIATED TO THE AREAS OF WORK	MAIN POSITION/ JOB WITH HERITAGE INTERPRETATION IN ITS TITLE	OTHER POSITIONS MENTIONED AT IE MEETINGS (2017-2021)
Social anthropology	Local government	Museum assistant	Heritage Interpretation Consultant	Cultural heritage consultant
Social and cultural anthropology	Environmental manager	Tourism assistant	Heritage Interpretation Consultant and Teacher	Education curator
Archaeology	Travel agent	Cultural heritage curator	Interpretation centre coordinator	Creative director of an interpersonal communications company, historically recreated in heritage sites
Architecture	Animador cultural	Exhibition curator	Interpretative Hiking Director	Chairman of the Norwegian Parks Association
Technical architecture	Animador sociocultural	Museum coordinator	Interpreter	Expert in cultural and heritage diplomacy
Soft landscaping	Archivist	Project coordinator	Heritage Interpreter	Graphic designer
Library science	Librarian	Museum director	Interpretation and dissemination of historic & artistic heritage	Founder of a company in the museum shops sector
Fine arts	Environmental curator	Environmental educator	Guide-interpreter	Certified interpretative trainer
Biology	Communicator	Museum educator	Environmental guide-interpreter	Manager of life interpretation company
Sports sciences	Teacher	National park guide	Heritage guide-interpreter	Illustrator and art teacher
Economics	Cultural manager	Museum guide	Information & interpretation staff	Certified interpreter
Political sciences and public administration	Tourism manager	Nature guide	Interpretation and Environment Education teacher	Head of interpretation and volunteers at the British Museum
Ecology	Tourist manager	Natural park guide	Head of the Interpretation Area	Space maker
Social education	Researcher	Heritage site guide		Heritage consulting senior planner
Philosophy	Instructor	Cultural heritage manager		Museum and cultural tourism planner and developer
History	Leisure instructor	Tourist guide		Chairman of ICOMOS' Committee on Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites
History of Art	High school teachers	Ecotourism guide		Head of communication and education at geoparks
Humanities	Environmental technician	Tourist informer		
Geography	Local and rural development technician	Heritage interpreter		
Geology	Cultural heritage technician	Ecotourism researcher		
Computer engineering	Tourism technician	Master compostor		
Forestry engineering	Municipal technician	Nature's classroom instructor		
Technical forestry engineering	Worker for a cultural foundation	Interpretation centre staff		
Computer engineering	Sustainable tourism	Hotel receptionist		
Degree in Geography and History		Tourist information office technician		
Teaching		Local government tourism technician		
Oceanography		Biosphere reserve technician		
Journalism		Interpretative guided tours		
Restoration (museums)				
Sociology				
Teoría de la literatura				
Tourism				
Translation and interpreting				

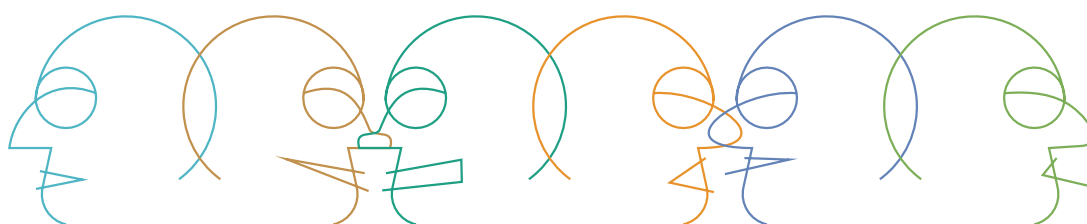
Table 7 shows the educational and professional diversity of people involved in heritage interpretation. Based on data provided by the responses to the SEMIP 2020 survey, participants to CEIDA heritage interpretation training courses (between 2006 and 2021) and participants to the courses offered by the Andalusian Institute of Historical Heritage (between 2017 and 2020). Column 1 contains data on their academic qualifications. Columns 2, 3 and 4 contain data related to professional self-identification organised from a generic definition (column 2) to a more detailed one (column 4)). Column 5 shows other professional profiles of attendees at IE annual meetings between 2017 and 2021 not identified in the previous sources.

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Another indicator that helps to clarify the picture from the field of tourism is provided by the study by Moreré and Perelló (2014). This work is based on the growth of the activity and public use around the heritage assets and the consequent consolidation of cultural and heritage tourism, along with the profile of guides who, nevertheless, lack specialised training in accordance with the emergence of new jobs related to cultural facilities and assets. (Idem: 35 ff) <sup>11</sup>. Thus, the aim of the work was to define and inventory the professional profiles involved in heritage tourism, particularly in museums, and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of training and qualifications, as well as to analyse their suitability for the positions depending on their key departments.<sup>12</sup>

Among the many interesting data offered by the results we highlight the fact that the profile of employability associated to heritage tourism presents multiple aspects as it comes from a varied training offer, structured around two unconnected areas: tourism and the heritage sector. Tourism companies tend to prefer people with this training, while museums and activities related to the heritage sector prefer a humanistic profile, save for science museums, which is to be expected, even though they recognise their lack of communication skills.

The study also underlines the importance that the dissemination and communication department has gained in many museums and centres analysed and shows that "the experts miss or consider the option of a specific professional itinerary directly linked to cultural tourism, or a training consisting of contents such as communication, interpretation and dissemination" (idem: 97). Similarly, the analysis of heritage interpretation STEP macro-environment (social, technological, economic, and political), conducted by Interpret Europe (2016) reflects the demand for a higher professional profile in cultural heritage as one of the future trends in the field of cultural heritage interpretation.



<sup>11</sup> Likewise, this work indicates that this type of tourism includes two different areas, tourism, and culture, with conceptual, administrative, and political disagreements, lacking its own formulation, which, due to the compartmentalisation of competences, is necessary for professional development. (Idem:9-10). In addition to that, as regards our case, there is natural environment, which falls under a different administration.

<sup>12</sup> Starting from the previous analysis of different sources, the work is based on 4 in-depth interviews with different key players, two focus groups and an online questionnaire addressed to a statistically representative sample of the museum sector, made up of 180 directors or heads of communication of Spanish museums and interpretation centres.

## Conclusion

Heritage plays an increasing role in our lives. One only has to look at the daily press to find heritage as part of the news on political, social, economic, health and welfare or sustainable development issues. The shift towards a perception of heritage as a resource has brought it to the forefront of current socio-economic affairs, highlighting the importance of its role in the present and future and generating demand for more professionals with the skills required for its management and dissemination.

At the same time, the truth is that heritage is still under-served, and very often heritage professionals find themselves in a precarious situation. However, given the change in social perception of heritage, from being seen as a costly remnant of history to being appreciated as a resource that improves the lives of people, considering that it is a source of employment that is difficult to relocate (Charter of Brussels 2010), as heritage resources are a source of employment rooted in a specific place and hard to relocate to other locations, greater attention to these shortcomings is to be expected.

Going back to heritage interpretation, Miró (2022) describes two main approaches to its development: on the one hand we find a strategic approach, linked to heritage planning with a view to reach more effective dissemination and diffusion, and on the other hand, an operational approach, aimed to communicate with the public and to pay specific attention to each place or heritage item. Just a glance at table 7 on professional diversity is enough to understand that the second approach, the operational one, is beginning to be well established, while the strategic approach seems to have a longer way to go, as there are fewer professionals linked to territorial management, consultancy or interpretive planning than those devoted to communication, guiding or education. In fact, there are many heritage planning or organisation projects that still lack an interpretative vision and strategy, just as heritage interpretation is still missing in the public administration, on which the present and future of heritage depends.

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Interpretation supports the professional performance of a wide range of educational profiles, people who work in all types of public and private organisations and in geographical areas, ranging from local to international. Thus, heritage interpretation is a cross-cutting and interdisciplinary approach to the multiple fields of work that, in a way, are related to natural and cultural heritage. In this sense, heritage interpretation might become the curricular meeting point of various sectors such as natural and cultural heritage, non-formal education, and tourism, which, from an administrative and professional point of view, are unrelated.

It is also worth mentioning that the boost of new technologies in the fields of heritage and museums opens up new possibilities for the professional development of heritage

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interpretation by encouraging the development of new forms of illustrating and conveying heritage values, so audiovisual producers and developers are beginning to enter the field of heritage interpretation (Fredholm 2023) and the term "digital interpretation" is becoming commonplace (Woodward *et al.* 2022; Stocks & Birley 2022). In any case, as with any interpretive project, digitization, 3D modelling, augmented reality, gamification, etc., need to be integrated into a narrative that gives meaning to heritage, avoiding making the technique more important than the heritage asset itself. (Miró 2022; Hackenbroich & Williams 2022). Thus, digital interpretation is becoming a new field of work.

At this point, we hope that as heritage interpretation opens up its working space, training and dignification of workers will be geared towards a genuine professionalisation.

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Heritage Interpretation:  
a look from Europe  
Handbook of **Best Practices**

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## Chapter 5

# Heritage interpretation and university education

By Darko Babić



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## Introduction

There are quite a lot of workers around us (the author being one of them) with whom we are interacting day-to-day and who are doing their jobs and tasks professionally. It might be an accountant or a pilot, or scholars, university-based scientific researchers or curators of a national museum or any other type of museum, and anything in between. This list could go on endlessly.

Our prime interest here is not in numbering or naming workers, or professions, as they both are endless, but in discussing why and how some professions achieve a desirable status, which allows them to gain international or, at least, national recognition, while others are less successful, with a special focus on heritage interpreters.

## The field of study

Over the last decades we have been exposed to the need of a more interdisciplinary scientific work, and/or multidisciplinary approaches which might offer better solutions compared to those already in place or provided just within a single field of study. If we look at the case of heritage interpretation, we might easily conclude that it stands on a crossroads. On the one hand heritage interpretation encompasses many scientific disciplines, so it perfectly fits 21<sup>st</sup> Century 'science meets practice', and inter/multi-disciplinarily demands, but on the other hand it is not a recognised scientific discipline according to formal regulations, such as laws, by-laws, etc. Putting aside people involved in and close to heritage interpretation (from academic workers all the way to tourist, museum, or park guides) many people have acknowledged its importance, but sometimes this is just not enough.

If we look at how some, or the vast majority of formal higher education programmes operate, regardless of their level (bachelor's, master's, or doctoral), we will easily conclude that all or some of them still have an 'anchor' in one of the already recognised scientific disciplines. Even when different bachelor's, master's or doctoral programmes are branded as inter/multi-disciplinary, they have its starting point within a specific scientific field, sometimes not necessarily a single one but within two or three of them. In the case of heritage interpretation, it might come from different fields of humanities

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and social sciences or, indeed, from natural sciences or any other field of knowledge. Furthermore, and in order to illustrate this better, within humanities it might be history, history of art, anthropology/ethnology and so on, very similar to diverse social or natural sciences sub-fields where heritage issues and, accordingly, heritage interpretation might appear as being not only a relevant cross-boundary (inter/multi) field of study but sometimes as the key one.

Higher education identified as the post-secondary education (i.e., as third-level, or tertiary education) is, by definition, an optional final stage of formal learning that occurs after completion of secondary education. Third-level education consists of university, college and polytechnic academic programmes that offer formal degrees after high school or secondary school. How does heritage interpretation stand on it, today and historically?

We could track some activities all the way back to the Roman Empire or even to earlier times which today might be seen as heritage interpretation. David C. Harvey, in his influential article 'Heritage pasts and heritage presents: Temporality, meaning and the scope of heritage studies' (2001, 323) says: "heritage has always been with us and has always been produced by people according to their contemporary concerns and experiences. Consequently, we should explore the history of heritage, not by starting at an arbitrary date like 1882, but by producing a context-rich account of heritage as a process or a human condition rather than as a single movement or personal project". Also, Peter Howard in his book 'Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity', published in 2003, deals with the idea that heritage can actually be whatever we want it to be, and that the existence of such a wish is key to any heritage related process: "... things actually inherited do not become heritage until they are recognised as such. Identification is all." (Howard 2003, 6). While the first quotation reminds us of the importance of time and context, the second one is closer to the topic we are addressing here.

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Heritage only exists once it has gained recognition and identification, which is a sort of interpretation of heritage (basically what is heritage or what it is not heritage, and why so). While 'interpretation of heritage' is not the same thing as what we mean by heritage interpretation both are, we might say, fully dependant. If someone is not aware of how heritage is created/constructed (and how it could be destroyed/deconstructed) he/she will have more challenges to research complex and/or deeper meanings that heritage is possible to transcend. By saying this we do not want to undermine the work of numerous heritage interpreters (tourist, museum, park guides) who are doing their job in this field extremely well. Our point is: heritage interpretation is much more complex (a field of study) than the way it is often presented. Or, to be clearer, making a simple comparison: if we want to broadcast a classical concert, a radio or TV company not only needs to have an educated musicologist who knows the structure of compositions but that person must

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be a technician or an expert too, someone who knows where to put microphones (and their features ) to grab a sound from each musician or orchestra with the same level of quality as if radio or TV listeners were present in a concert hall. The very same applies to heritage interpretation and interpreters: knowledge and skills translated to the competencies they need to have are rooted equally in heritage related studies, including heritage interpretation theory and practice and the knowledge of the elements (phenomena) that they are addressing, such as archaeology, ethnography, urbanism, gender issues, natural history, and so on.

The last is the main reason why tertiary education in heritage interpretation (the same is also valid for heritage studies, and/or museology<sup>1</sup>) is much more complex and more difficult to organise. Since the very beginning this is an interdisciplinary process, and while interdisciplinarity is around us for decades, it is heavier to make breakthroughs foremost within any over-standardized and prescribed context (as academia and universities often are), in other words it is more demanding to organise appropriate university accredited programmes. On the other hand, as we already explained, heritage interpretation is an interdisciplinary field of study, so it is not so surprising that starting



Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal. Picture by Julio Rodríguez Bisquert.

1 The next chapter gives a brief overview of the similarities with museology and what could be learned from experiences in museology concerning formal, tertiary education, in heritage interpretation.

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initiatives for its formal tertiary education emerge all the way from researchers in already well-established fields such as pedagogy, history, geography, ethnology, or various natural sciences, as well as from more recently established museology or heritage studies, or even from environmental studies. This diversity is not surprising, and while it might seem quite confusing it actually reflects the importance and attractiveness of heritage interpretation in today's world.

Keeping all the above in mind, our task is now to look at formal, mainly university-based heritage interpretation academic curricula and training in Europe, and in this sense, we should point out the following challenging issues:

- Heritage interpretation, as a recognised field of study (which is usually a precondition for having university-based programmes) is not 'a separate island': it is heavily interconnected with the idea of heritage *per se*, as well as many other scientific disciplines.
- As long as heritage interpretation is not recognised as a sub-scientific discipline by the academia it will hardly be included in university syllabuses at the bachelor's, master's (ideal option) or doctoral levels.
- The best option for including heritage interpretation in tertiary education is, in most cases<sup>2</sup>, to incorporate it into existing heritage studies of university curricula. Otherwise, it might be either ignored or over-dominated by well-established disciplines and programmes.

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## The 'battle' for Museology/Museum Studies as a case study

**B**enchmarking is a particularly useful tool for assessing something by comparison with other similar things, and/or with a given standard, where a standard is set. While this tool comes from economics, and mainly from marketing, and is usually applied to commercial sectors for measuring products, services, and processes against companies and organizations known to be leaders in one or several aspects of their businesses, the same practice could be applied to any human related activity.

To the extent that we are discussing the higher or lesser importance of including heritage interpretation in formal university education in Europe we might look, with a

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2 To learn more about this subject, see chapter "One size does not fit all."

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reason, at the long path that was necessary for museology/museum studies to become not only a recognised profession, but indeed a field of study which European universities, and many others around the Globe, are interested to organise and to offer to their students, as a desirable and prospective study programme. As far as we could track Museology/Museum Studies, skipping deliberately here the first ideas of a museum - the *Mouseion* of Alexandria-, or even earlier forms, such discipline started shyly in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century by Emanuel Mendes da Costa, with his book "*Elements of Conchology*", published in 1776, where he made reference to "museographers"[\[4\]](#), and, more importantly, with "*Zeitschrift für Museologie und Antiquitätenkunde*" ("Journal of Museology and Antique Studies"), first published in Dresden, Germany in 1878[\[5\]](#) by Johann Georg Theodor Graesse. In the meantime, some formal education in museology/museum studies was being organised, for example at the University of Brno in 1921 by Jaroslav Helfert<sup>3</sup>, or at the École du Louvre of Paris, which was innovative by creating the chair of museology in 1927.

However, it took decades, even a century, since the first signs of demand for education in museology/museum studies were finally reflected on academic curricula. As an illustration of how this was done, we might recall an excerpt from a speech by professor I. Maroević (Maroević 2004, 125), a relevant expert in the museum sector:



Dubrovnik, Croatia. Picture by Julio Rodriguez.

3 See: Dolak, J. (2007) 'Czech and Slovak museology, current status and the future of this branch of science' *Nordisk museologi* 2007 (2), 99-106.

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“When in 1965 the 7<sup>th</sup> General Conference of ICOM<sup>4</sup> in New York concluded that theoretical museology should be developed at the universities, the education of museum specialists as an integral part of the creation of the profession obtained international backing. The only problem is in the fact that the definition of theoretical museology was imprecise, the result being its different development in different countries. If we can understand this today as a metaphor identifying a broad museological approach that through the training of new experts will also enable the development and advancement of museum work in a given time and space, then we will be able, with this kind of interpretation of the word ‘theoretical’, to understand the phrase ‘a theoretical approach’ [...] as the academic museological framework within which museological practice is developing. It is only with this kind of approach that we will be capable of managing the changes that are coming upon and that are integrated in museum practice, quite frequently changing both, the concept, and the structure of the museum.”<sup>5</sup>



Pergamon Museum, Berlin, Germany. **Picture by Julio Rodriguez.**

Thus, a century was needed before the first (indirect) arguments reached recognition

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4 ICOM stands for International Council of Museums, established in 1946, with headquarters in Paris, France.

5 Maroević 2004, 125. This quote first appeared in a paper published by Maroević in ICOFOM Study Series/ISS 33a (2001), 63–68 (in English).

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and importance for university-based education and for the development of the profession, being all those elements necessary for that goal. Or more precisely, only in recent history (the last third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its last decades) academic programmes in museology/museum studies were established, heading towards a situation where, especially after the 1990s, accredited university-based museology/museum studies exist in all continents and in so many countries worldwide.

What can we learn from that and how could that help us regarding heritage interpretation? At first, since we are discussing here about the academic sector and formal tertiary training in heritage interpretation in Europe, it is obvious that the university sector does not change as quickly as we, sometimes, wish. Basically, it takes time, certainly less than in the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but still some patience is needed. As we said before, heritage interpretation, concerning its overall historical development, is not so different from museology. Both activities started a long time ago without a clear description of what those activities were, what the methodologies should be and lacking a body of knowledge as well as any accumulated experiences.

Museology started to formulate those in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and as a result the first academic course and/or programme appeared in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (as mentioned before, at the Masaryk University of Brno, Czech Republic, in 1921 or at the École du Louvre, Paris, France in 1927). Over time, other courses began to appear, mainly in Europe , and elsewhere in the World.

One of today's still most influential museum studies/museology academic programme started in 1966 at the University of Leicester, United Kingdom. This programme is important as it made a difference by not making an emphasis anymore on the objects on display in museum collections and their related scientific fields (such as archaeology, art history, ethnology, history, natural history, diverse technical sciences and so on) but rather by insisting on the theory and practice of museum work<sup>6</sup> as the core of the programmes related to museum studies. Over time more formal university programmes in museum studies/museology started, particularly in the last 30 (plus) years following the methodology first introduced by the University of Leicester. The initial motivation for researchers to launch museum studies/museology programmes at their own universities are extremely diverse, often connected to core scientific disciplines<sup>7</sup>, reflected in a museum context where researchers and lecturers were seeking innovative approaches, some-

6 See: Lewis, G. (1987) 'Museum, profession and University: museum studies at Leicester' *Museum* 1987 (156 / Vol XXXIX, n° 4), 255-258. & Nutting, R., and J. Morris (2016) 'The origin of the School Of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester' *Museologica Brunensia* 2016 (vol. 5, iss. 1) 62-67.

7 Core scientific disciplines are those which are directly connected with museums' collections (archaeology, art history, ethnology, history, natural history, diverse technical sciences etc.)

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times within overarching scientific fields (like information/communication sciences or geography, management, conservation, or tourism). It is worth mentioning that in some countries, such as Brazil or Japan, museum curators are required by law to have a graduation in museology before they can perform any museum work.



Museum set-up for the display of fossils. La Rinconada Museum, Seville, Spain. **Picture by Anna Elías.**

If we compare the aforesaid situation in museology/museum studies with heritage interpretation we might conclude that the body of knowledge and experiences in heritage interpretation started to develop mainly after the seminal book by F. Tilden<sup>8</sup>, which was first published in 1957, although only its third edition (published in 1977) achieved significant relevance worldwide. With time, and particularly after the 1990s, and even more in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the book, as well as many other works published on the fields of study related to heritage interpretation, encouraged other authors to make contributions on heritage interpretation going beyond just practical aspects of the work. The last period is by far a critical moment, where universities and, more importantly, their associated researchers start to look for new options; some possible new development trends, depending on quality and quantity of the accumulated body of knowledge within the newborn discipline.

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And now is time to check opportunities to argue for the implementation of (yet another) master programme as much promising than the bachelor one, insomuch as we are speaking about university-based programmes in heritage interpretation. Accordingly, the current situation of the European and global 'market of university/academia curricula' represents more a starting point, or rather, a potential position for heritage interpretation to become in the future an academic discipline, which, eventually, will be reflected on more offers by different university curricula, both in Europe and elsewhere.

As it happened with the case of museology/museum studies, it shall take some time, but certainly less than it was needed in the past, to see it fully visible. As we said earlier, the situation regarding museology/museum studies and heritage interpretation (either within heritage studies or as a separate university programme) is quite similar. They are just not happening at the same time, where the last is favourable to heritage interpretation and could make it quicker. Similar, in a way, as it was the case with museology/museum studies, inspiration of researchers coming from different fields, or from researchers contributing to establishing heritage studies, we need an even stronger impact on theoretical (the most important) as well as practical side to lift up, to make heritage interpretation attractive to a new generation of researchers, who might come from diverse fields (directly or indirectly) addressing heritage, who will be increasingly attracted by ideas of heritage interpretation and the benefits they bring to society.



Heritage interpretation has a chance to become relevant much faster (e.g., the agenda of green policies) and more often addressed by different scientific fields, be it pedagogy, environmental issues, museology, or any other scientific discipline that we previously called the core ones. And as such, heritage interpretation will be more likely influenced by more researchers and will be included among university-based master's degrees, or indirectly (or directly) bachelor's degrees, as well as at

doctoral level accredited degrees. An extraordinary growing interest in heritage studies as the main field of research, thus flourishing university academic programmes offer us a reason to believe that diversification will up standard and more masters in heritage interpretation will appear in the future. The EU funded TEHIC project is just one (small, but important) contribution toward sorting all, or many of the aforementioned dilemmas out of this issue.

# One size does not fit all

The Planet where we live in is extremely diverse, not only by its nature, but also from a cultural (i.e., human made) point of view. This includes geographical, economic, and political situations as well as perspectives. Some countries, such as the Russian Federation or Canada have huge territories, whereas others are tiny (like Monaco or Tuvalu); some countries have over one billion inhabitants (India, China) and other just have several thousands (Palau, San Marino). Population density per square km varies extremely too: Monaco has an average of 17,285 inhabitants per square kilometres, while Mongolia has only two. Economic parity is sometimes even more extreme. Statistically<sup>9</sup>, the richest countries in the World are Monaco, Liechtenstein, and Luxembourg, while among the poorest are Burundi or Sierra Leone. If we take a closer look at the European Union countries, Germany is the most populated country of the EU [↗](#), followed by France and Italy, while the least populated countries are Malta and Luxemburg. The richest countries (according to their GDP per capita<sup>10</sup>) are Luxemburg and Ireland, whereas on the opposite side we find Bulgaria and Romania [↗](#) [↗](#). The economy of some countries of the World and the European Union is highly dependent on tourism (we might say here “visitors”), while the economies of other countries, which according to data, have more tourists and visitors (and are significantly larger) are less dependent on tourism, including heritage related tourism. We could go on with statistic data over and over again but presenting those above has just one, but particularly, important purpose: starting positions and existing multi-relevant conditions (geographical, cultural, social, economic etc.) diverge greatly: what might be the best choice for a certain situation is not necessarily the perfect option for another.

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If we transfer that conclusion into heritage interpretation, by questioning on what level and how intense future heritage interpreters must be educated within formal (or sometimes informal) systems we might recommend one critical precondition. Any planning and implementation of such education must seriously follow some simple, but important, criteria: it must always reflect local needs and demands, where the word *local*, if looked from a global perspective, could be understood as the European Union or the national perspective. Within the EU it is a national or regional level and so on. In other words, if there is a high demand for more heritage interpreters at a regional, national or (recognised) European level there are no obstacles to push for it, and this is particularly

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9 By GDP (nominal) per capita.

10 GDP (Gross domestic product) per capita is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes (less subsidies) not included in the valuation of output, divided by mid-year population. Sustained economic growth increases average incomes and is strongly linked to poverty reduction. GDP per capita provides a basic measure of the value of output per person, which is an indirect indicator of per capita income. Growth in GDP and GDP per capita are considered broad measures of economic growth. [↗](#) (10.07.2023)

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important for higher education programmes. But always keeping in mind that demand will not be the same in each territory within Europe or the European Union, or elsewhere. As we explained before, there are huge differences between countries and between their regions. And since such differences exist, they must be respected. In a way, this logic fits into an (inverted) idea: “act locally, think globally.”

All the foregoing leads directly to a (possible) reduction of many academic master programmes in every field: for example, those which might be suitable for France will not necessarily be appropriate for Poland, Finland, Spain, or Croatia. On the other hand, due to the importance of local conditions which are reflected in social and economic activities and with a focus on tourism, the most important heritage related educational programmes (therefore, heritage interpretation too) might easily have much more importance in some specific countries. Therefore, it would not be strange to see more formal, as well as informal, educational programmes of all kinds for heritage and heritage interpreters in Croatia than in Poland (calculating the number of programmes/offers per capita). It would not be an anomaly, but just a reflection of reality, a representative ratio of (sometimes unpopular) supply and demand.

Master's Degree in Architecture and Historic Heritage. University of Seville and the Andalusian Institute of Historic Heritage. **Picture by MARPH.**



## Academic/University programmes or courses addressing Heritage Interpretation

As noted above, due to a number of internal and external factors, the existing number of heritage interpretation master's (or bachelor's) academic curricula and/or related courses is hard to describe. There are many, indeed, but quite often as an additional value of masters in Museology/Museum Studies and/or other kinds of heritage management or preservation. Broadly speaking, there is nothing wrong with that, since not all countries, as we argued before, can afford to have a full master exclusively in heritage interpretation, no matter how it might be desirable, considering the future perspectives within EU regions, particularly in those highly dependent on (heritage) tourism.

### Level 8 – Doctoral level or equivalent

As far as heritage interpretation is concerned, the highest level of formal education (Level 8 – Doctoral level or equivalent) is twofold. Our research did not track any PhD programme which is exclusively devoted to heritage interpretation. This is not surprising, since the demand for doctoral degrees is in a vast majority connected with academia or high-level research jobs, more precisely to positions at universities (both public and private), research institutes and the like. Heritage interpretation is not an exception. Many fields of study do not have specific university programmes devoted to those disciplines at the doctoral level. This, however, does not mean that it is impossible to deliver a dissertation where a significant part (sometimes the main part) of research is heritage interpretation. In fact, to some degree, and ironically, opportunities here could be even greater than at the master's or bachelor's level, which we shall discuss later on. Namely, for almost any scientific discipline for which a PhD programme exists at whatsoever university it is possible to imagine doctoral theses focused on heritage interpretation. The reason for this is simple: every scientific discipline has its own history and, accordingly, so does heritage, and therefore if a PhD thesis is focused on the above, it might be considered as being relevant. Actually, this kind of situation will rarely take place, but it is not impossible.

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Moreover, it is not hard to envision doctoral thesis focused on heritage interpretation within the field of humanities, or in some segments of natural and technical sciences. Therefore, albeit there is not an official PhD programme, 'the doors are not completely closed.' This situation will broadly improve as heritage interpretation increasingly enlarges its own body of knowledge.

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### Interconnectivity of Degrees (doctoral level) vs. heritage interpretation related work:

As noted, doctoral degrees, as a demand, are connected with universities and research institutes. As long as there is no high demand of any specific position at such institutions (e.g., MA or MSc professors in Heritage Interpretation or researchers at any kind of institution specialised in heritage interpretation) this situation will hardly change.

### Level 7 – Master’s level or equivalent

As for the master’s level (be it Master of Arts or Master of Sciences) the research has shown certain similarities with the previous level. More precisely, if we take a look at the European offer, we must conclude that there are only a few master programmes which are close to being exclusively on heritage interpretation. At first, this might seem disappointing, but we are convinced that it reflects all challenges we mentioned earlier. Including, probably what is the most relevant here, the necessary time, as the academia, and everything related to it, is a slow changing system. New ideas, transferred to new university programmes need many verifications before they are accepted: things are easier to push once they become a usual norm. As we are checking particular masters in heritage interpretation across Europe, the United Kingdom’s offer is standing alone. More precisely, the University of the Highlands and Islands (Inverness, Scotland) and its MSc<sup>11</sup> programme entitled “Interpretation: Management and Practice” is, apparently, the only master (delivered on-line only) mainly focused on heritage interpretation. And, sadly, that is all, since any other master which we were able to find is grounded in other disciplines of study, such as heritage or museology, among others.<sup>12</sup>

Outside the UK, the situation is quite the same. There are many and diverse<sup>13</sup> university curricula related to master’s programmes (in Belarus, Croatia, Check Republic,

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<sup>11</sup> Master of Science.

<sup>12</sup> Such as, for example, the University of Leicester (UK), where a MA & MSc in Heritage and Interpretation is offered, albeit within Museum Studies, or the University of Birmingham (UK) where a MA in International Heritage Management includes one module on heritage interpretation by the Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage. The list of available modules and similar relations to divers on courses vs. Masters where heritage interpretation is included could go on (in the UK, for example) the University of Exeter with its MA International Heritage Management and Consultancy with one module in “Interpretation, Narrative, Memory and Conflict”, or the University College London and its MA Cultural Heritage Studies, (delivering one module: Museum and Site Interpretation), or the University of York (UK) with its MA in Cultural Heritage Management (with a core module on Museums, Audiences and Interpretation).

<sup>13</sup> From heritage/museums studies all the way to other disciplines.

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Germany, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden<sup>14</sup> etc.) but none of them could be qualified as a real Master in Heritage Interpretation. In the near or slightly more distant future, heritage interpretation will be gradually incorporated into university curricula as an important field of study, which is an essential precondition to see it driving theoretical research and making stronger connections between theory and practice. Once this is done, an exponential interest for heritage interpretation as a field of study will start to thrive and, therefore, so will do university related programmes. As a side effect, it is worth noting that many university masters which address heritage (or museum) studies will not necessarily have heritage interpretation as a prime subject matter.

### Interconnectivity of Degrees (master or equivalent) vs. heritage interpretation related work:

Even though at first sight obtaining a master's degree in heritage interpretation, or more precisely, a specialisation within heritage studies, heritage management or museology/museum studies may not seem so necessary to the extent a straightforward level of heritage interpretation is needed (e.g., for guiding) it would nevertheless be advisable for any upper level (like master interpretation planning, organising interpretation at heritage sites etc.). As we pointed out above, future heritage interpreters, if well organised and skilled, with such education will gain competencies to perform their work with the highest quality standards. We are not there yet, but with the TEHIC project we are pushing limits to be as close as we want them to be, today, or in the near future.

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### Level 6 – Bachelor's level or equivalent

As far as bachelor's degrees are concerned the situation is relatively similar as for the master's level. The main difference that we noticed is the lack of a bachelor's degree specialised in heritage interpretation. On the one hand this is understandable, since heritage interpretation is, as we already explained, a field of study strongly interconnected with other disciplines, like humanities, or natural or technical sciences. In this sense, and regardless of the provision of advanced knowledge by bachelor's degrees involving a critical understanding of theories and principles, the last will be focused on something which we could name as "core" fields of work or study<sup>15</sup>. On the other hand, and simultaneously, the same thing happens as for the case of Level 7; within diverse bachelor's

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14 'Want to study heritage interpretation in Europe?'  (17.07.2023) and personal research.

15 For example, archaeology, biology, conservation, environmental studies, geography, history, pedagogy, tourism studies, etc.

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degrees we could find courses, sometimes even modules, which incorporate or are completely devoted to heritage interpretation, addressed to interests interconnected with the “core” fields of work or study.

### Interconnectivity of Degrees (bachelor’s or equivalent) vs. heritage interpretation related work:

As far as we are discussing competencies in heritage interpretation earned through courses or modules within different university programmes, we might say that the situation here is almost the same as with the master’s level. The only difference is that during bachelor studies students have less knowledge and experiences compared to the situation where they have already obtained such degree, so they face the concepts and theories of heritage interpretation better educated.

## Conclusion

In this article we tried to summarize how heritage interpretation is included in formal, university-based educational programmes and the reasons that explain the current situation. To have a better overview we analysed why having a clearly defined field of study and a well-developed body of knowledge is important. At the moment, heritage interpretation as a separate bachelor’s degree does not exist in practice, while as a master’s study programme we could find some, but still, these are rare examples. At the same time, different master’s programmes include heritage interpretation as a course or sometimes even as a module, the same as for bachelor’s programmes, although in this case this is even less frequent.

According to the foregoing (including the part on the evolution of museology/museum studies) we may conclude that the situation of heritage interpretation as far as university-based curricula are concerned will remain quite the same for some time. Over time we will witness more heritage interpretation courses being incorporated mainly into master’s, but also to bachelor’s programmes and, simultaneously, there will be probably more attempts to organise heritage interpretation as an independent discipline at Level 7 (master’s or equivalent).

In the near future it is hard to imagine any curricula leading to a bachelor’s degree in heritage interpretation because of the reasons explained in this article. At the PhD level it is already possible to draft a doctoral thesis having heritage interpretation as its main topic, although under PhD programmes as an official field of study it will be different. The situation is not expected to change much in the future. Overall, albeit the presence of

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heritage interpretation within formal university-based education is prosperous, it might not evolve so rapidly as some researchers and practitioners wish, but its growth is assured. Finally, as in any other profession, quality and quantity of university-based education is a crucial step in making the profession stronger and more recognisable.

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Heritage Interpretation:  
a look from Europe  
Handbook of **Best Practices**

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## Chapter 6

# Criteria for selecting best practices in heritage interpretation

By Maribel Rodríguez Achútegui



## 6. Criteria for selecting best practices in heritage interpretation.

# Criteria for selecting best practices in heritage interpretation

By Maribel Rodríguez Achútegui

Throughout the various chapters of this handbook, we have seen that heritage interpretation is currently a widespread practice in Europe, particularly at professional level, although it is more widely recognised by the interpreters themselves than by society or the academy. Those who work with heritage interpretation see it as a profession and have organised themselves into a hotchpotch of associations, which, among other goals, attempt to give their job greater social visibility<sup>1</sup>. In addition, we can spot the development of a theoretical corpus, which seems to be leading to the recognition of heritage interpretation as a discipline by the academy, despite the peculiarity of its evident cross-cutting nature, embracing many areas of knowledge related to heritage, both in its natural or cultural aspects.<sup>2</sup>

We are therefore dealing with a subject that professionals have been applying for a long time in a wide range of fields, such as biology, history, archaeology, geology, museology, tourism, etc. In other words, a wide range of experiences and projects can be traced that use interpretive tools to create places for cognitive and emotional relations between heritage and the public.

But how could we define which of these experiences are best practices? What are the factors that allow us to differentiate outstanding practices among the large number of projects that apply heritage interpretation principles in an orderly manner?

Answering this question is the first challenge that the team (made up of members from different countries such as Croatia, Germany, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden) of the project Erasmus + "TEHIC, Towards a European Heritage Interpretation Curriculum" has set itself, and in turn, from the different approaches that make up the practice of heritage work: university, administration, and professionals. The approach of this paper has been to establish common criteria to define what we consider "Best practices in Heritage Interpretation"; something that is absolutely necessary, since this is a field where practice is far ahead of theory.

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1 These topics can be found in Chapter 3 (Miró) and Chapter 4 (González).

2 This subject is further developed in Chapter 5 (Babić)

## 6. Criteria for selecting best practices in heritage interpretation.

In this sense, a broad concept of heritage interpretation has been used as a starting point<sup>3</sup>, with a twofold focus:

- On the one hand, heritage interpretation aims at transmitting and conveying to the public the main values and the "soul" of heritage effectively, by appealing to emotions.
- On the other hand, it works on the strategic planning of the use of heritage, focusing on heritage enhancement and the creation of spaces where people can interact with heritage in a sustainable fashion, supporting heritage preservation and community development (Miró 2022).

In this sense, we suggest the following to be considered as best practices in heritage interpretation: "Those in which heritage interpretation tools are used for heritage protection and use and for the well-being of local communities as well as of concerned heritage communities. We put forward two different kinds of good practices, according to their size and scope" (Erasmus+ TEHIC 2022).<sup>4</sup>

In order to make this definition clearer, we might draw on the conclusions of the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Conference of the Spanish Association for Heritage Interpretation (AIP), where the mission of heritage interpretation was reviewed, with the following reflections:

- 1 "In these times, it is still absolutely true that one of the missions of interpretation is heritage **preservation** in any of its many forms (natural, cultural, tangible, or intangible).

In order to achieve this goal, interpretation professionals must continue to work to provoke thought and promote processes of reflection and education. The aim is to **generate conducive attitudes** and to invite the public to **actively participate** in heritage preservation.

- 2 Interpretation is also a tool for **social transformation**, that supports the emergence of critical citizens, who are committed to the community and its values.
- 3 In addition, interpretation is one of the tools for **heritage management**, providing the creation of places where citizens can interact (cognitively and emotionally) with their heritage, generating **tourist, educational and social uses.**" (Rodríguez 2022)

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3 See Chapter 1 (Fernández)

4 Unpublished working paper.

## 6. Criteria for selecting best practices in heritage interpretation.

Thus, as mentioned above, when it comes to establishing such criteria, the Erasmus+ TEHIC working team set out to look for those aspects that may suggest that a project is something else than just a proper application of interpretation. In order to qualify a case as a best practice, we believe that it is necessary to take a step further, assessing those projects that change our reality, strengthen co-responsibility for heritage, inspire critical thinking, create new narratives and non-established readings, generate attitudes regarding heritage preservation, and provide cultural and social development in the territory.



Interpretation Centre Les enfants de la vallée du fleuve Sénégal-Diiwánudexgui (The Children of the Senegal River Valley), Saint Louis, Senegal. **Picture by Espiral Patrimonio.**

This is the reason why the following group of markers are proposed, seeking to identify those transforming aspects of rootedness in the community, communicative effectiveness, and innovation of the message. We have sought to define some specific criteria, and within each of them to select those indicators that can help us in assessing heritage interpretation projects.

Obviously, types of audiences, goals and means used in the field of heritage interpretation may vary widely. We know that it is not possible to assess in the same manner interpretive projects as diverse as:

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- Interpretive facilities: Museums, interpretation centres, archaeological sites, visitor centres, etc., which are both places where heritage is shown to the public (such as exhibitions), and generators of all kinds of programmes (temporary exhibitions, activities, workshops, thematic visits, etc.)
- Integral projects: Where the territories (municipal, regional or of greater or lesser rank) work for local development (economic, social, cultural, or educational) through heritage interpretation.
- Specific heritage interpretation services, such as guided tours, itineraries, workshops, and so on.

This great diversity of situations means that an effort must be made to select the appropriate criteria for each case. Therefore, considering a project as a "best practice" does not necessarily mean that all criteria are met, but only those that apply to the nature of each type of project.

Archaeological Museum of Bizkaia - Arkeologi Museoa. Bilbao. Spain. **Picture by Espiral Patrimonio.**



## 6. Criteria for selecting best practices in heritage interpretation.



## Criteria for selecting best practices in the field of heritage.

### 1. A long-term outlook: projects committed to continuity and deep-seatedness. Social and environmental sustainability.

This criterion applies particularly to equipment and facilities, such as interpretation centres, museums, visitor centres, archaeological sites enhancement, etc. The aim is to assess those projects that, showing disregard for faddish opening ceremonies, are conducted with a view to continuity, are well established in the territory, and are devoted to the economic, social, cultural, and educational development of the territory.

On the one hand the stability of this type of projects may show their management sustainability and they often lead to the creation of local employment related to the services they offer. On the other hand, it is also frequent that such projects have a triggering effect on cultural, identity, participative and educational proposals, both for visitors and for the local population, generating places where the public can interact with heritage.

#### Indicators:

- 1.1. Regular or stable programming.
- 1.2. Age of the project or case (more than one year in operation).

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Interpretive activity with children. Group immersion in mapping.  
Picture by Espiral Patrimonio.

## 6. Criteria for selecting best practices in heritage interpretation.

### 2. Community involvement

Heritage interpretation plays a key role in the reception of visitors at heritage sites, as it is a tool for conveying the values of the site itself. However, a heritage interpretation project stands out as a best practice not only when it fulfils this mission: it also has to seek to be involved in improving the well-being of the local community.

Very often, heritage preservation is a source of conflict, and through participation, heritage interpretation can generate debate spaces in the search for consensus. Additionally, tourist pressure may create unease among the population in certain territories, which can lead to a very critical view of heritage projects, or even to heritage being seen as something important only for tourists.

For all these reasons, we have proposed this criterion in order to assess those cases where the opinions of the community have been considered in the planning of heritage interpretation services, or spaces have been created to enable the local people to actively participate in setting up or managing such services. The last level would be those cases where the design of the service also seeks the assistance and cultural and social enrichment of local population. This is why the detection of community involvement is regarded as something particularly important. This can occur at different degrees, ranging from co-creation to simple attendance by local people to the scheduled activities.

Moreover, targeting a visiting public requires, in general, different means and sometimes different messages than those that may be of interest to the local population, and the same resources are not the most appropriate for educational groups. This is why we point out that the suitability of the offer of heritage interpretation services for a diversity of audiences is another indicator in the search of community involvement.

Finally, as another sign of quality, we also suggest the identification of the community with its heritage, which comes from the perception of such heritage as a generator of well-being and cultural, social, educational and/or economic development in the territory. Such identification can be revealed if we look at the integration of the community in



Community participation in the Centre's audiovisual "Casa Valcárcel. Colección Histórica". Las Cabezas de San Juan, Seville, Spain. Picture by Espiral Patrimonio.

## 6. Criteria for selecting best practices in heritage interpretation.

the activities offered, and, in general, in the heritage and educational life of the place. It can also be measured by its presence in networks, media, and local reference.

### Indicators:

#### 2.1. Involvement of the population in one of the following degrees of governance in heritage interpretation activities:

##### A. Co-creation:

- Participation in decision-making regarding the offer and management of interpretive activities.
- Joint design of interpretive activity.

##### B. Active participation of the local population in the development of the interpretative activity.

##### C. Community attendance at the activities.

#### 2.2. Diversity of target audiences and adaptation of the interpretive environment to the type of audience.

#### 2.3. Positive impact on the well-being of the community: identification of the population with its heritage; economic, social, educational, and environmental impact; impact on the well-being of the people who benefit from these services.



Community participation in historical reenactment activities. Gilena's Museum Collection. Gilena, Seville. Spain. **Picture by IAPH.**

## 6. Criteria for selecting best practices in heritage interpretation.

### 3. Heritage in terms of values. Heritage interpretation is a communication strategy, and if used correctly provokes thought and encourages critical spirit, a feeling of identity and emotional attachment to heritage.

The quest for the generation of thought among the public is inherent in the concept of heritage interpretation. It should not be forgotten that the ultimate goal of any good interpretation is to foster attitudes favouring heritage preservation and social transformation. It is therefore necessary to highlight the importance of the message conveyed as one of the criteria for selecting a best practice.

The use of imaginative, inclusive, and transformative communication, offering new visions and readings of heritage, away from preconceptions, is particularly valued.

#### Indicator:

Accessible, inclusive, cross-cutting, gender-sensitive speech and means; focus on diversity, integration...



Interpretive community awareness activity. Star Bay, Mauritania.  
Picture by CBD-Habitat.

## 6. Criteria for selecting best practices in heritage interpretation.

### 4. Applying the tools of interpretation

In addition to the above, in order to assess that an interpretive service is good, it is important to evaluate whether such service conveys a message effectively. This is where the appropriate construction of a narrative comes in, based on the personality of the audience and which provokes the "revelation" of the deep meaning of heritage, as Tilden pointed out (2006).

To achieve this, Ham (2015) defines four qualities of interpretive communication that we use in this project as indicators of good interpretation. Similarly, we also point to the use of different techniques to achieve those features as quality indicators.

On the other hand, a correct interpretive message, as described by Morales (1998), will point out tangible heritage features (elements) that the public can clearly identify and relate to intangible concepts (those issues that are not obvious but are intimately linked to the interpreted item) and to universal concepts. Finally, the importance of the assessment processes to test whether communication is reaching its audience in the best manner is highlighted as a sign of quality.

#### Indicators:

- **4.1. Use of the TORA model**  
(content should be thematic, organised, relevant and amusing).
- **4.2. Identification of strategies used to connect heritage with people's reality, with the creation of cognitive and emotional links, etc.**
- **4.3. Use of immersive techniques such as self-referencing, humour, active participation, use of the senses, etc.**
- **4.4. Assessment of activities and their impact on audiences.**

Interpretive Activity. Alcázar of Seville, Spain. Picture by Espiral Patrimonio.



## 6. Criteria for selecting best practices in heritage interpretation.

## 5. Using applied research and innovation for heritage mobilisation.

Finally, with this last criterion, we raise the need for continuous updating of interpretive services in order to achieve excellence. This involves two dimensions: innovation through the constant application of scientific research (so that the narrative offered regarding heritage is updated and not burdened by custom) and innovation in terms of the methods and means used. Therefore, we propose as an identifying element of quality, the alliances between different disciplines that provide new readings. Thus, combinations with contemporary creation, music, technologies, experimental sciences, etc. can help us to identify innovative services and find new ways of connecting people with heritage.

### Indicators

#### 5.1. Updated speech

#### 5.2. Unlikely connections, such as the use of artistic creativity, participation, etc.



Interpretive Tour. Itálica Archaeological Site, Seville, Spain.  
Picture by Espiral Patrimonio.

## 6. Criteria for selecting best practices in heritage interpretation.

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Luque Ceballos, I. (2022) *Buenas prácticas de movilización del patrimonio cultural en perspectiva territorial: la mirada desde Andalucía 2000-2015*. (Tesis Doctoral Inédita). Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla

Miró, M. (2022) Más que comunicación. La interpretación como disciplina para planificar los usos del patrimonio. *Boletín de Interpretación*, n.º 46. Available at: [\[link\]](#) [Visited: 20/07/2023]

Morales, J. (1998) *Guía práctica para la interpretación del patrimonio: el arte de acercar el legado natural y cultural al público visitante*. Sevilla: Consejería de Cultura de Andalucía (Department of Culture of the Government of Andalusia)

Rodríguez, M. (2022) Conclusions of the 21<sup>st</sup>. Congress of the Spanish Association for Heritage Interpretation. Interpretación del Patrimonio ¿Dónde y hasta dónde? Sevilla, 10 -11 March 2022. AIP. *Boletín de Interpretación*, n.º 46. Available at: [\[link\]](#) [Visited 20/07/2023]

Tilden, F. (2006) *Interpreting our Heritage*. Chapell Hill (North Carolina, USA). The University of North Carolina Press (Spanish version: *Interpretando nuestro patrimonio*. Madrid: Asociación para la Interpretación del Patrimonio, AIP)





**Acknowledgements:** The essence of this chapter is the outcome of the work done by the Erasmus+ TEHIC team, "Towards a European Heritage Interpretation Curriculum", who has worked on the creation and definition of the criteria outlined above.

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Heritage Interpretation:  
a look from Europe  
Handbook of **Best Practices**

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## Chapter 7

### Best practices cases in heritage interpretation



## Best practice cases in heritage interpretation

The best way to share perspectives and seek common grounds on the concept of heritage interpretation was by illustrating with examples the goals set and the tools and means used by the discipline in specific best practice cases. For this purpose, each member of the TEHIC team has conducted a screening of initiatives according to the criteria described in Chapter 6. The sharing and presentation of those examples gave rise to a rewarding discussion that concluded with a selection of two or three cases by each member. The selection process valued the diversity of each project in terms of the representation of interpretive means, which should include personal means, such as interpreted tours and itineraries and non-personal means, such as panels, self-guided itineraries, digital formats, etc., as well as a variety of equipment, like exhibitions in museums and interpretation centres. The application of interpretation at different planning scales and the diversity of heritages, including natural and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, has also been considered.

The aim was to record the entire range of cases collected, in addition to those selected for their development. Therefore, the results shown herein are the outcome of this reflection and we hope that they will be a useful and convenient tool for all professionals.

## Full list of cases compiled by TEHIC members

### Croatia



**Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding**

[www.mbdb.hr](http://www.mbdb.hr)



**Regional Museum of Benkovac**

[www.muzej-benkovac.hr](http://www.muzej-benkovac.hr)



**Krka Eco Campus Puljane**

[www.npkrka.hr](http://www.npkrka.hr)



**Istra Inspirit**

[www.istrainspirit.hr](http://www.istrainspirit.hr)



**Info-centre of industrial heritage "Dutch House" Sisak**

[www.hoku.hr](http://www.hoku.hr)



**Museum of Broken Relationships**

[www.brokenships.com](http://www.brokenships.com)

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### Germany



**Kandel, mountain of power**

[www.schwarzwaldportal.com](http://www.schwarzwaldportal.com)

**Magnifying Glass Liliental**

**Schauinsland inclusive**



**Black Forest National Park**

<https://www.nationalpark-schwarzwald.de/de>

### Portugal



**Batoto Yetu Portugal - African places in Lisbon**

[www.batotoyetu.pt](http://www.batotoyetu.pt)

## 7. Best practices cases in heritage interpretation



**Portimão Museum - Recreation of the sardine discharge on the Portimão pier**  
[www.museudeportimao.pt](http://www.museudeportimao.pt)



**"A Música Portuguesa a Gostar dela Própria" Portuguese Music Loving Itself - online archive.**  
[www.amusicaportuguesaagostardelapropria.org](http://www.amusicaportuguesaagostardelapropria.org)



**Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation - Arts' Cart**  
[www.gulbenkian.pt](http://www.gulbenkian.pt)



**Association 25<sup>th</sup> April & CML, "Places of April"**  
[www.a25abril.pt](http://www.a25abril.pt)



**Municipality of Arraiolos. ByAR - Augmented Reality "Arraiolos over the centuries"**  
[www.byar.pt](http://www.byar.pt)



**Local heritage routes. Oeiras Municipality & Mapa das Ideias - Integrated educational project**  
[www.mapadasideias.pt](http://www.mapadasideias.pt)



**Pedagogical Briefcases. Mapa das Ideias & Castles of Mondego**  
[www.mapadasideias.pt](http://www.mapadasideias.pt)

## Spain-AIP



**Cascarilleiros guided tour. A Coruña of crafts (A Coruña)**  
[www.cascarilleiros.com](http://www.cascarilleiros.com)



**La Garriga Interpretive management (La Garriga-Barcelona)**  
[www.visitalagarriga.cat](http://www.visitalagarriga.cat)



**Museo de la Energía (Ponferrada)**  
[www.ponferrada.org](http://www.ponferrada.org)



**Cabanas sen barreiras - Serra de Outes (A Coruña)**  
[www.cabanitasdelbosque.com](http://www.cabanitasdelbosque.com)



**Activities by the Val d'Aneu Ecomuseum (Lleida)**  
[www.ecomuseu.com](http://www.ecomuseu.com)

## 7. Best practices cases in heritage interpretation



### **Sevilla a la carta. Tours (Seville)**

[www.sevillalacarta.com](http://www.sevillalacarta.com)

## Spain-IAPH



### **Caicena River Ecomuseum (Cordoba)**

[www.ecomuseoriocaicena.es](http://www.ecomuseoriocaicena.es)



### **Gilena's museum collection (Seville)**

[www.facebook.com/coleccionmuseograficadegilena](https://www.facebook.com/coleccionmuseograficadegilena)



### **Museum of La Rinconada (Seville)**

[www.larinconada.es](http://www.larinconada.es)



### **Aroche Heritage Project (Huelva)**

[www.aytoaroche.es](http://www.aytoaroche.es)



### **University Extension Programme of the Universitat Jaume I (Castellón)**

[www.catedradelagua.uji.es](http://www.catedradelagua.uji.es)

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### **Projects developed by Herstóricas (Granada & Madrid)**

[www.herstoricas.com](http://www.herstoricas.com)

## Sweden



### **Bergsjön - 4000 years at Siriusgatan**

[www.gu.se](http://www.gu.se)



### **Äskhult village, ancient agrarian landscape**

[www.askhultsby.se](http://www.askhultsby.se)



### **Forsvik factory**

[www.forsviksbruk.se](http://www.forsviksbruk.se)



### **1 sqm flax - Nordic craft**

[www.hemslojden.org](http://www.hemslojden.org)



## 7.1. Croatia



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### Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding

**Address:** Vladimira Nazora St. 7 / HR-22244  
Betina / CROATIA



### Istria Inspirit


**Address:** All over the Istrian peninsula  
(CROATIA)

HQ: Pionirska 1a, HR-52440 Poreč (Croatia)  
or Dalmatinova 4, HR-52100 Pula (Croatia)



## Muzej betinske drvene brodogradnje / Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding (Croatia)

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**Betina Museum of  
Wooden Shipbuilding**

Betina is a small historical village of around eight hundred inhabitants. Currently, the village main activity is tourism. The village of Betina is located on the island of Murter, a few kilometres away from a drawbridge which connects the island to the mainland. As the largest island of the Šibenik archipelago and the closest one to the mainland, Murter has been populated since the time of the Illyrians. The remains of Roman settlements testify to its occupation during the period of the Roman Empire. Betina has an outstanding reputation for its long tradition in wooden shipbuilding. Betina nowadays is one of the few remaining centres of small wooden shipbuilding on the Croatian Adriatic and the Mediterranean seas.

**Address:** Vladimira Nazora St. 7 /  
HR-22244 Betina / CROATIA

[www.google.es/maps](https://www.google.es/maps)



### 7.1.1. Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding



Part of the permanent exhibition of the Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding.

Photo © Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding

## Author

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The Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding is a public initiative of Betina City Council. Although a municipal initiative the Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding is the result of strong community ingenuity, where the *Betina Gajeta 1740 Association* (local OCS) played a key role, together with curators from the Šibenik City Museum and the Kocka (a private consultancy firm on museum/heritage projects). Ms. Kate Šikić Čubrić is the director of the Museum, and she contributed significantly to its development. In 2019 the Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding received the Europa Nostra Award in the category of “Education Training and Awareness-Raising”.

## Type of Heritage Interpretation activity

The Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding represents an integral planning activity. The museum not only organises guided visits and has implemented digital applications, but its activity also spreads well outdoors: the harbour which is exclusively devoted to wooden vessels. In addition, the Museum has a strong educational programme, recognised by the Europa Nostra award.

## Brief description

Betina citizens have a centuries-long tradition in making (small scale) wooden ships which served for local demand, as they worked the land in a nearby archipelago or practised small-scale trades. While this tradition of a unique craftsmanship gradually started to be less important in many villages of the Adriatic and Mediterranean seas in the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, due to economic changes, it practically disappeared in the 1970s and the 1980s, when mass tourism became the main source of income for many small Mediterranean villages, the Adriatic Sea included. But in Betina, residents took a different approach, they welcomed tourism but keeping their identity alive at the same time, thanks to the engagement of the Betina Gajeta 1740 Association (local OCS).

The years 2014-2015 marked a new momentum, when local politicians recognised investing in culture and heritage was of uttermost importance. Foremost, due to the interest shown by the local community and their constant pro-active engagement. Accordingly, in an extremely brief time (for Croatian usual museum/heritage experiences) the Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding was thoughtfully planned (which is an important part), and later operationally delivered: the Museum opened in mid-2015. After this, thanks to a perfect planning of its educational/interpretive programmes and activities, the Museum was awarded by Europa Nostra for its education training and awareness-raising (2019). The Museum preserved the main part of the old Betina harbour for traditionally built wooden ships. Now, the income earned by the Museum further benefits the entire surrounding territory, both land and sea.

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Launching of a new build boat/ship in Betina. Photo © Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding

## Criteria it meets and justification

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### 1. Time and Sustainability

#### Time path of the project

After its opening in 2015, the Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding has been creating, step by step, intense educational/interpretive programmes for which the Museum was awarded in 2019 by Europa Nostra, for its education training and awareness-raising. While the Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding is proud of it, the Betina Museum goes on. And every year the Museum is developing new programmes, addressing educational and interpretive ideas and projects. An example of this is the activity on how to build your own boat, which is intended to elementary school kids from the county, but also to other Croatian, or even foreign regions. Another example is the expansion of its influence within a territory which officially does not belong to the Museum, but which is claimed by the local community to be recognised as being part of its area of influence (e.g., the old harbour).

#### Sustainability

The Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding represents a case study of heritage action/museum which provides educational, social, and cultural services for the local community and for seasonal visitors or tourists as well. Broadly speaking, Croatia suffers from a major imbalance between the considerable number of tourists visiting the country in the summer (from late June to early September, the summer high season) and those who come the rest of the year. Accordingly, many heritage attractions in Croatia end 'in the same trap,' focusing on summer months only. But that is not the case of Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding, which is opened all year around, and where its devoted staff plan activities in July likewise important as in February or December, since the Betina Museum considers that local people are just as important as tourists, who are always welcome.

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### 2. Community engagement

#### Degree of engagement

##### Co-creation

The Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding is a case study of a community-built museum. Without the engagement of *the Betina Gajeta 1740 Association* (local OCS) it would have



### **7.1.1. Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding**

never been possible or without the recent and current support by a local community which accepted tourism, even mass tourism, but which, over decades, has been proud of its own identity, a key element they continue to foster.

#### **Participation:**

The local community plays a key role when it comes to planning activities for the Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding. The community not only takes care of the way the Museum looks like, but it also creates extended areas of the Museum itself, like by regulating Betina's ancient harbour, which will be devoted exclusively to wooden ships to moor there, and therefore not any other kinds of boats will be able to use it. Or by reporting to the Museum staff sailors do not respect the set rules or reporting by local people on anything else not fitting the idea of the Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding: the Museum has a kind of authority of a museum police, imagine!

#### **Assistance**

As explained above, the Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding is the result of a synergy between local community (transferred foremost by the Betina Gajeta 1740 Association, a local OCS), Betina City Council and invited museum/heritage experts (curators from the Šibenik City Museum) and Kocka, a private consultancy firm on museum/heritage projects, where the local community played a key role, including the final monitoring of the Museum permanent exhibition, which has been proposed by experts.

Furthermore, local community actively participates in preparing the Museum activities, for example, by policing/reporting when there are wooden on plastic boats moored in the old harbour (reserved for wooden boats only) or by any other related activity.

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#### **Diversity of Audiences**

- Locals, schoolchildren, families, elderly, tourists, specialized visitors.

#### **Positive impact on the community (examples)**

The Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding represents a case-study of how heritage could be used as a main generator, a trigger for social change, territorial development, and sustainable action. The Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding is a public project which supports the core identity of the village and the villagers, who are mainly local shipbuilders whose work has supported local economy for hundreds of years and did not fail doing it (regardless of sirens' voices) despite mass tourism over the last few decades. By initiating it, creating, and cooperating, the community makes a profit of a heritage-based site, as well as of Croatian museums and the heritage professional sector.

### 3. Heritage values provoke thinking or identity storytelling or media

The Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding is the story of a disappearing local identity (small, family-owned shipyards) which is saved and supported by heritage actions such as the opening of the Museum and through heritage interpretation. It has a strong inter-sectoral perspective, since museum and interpretation promote shipbuilders, who still have orders for new boats: local people and visitors make new orders of traditional wooden boats, not plastic ones. Cross-cutting perspective and respect of diversity is reached by temporary activities (workshops etc.) where local people and guests or tourists of all ages participate and share their perspectives.

Actually, the Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding is, in its core, an eco-museum (although this word is not part of its name), where synergy of a traditional way of life (shipbuilding, fishing, agriculture) is meeting the new reality (over dominance of tourism) where tourists are welcoming guest to have an insider's look into how life before mass tourism was, and how it could continue to be.

### 4. Heritage Interpretation strategies applied: use of the Tore model / use of immersive techniques.

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Workshop at the Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding.

Photo © Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding

The Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding and its permanent exhibition is a quite young museum (opened in 2015). However, in eight years it has grown, and thanks to the full support by the local community now it is managing the oldest part of Betina's harbour, where only small wooden boats, locally made, can be moored. The harbour became, thus, an open gallery of not musealised items, but of things which still are in daily use, representing tradition and heritage at the same time. Furthermore, the Museum is working on establishing agricultural interpretation routes, both on land, and sea.

The Museum initiated many activities connected with its main theme, including the Festival of the Betina Gajeta (a kind of local small wooden boat, 5 to 8 meters long, 2 to 2,60 meters wide) together with the Betina Gajeta 1740 Association. One of the main attractions of the Festival is the traditional wooden boats race "Za dušu i tilo" (For Body and Soul).

## 5. Innovative, research and creative elements used

The most creative and innovative element in the case of the Betina Museum is the enormous constructive interaction it created within the local community. This does not only include participation of the local community in creating the Museum, but in its management as well. Local people are community guardians of the heritage the Museum represents, for example by acting as guardians of the right of mooring in the old harbour. The second part, but equally important, is a constant collaboration and co-supporting between local small-scale entrepreneurs. The first, and the most important, with family-owned shipyards. Finally, the Museum does not ignore the reality of 21<sup>st</sup>. century and on many activities collaborate with people who engage in Betina's major business today: tourism. Another creative element is the 'open museum gallery' at Betina's old harbour, where small wooden, locally made boats are museum objects and, at the same time, boats used for daily life.

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## Why this activity should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice?

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The Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding is, from our point of view, an extraordinary case of how heritage could be used to mitigate the effects of quick transition in society, especially within small communities. And to offer benefits to the local community regardless of whether they are more involved in 'traditional' or modern activities. This goes for an overall idea of quality heritage management, where heritage interpretation (as a complex set of thematic, organized, relevant and enjoyable communication skills) play the most significant role. No matter whether this is done through communication with local communities (entrepreneurs included) or with guests/visitors/tourists. And by doing this at every segment of all Museum related activities, within the permanent exhibition, the open-air space, heritage trails, planning and execution of activities all year around and so on.

The Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding has been awarded the prestigious Europa Nostra Award in the category of Education Training and Awareness-Raising, with a reason.



The Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding (webpage, English)



The Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding (Facebook-page)



The Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding (Instagram)



The Betina Museum of Wooden Shipbuilding (You tube channel)

## Istra Inspirit Istria Inspirit (Croatia)



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Istra Inspirit  
Istria Inspirit (Croatia)

Istria (Istra), formerly *Histria* in Latin, is a triangular and the largest peninsula within the Adriatic Sea, most of which belongs to Croatia. It extends to the north-east of the Adriatic Sea, between the Gulf of Venice (west), the Gulf of Trieste (north) and the Gulf of Kvarner/Rijeka (east). The peninsula has an area of almost 3,500 square km whose northern part belongs to Slovenia, while the central, western, southern and eastern parts (90%) belong to Croatia. A small strip of coast in the north-west is the city of Trieste, Italy.

**Address:** All over the Istrian peninsula (CROATIA)  
HQ: Pionirska 1a, HR-52440 Poreč (Croatia) or Dalmatinova 4, HR-52100 Pula (Croatia)

[www.google.es/maps](https://www.google.es/maps)





Istria Inspirit leaders. Photo © Istria Inspirit

## Author

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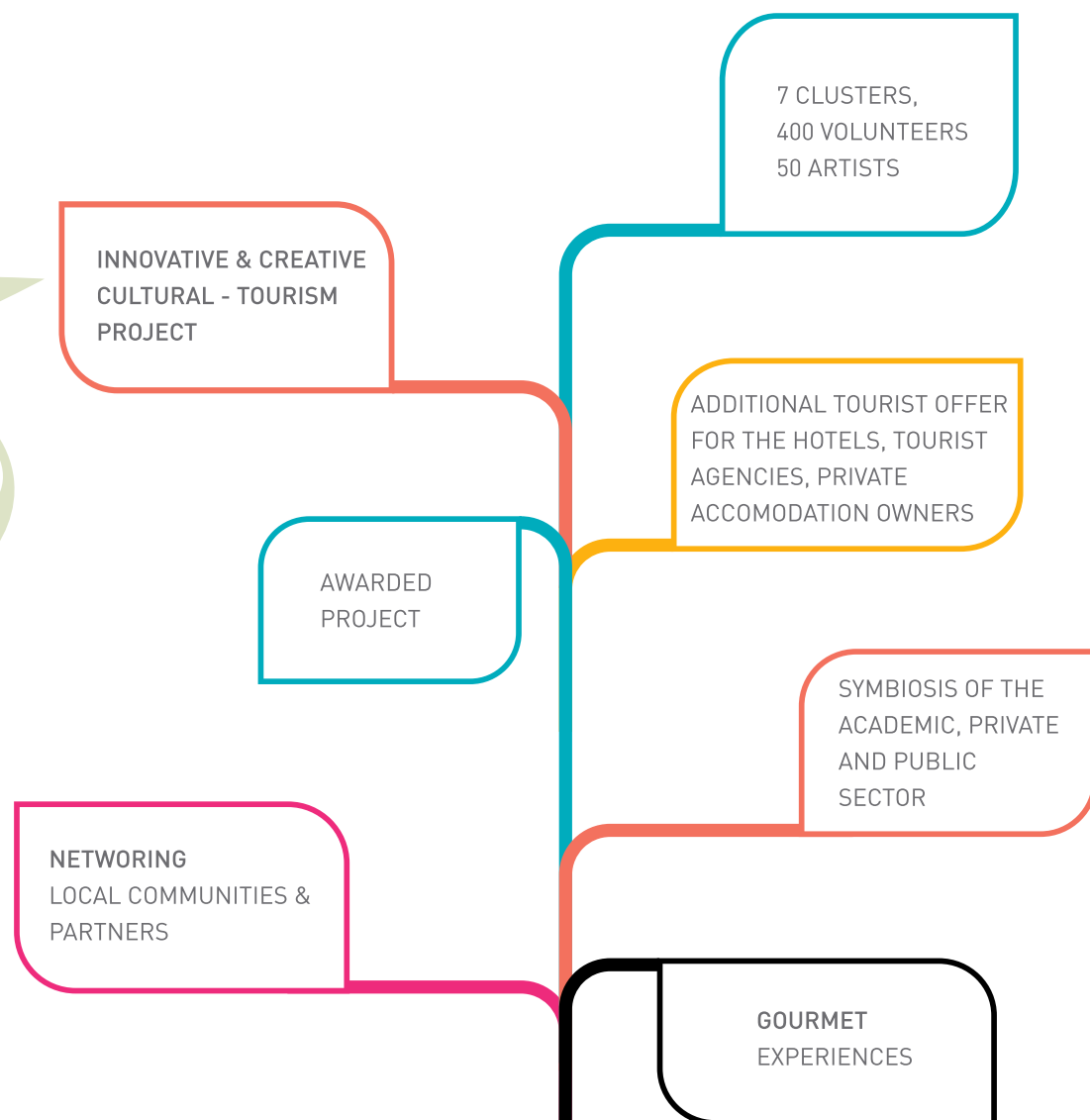
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Istra Inspirit is a multi-awarded 'tourism meeting culture and heritage' project in Istria, which enriches the peninsula's cultural, and tourist offer with the revival of historical events on real locations, through staged Istrian legends and myths. The Administrative Department for Tourism of the Region of Istria (Croatia) has promoted the development of the Istra Inspirit project since 2012, in cooperation with the Istrian Tourism Development Agency (IRTA) and the Istria Tourist Board. Istria Inspirit is a public project, which is coming close to be seen as a public-private partnership (with all its positive connotations).

## Type of Heritage Interpretation activity

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Istria Inspirit is not a single museum, nor an interpretive centre, nor any other similar (fixed) heritage attraction. It is a model of comprehensive heritage planning, where values of existing, unused resources of cultural and historical heritage of the region find innovative ways of involving different stakeholders in the tourism/heritage industry, in order to create new products. Quality, originality, innovation, and sustainability are the major features which make the project unique and its 'know-how' recognizable, with the aim to be transferred to diverse stakeholders and to create, with them, 'the story of the destination'(s).



## Brief description

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Istria Inspirit is a public established body, with the mission to serve local communities and a clear understanding that public-private partnership is probably the best way to reach the highest quality levels of tourism and heritage (included heritage interpretation), and to benefit, directly and indirectly, local communities, as they are the real owners of heritage.

Istria Inspirit creates diverse experiences in storytelling and a living history by which guests and visitors of different sites within the Istrian peninsula can understand better the local context, and their stays at destination are far more enriched and remain unforgettable. The essential 'modus operandi' of Istria Inspirit is based on a simple rationale: each destination (even the smallest one) has its own specific history, traditions, myths, and legends that can be performed and presented to the audience in a creative and interesting way. In other words, Istria Inspirit is an ideal partner for converting Istrian legends and stories into today's understandable realities: like, for example, reviving the story of Mr. Jure Grando, the very first vampire story recorded or the legend of the fairies who built the famous Pula/Arena amphitheatre. Istria Inspirit is doing a transfer toward an innovative cultural and experiential product, as a unique travel through time, customs, and traditions and by interpretation of all senses, of tangible and intangible heritage.

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Istria Inspirit started in 2012, as an innovative programme and in 2023 it is a main heritage 'engine' of related interpretations within the Istrian peninsula.

## Criteria it meets and justification

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### 1. Time and Sustainability

#### Time path of the project

When Istria Inspirit started in 2012 it offered nine different experiences, which have been performed twenty-seven times, mostly during the summer. Within two years the number of performances tripled, thanks to an appealing programme and it keeps growing every year (save for pandemic years). While there are regular performances which have smaller updates, success of Istria Inspirit is in constant research for new inspirations coming from the well of the intangible heritage of the Istrian peninsula: myths, legends and stories which deserve to be re-discovered.

A number of partners come from the academia, the culture and private business sector and many other members come from local communities.

## Sustainability

Sustainability, besides quality, originality and innovation is the credo of every action undertaken by Istria Inspirit. For decades, tourism significantly changed the way of life in Istria (for better mostly or for worse). Istria Inspirit started with the idea of finding innovative ways to involve diverse stakeholders in today dominant tourism industry, and with the aim of conveying the idea to stakeholders and creating with them stories of the destinations. Furthermore, the goal, reached, but still constantly evolving, is the active networking of all interested people creating a constructive collaboration to create tourist destinations: family farm households, students, local communities, actors, artists and musicians, craftsmen and local tourist boards. All of them might obtain tangible benefits.

## 2. Community engagement

### Degree of engagement

#### Co-creation:

Ideas for any new 'experience' and interrelated performances always come from a member of a local community. It could be another legend or story which any local farmer, artist or craftsman whispered around, or something on which the Istria Inspirit team (with the help of scholars) made research and checked in within local communities.

#### Participation:

Participation of local people is always included in Istria Inspirit performances. Not only on their planning but as well as in its implementation. Since the very beginning of the Project, this included top-quality art performers with multiple skills, talents and abilities such as acting, music, dancing, juggling, walking on sticks, fire-eating, silk dance etc. so the audience can enjoy a comprehensive interactive experience of the living history concept. But it also involves the audience(s) itself in a performance that requires both, the performers and everyone who is involved and can add any ability to improvise and adapt to each experience in a different fashion.

#### Assistance:

As a public body (the Administrative Department for Tourism of the Region of Istria in cooperation with the Istrian Tourism Development Agency (IRTA) and the Istria Tourist Board) Istria Inspirit has a mission to serve the common good of all Istrian citizens. Istria Inspirit is doing its best efforts by conveying stories, myths, and legends in a professional way in the form of a creative interpretation of cultural heritage. But it would be impossible to do so without a cross-sectoral cooperation, without all professionals (foremost actors and musicians, and other performers) as well as numerous associations and

### 7.1.2. Istria Inspirit

heritage institutions (of diverse range) involved in the project, whose contribution to the project is priceless. To name just a few: Association Friends of Giostra, House of Batana, Labin Art Express, Pretoria, MVS Nešpula, Historical Association Castle etc.

#### **Audiences' diversity**

Tourists, locals, specialized visits, families, schoolchildren.

#### **Positive impact on the community**

Through its activities, experience programmes and related performances, Istria Inspirit demonstrated, at least, two things. Firstly, the intangible heritage of Istria (and therefore of any other region) could be more attractive than it might seem, but if presented in an innovative, quality heritage interpretation way it may be a 'bingo'. Secondly, if properly and in-depth planned the previous could be a perfect tool to ensure additional benefits to local communities, regardless of whether they are already interconnected to existing dominant economy of tourism or not. Istria Inspirit, with its activities is crossing the inter-sectorial gap, so necessary, as its activity includes making connections and cooperation between local Istrian farmers, professional performers, directors of Tourist Boards and/or (indeed) hotel managers. In the end, all the aforementioned have the same interests in participating and gaining benefits out of it, using heritage interpretation as a tool.

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## **3. Heritage values provokes thinking or identity storytelling or media**

By bringing the audience (locals, tourists, or visitors) and intangible heritage of the Istrian peninsula, its myths, stories, and legends, into the forefront, Istria Inspirit directly builds and keeps Istrian local identity. Local people are becoming proud not only of Istria's natural beauties, which are many, and well-known, but also of those 'small stories' from their (family) past lives, and sometimes even current lives. Performances put Istria and its former peoples or its famous guests in the spotlight.

The Istrian peninsula, due to its turbulent history (from Roman times all the way to former socialist Yugoslavia and today's Republic of Croatia) has always been a place of diversity. Experiences and performances by Istria Inspirit respect that past, even though other diverse and/or intersectional perspectives exist, for example related to stories from the past, which were accepted in the past by previous society values, but which do not fit in today's standards.

## 4 Heritage Interpretation strategies applied: use of the Tore model / use of immersive tech-niques.

The activities by Istria Inspirat are case studies, perfect examples of the TORE principles. Any action/experience/performance is strictly thematically organised, having local inspiration but sending (directly or indirectly) a universal message. It is well organised with multiple stakeholders, including local communities, entrepreneurs of all kinds, Tourist Boards etc. all of them coordinated by Istria Inspirat. Those activities are relevant as performances are based on Istrian myths and legends but are also relevant to today's people and their real-life experiences. Finally, these activities are enjoyable, as they take the form of a history enactment, providing an elevated level of contemporary theatre performance, making it as an art, the art of heritage interpretation, adapted to interests of visitors while creating benefits to local communities.

## 5. Innovative, research and creative elements used

The uttermost creative and innovative element in the case of Istria Inspirat is its ability to interconnect diverse sectors (arts, culture, hotels, local farmers, local craftsmen, etc.) putting them together for the same goal. No question the tourism industry (hotels, travel agencies) has seen it as an opportunity for an extra revenue, but Istria Inspirat was able to mitigate that idea quite well: if it is not in the interests of the entire/wider community it will not be a priority, nor will it take place. By doing so they opened a space for some vulnerable, unprivileged actors (as far as we discuss tourism industry) to "step on stage" and show that the so-called "experience economy" is not possible without them.




Selected interpretation performances in Istria, organised by Istria Inspirat. Photo © Istria Inspirat


## Why this activity should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice?

Istria Inspirat is a public engagement/project, where a new form to present an intense (intangible) heritage of a certain European region through heritage interpretation techniques is proposed, and accordingly organised considering the balanced interests of all stakeholders involved. Usually, when heritage meets tourism (especially in the case of a mass tourism) heritage interests end as the weaker side. In a way, the Istrian peninsula was a case study of that, but Istria Inspirat changed this approach dramatically. Not only by organising experiences and related performances over the last ten years, but much more by showing a different approach, where the formula “tourism meets heritage” is indeed possible, and it might be of interest for all stakeholders. Where heritage interpretation, supported by the highest quality ‘actors’ (here) is playing a leading role. It could be the same or different for other places where this model might apply.



Selected interpretation performances in Istria, organised by Istria Inspirat. Photo © Istria Inspirat

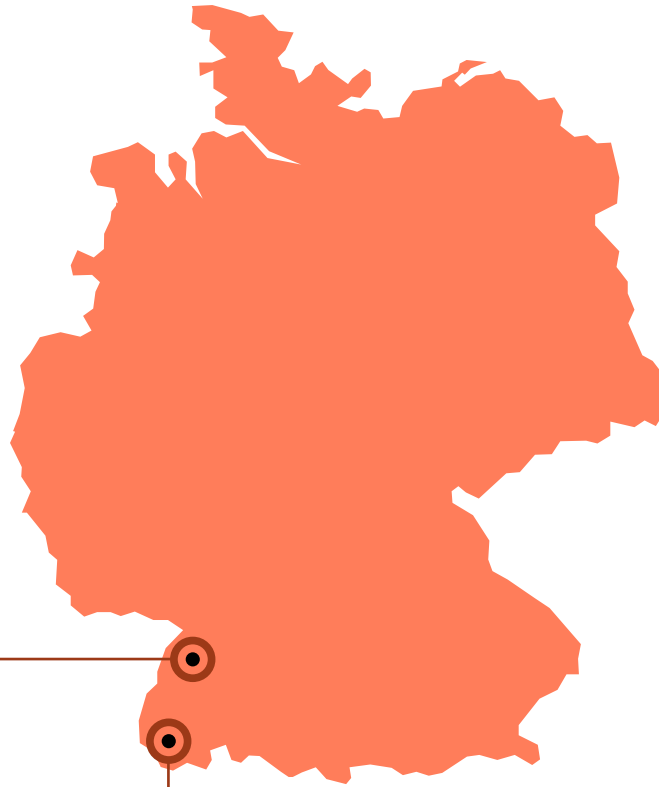
 Istria Inspirat (webpage, English)

 Istria Inspirat (Facebook-page)

 Istria Inspirat (Instagram)



## 7.2. Germany



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Kandel mountain  
of power

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National Park Black  
Forest, a bit wider

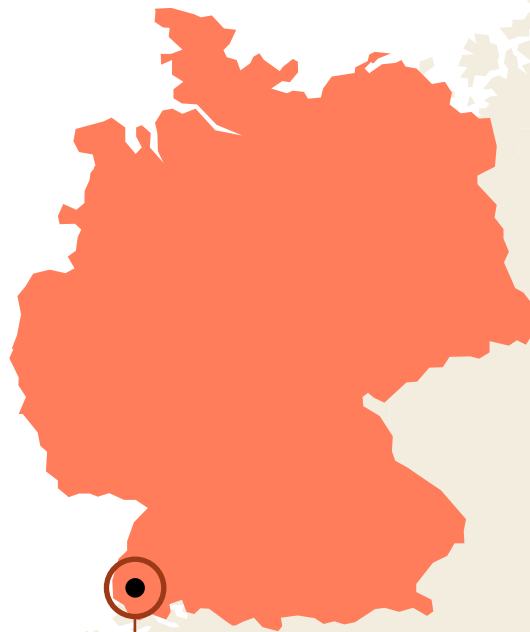
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**Address:** Nationalpark Schwarzwald  
Schwarzwaldhochstr.2 77889 Seebach  
(Germany)



## Kandel – Mountain of Power

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Kandel mountain  
of power

Kandel - Mountain of Power is a destination offer that includes the entire mountain massif. The landscape is characterised by mixed mountain forests, old farmhouses, pastures and meadows, deep valleys, and rocky areas. Many rare animal and plant species have settled there. The Kandel is part of the Southern Black Forest Nature Park and has several nature reserves. The communities are located in the valleys around the mountain range. The Kandel is one of the highest peaks of the Black Forest, situated on the edge of the Rhine plain and offering a wide view over the landscape. The villages and the town have a strong tourism activity and they either have a slight demographic increase or remain constant in demographic terms.

[www.google.es/maps](http://www.google.es/maps)



### 7.2.1 Kandel mountain of power



The exhibition to invite people to discover the offer. Picture by Andreas Schaps

## Author

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The Kandel – Mountain of Power is a private and municipal initiative designed and realised by the University of Freiburg, Institute of Environmental Sciences and Geography, Heritage Interpretation working group, Anna Chatel & Monika Nethe.

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Town councils and, particularly, tourism associations thereof take care of the offers.

The Emmendingen District Office is to be regarded as the lead agency.

## Type of Heritage Interpretation activity

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This is a comprehensive planning activity, including a small interpretive centre and guides.

## Brief description

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The project was the result of a private and a communal initiative and was co-financed by the Southern Black Forest Nature Park. The neighbouring communities of Waldkirch, Simonswald, St. Peter and Glottertal, as well as the district of Emmendingen and the Natural Park, all agreed that this special natural and cultural space needed to be highlighted. Until now, it had not had any offers.

Through many workshops and interviews with local experts and the university, seven themes were developed for seventy-two points of interest.

Those themes were:

- The world of plants - plants in the play of the forces of nature.
- The world of rocks - creative forces from outside and inside the earth.
- The world of sport - a test of strength on the mountain.
- The world of legends - the power of myths.
- Regenerative energy - gaining power from nature.
- The world of agriculture - demanding power, and
- The world of historical power - the power-sapping world underground.

All of which were placed under the central theme of Kandel - mountain of power.

“Destination Kandel - Mountain of Power” consists of six discovery areas where Kandelbergland natural and cultural landscape is presented in three languages, on forty-two information panels and three brochures. A small exhibition in a central information point and a hiking book completes the offer.

It is also possible to book guides specially trained in heritage interpretation.

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The book on the offer “Kandel mountain of power.” Picture by Andreas Schaps

## Criteria it meets and justification

### 1. Time and Sustainability

#### Time path of the project

In 2005 the Heritage Interpretation Working Group of the University of Freiburg was commissioned to develop a concept for the Kandel destination. It was implemented in several steps, starting in 2006. The official opening of the seventy-two points of interest took place in 2011. In 2013, the Kandel guide training was added. In 2014, the hiking book with texts on the seven themes was written. The last implementation was in 2022 with the information point and an exhibition.

#### Sustainability

The destination Kandel of Power is a self-guided offer where visitors are introduced to the unique, historically evolved cultural landscape of the southern Black Forest and shown how nature and man can live together in harmony. Using the method of heritage interpretation for the offers, visitors are introduced into the natural and cultural themes of the Kandel in a lively way through exciting stories (emotional appeal) and are encouraged to reflect.

Guided tours on special Kandel themes can be booked at the Tourist Information Office.

The panels are not only for adults, but also for children, as the main character Kandela and her two pets (a cat and a raven) at the bottom of the panel present funny dialogues in the form of sketches to stimulate discussion with parents.

KANDELA, the witch for the children.  
Picture by Andreas Schaps



## 2. Community engagement

### Degree of engagement

#### Co-creation:

Co-creation in the planning process: with numerous interviews, special personal stories from people who live on the Kandel were compiled. These were used at the points of interest to involve the local people and to give visitors a better feeling of the mountain.

#### Participation:

Inclusion of local population in the development of the interpretive activity.

#### Assistance:

Local people look after their panels which are telling their stories. They keep them clean and mow the grass around.

### Diversity of Audiences

Families with children in primary school, adults, small hiking groups, English or French speaking visitors.

### Positive impact on the community

Featuring the names of accommodation facilities or farm shops on the panels creates added value for local agriculture. The communities benefit directly from the promotion of a good thematic offer on the Kandel. Thanks to the discover areas, visitors come to the Kandel more often and overnight guests stay longer. Local people understand their mountain better and contribute to its protection.

## 3. Heritage values provoke thinking or identity storytelling or media

On the panels, in the brochures, in the book and in the exhibition, texts and photos are used in a way that have a direct connection to the phenomenon. They set the scene for the natural or cultural heritage of the Kandel and makes the invisible visible. This helps people to understand issues such as nature conservation, or it helps to support farmers by telling their stories.

### TORÉ

Every few years, new services are added, like the info point. Panels have been completely redesigned and the Kandel book is going into its second edition.

## 4. Innovative, research and creative elements used

Many of the university's excursions are held on the Kandel and final theses are written, evaluating the heritage interpretation offer. This helps to continuously improve new services or renew old ones.

Creative installations are used to show how change in nature is going on (Power wheel).

Visitors reading the text. **Picture by Anna Chatel**



## Why this activity should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice?

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Heritage interpretation is used from the very beginning with a strong guiding idea and various themes. Evaluation has shown that the heritage interpretation offer helps people to better understand the sensitive natural and cultural area. The offer uses different media and serves different target groups.



[www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net)

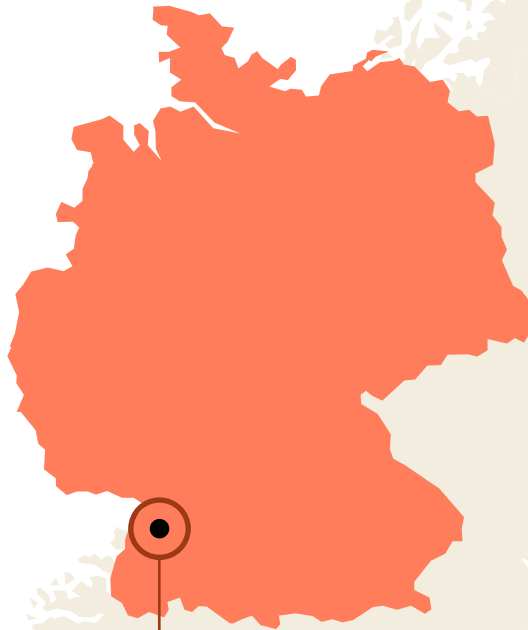


[www.werbekonzepte.com](http://www.werbekonzepte.com)



[www.schwarzwald-tourismus.info](http://www.schwarzwald-tourismus.info)

## Black Forest National Park, a bit wilder



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**Black Forest  
National Park**

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The protected area extends in two sections over a total of around 10,000 hectares between Baden-Baden and Freudenstadt. 0.7 percent of Baden-Württemberg's forest area is under special protection.

The national park area is divided into three zones with varying degrees of protection: Core Zone, Development Zone and Management Zone.

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**Address:** Nationalpark Schwarzwald  
Schwarzwaldhochstr.2 77889 Seebach  
(Germany)

**[www.google.es/maps](http://www.google.es/maps)**



### 7.2.2 National Park Black Forest, a bit wilder



Learning in Nature. Picture by German partner.

## Author

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National Park Service. Leader: Charly Eble

## Type of Heritage Interpretation activity

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This is a visitor centre with educational programmes, itineraries, and digital applications.

## Brief description

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The Black Forest National Park has been in existence since 1<sup>st</sup>. January 2014. It was preceded by a discussion process lasting around two years in which the region was also extensively involved.

The Black Forest natural and cultural landscape is unique. Forestry and grazing have been practised here for generations, shaping the region to this day.

In the Black Forest National Park visitors find a lot of contrasts: for example, forests, moors, ridges, and lakes.

The diversity of this landscape is reflected in the variety of fauna and flora: a large part of the National Park is a NATURA 2000 protected area.

The motto “Let nature be nature” expresses the primary goal of the protected area. The protected area also has the task of conducting intensive educational work in order to inspire future generations for wilderness and nature conservation. Children, young people, and adults can experience in the National Park what it means to leave nature on its own. They work intensively with *kindergartens* and day-care centres. Another focus is on schools of all types and pupils of all ages, as well as on students at universities. In addition, the National Park offers programmes for teachers, educators, youth groups, clubs, and associations. The National Park sees itself as an initiator for the topics of wilderness and conservation.



Learning in Wilderness. Picture by German partner.

## Criteria it meets and justification

### 1. Time and Sustainability

The staff in the field of wilderness education work with different approaches: at events such as guided tours and lectures, visitors of all ages are informed about the tasks and goals of the National Park. However, since young people in particular are to be empowered to shape a sustainable world responsibly and actively, the educational work also focuses on cooperation with *kindergartens* and schools.

## 2. Community engagement

### Degree of engagement

#### Co-creation in the planning process:

The National Park area is divided into three zones with different degrees of protection: Core Zone, Development Zone, and Management Zone. This division was made with the involvement of the population in the course of a large-scale participation process. 147 suggestions from visitors, municipalities and an online forum set up especially for this purpose were discussed in advance and implemented.

#### Participation:

Participation is a key concern of the National Park. Participation takes place in various forms. Depending on the topic, for example, guided tours, workshops, information events, visits to municipal council and district council meetings, tours, online information, or on-line dialogues are offered.

Since May 2022, there have been many different opportunities to get involved in the further development of the National Park. An information event in Forbach, broad online participation and theme tours as well as workshops brought together many ideas and suggestions from interested citizens.

Another centrepiece of the participation was a citizens' forum made up of some 1,000 randomly selected citizens from all over Baden-Württemberg and the region surrounding the National Park. The forum brought together different perspectives from society. The study was intended to find out which opportunities, risks, and issues of a further development of the National Park are important to the population. In addition, citizens were asked about conceivable opportunities for participation.

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#### Assistance

There are a lot of people participating and helping out as volunteers at the National Park.

#### Diversity of Audiences (types)

Families with primary school children, adults, hiking groups, bus groups, people with disabilities, the elderly, English or French speaking foreign visitors.

#### Positive impact on the community (examples)

Communities benefit directly from the promotion of a great visitor centre and education-

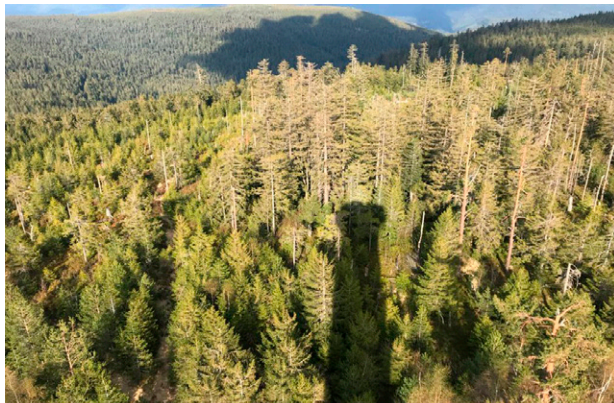
al activities. Thanks to the National Park, visitors come to the region more often and stay longer. Local people understand their environment better and contribute to its protection. There is constantly research going on to find out the impact. The National Park is very young, so all this is still in process.



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Learning in Wilderness. **Picture by German partner.**

Torre National Park. **Picture by German partner.**



### 3. Heritage values provoke thinking or identity storytelling or media

Provoking reflective thinking is an educational goal and inclusiveness is a key topic at the National Park. Whether guided tours in sign language, barrier-free construction measures or online offers in easy language – the National Park takes this very seriously. All people should have a good access to the Park.

This also applies to the website.

### 4. Heritage Interpretation strategies applied: use of the Tore model / use of immersive techniques.

A co-creation process took place in advance and participation is a key tool at the National Park.

The topic of the visitor centre is “Wilderness,” and everything is built up around this topic, guided tours included.

Rangers have attended the Certified Interpretive Guide Training. Assessments are under process.

## 5. Innovative, research and creative elements used

The National Park social science team is also concerned with the question of how and why visitors come to the National Park, and what are their impressions regarding the protected area. These data flow directly back into practice; for example, in decisions on how to manage the flow of visitors in the National Park in a sensible manner. Counting barriers installed in the area play a key role for this. The results of visitor monitoring are also part of socio-economic and socio-cultural monitoring.

Creative (digital) installations at the visitor centre as well as outdoors let people really dive deep into the wilderness.

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### Why this activity should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice?

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The entire National Park is noticeably young, which is a great advantage, because it was possible to build it up through co-creation and a participative process.

The visitor centre includes different media for different target groups.

Rangers have a certified interpretive guide training.

Much research is being done.

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[www.nationalpark-schwarzwald.de/de/nationalpark/kurz-knapp](http://www.nationalpark-schwarzwald.de/de/nationalpark/kurz-knapp)



[www.nationalpark-schwarzwald.de/de/erleben/nationalparkzentrum](http://www.nationalpark-schwarzwald.de/de/erleben/nationalparkzentrum)



[www.nationalpark-schwarzwald.de/de/erleben/nationalparkzentrum/ausstellungen](http://www.nationalpark-schwarzwald.de/de/erleben/nationalparkzentrum/ausstellungen)



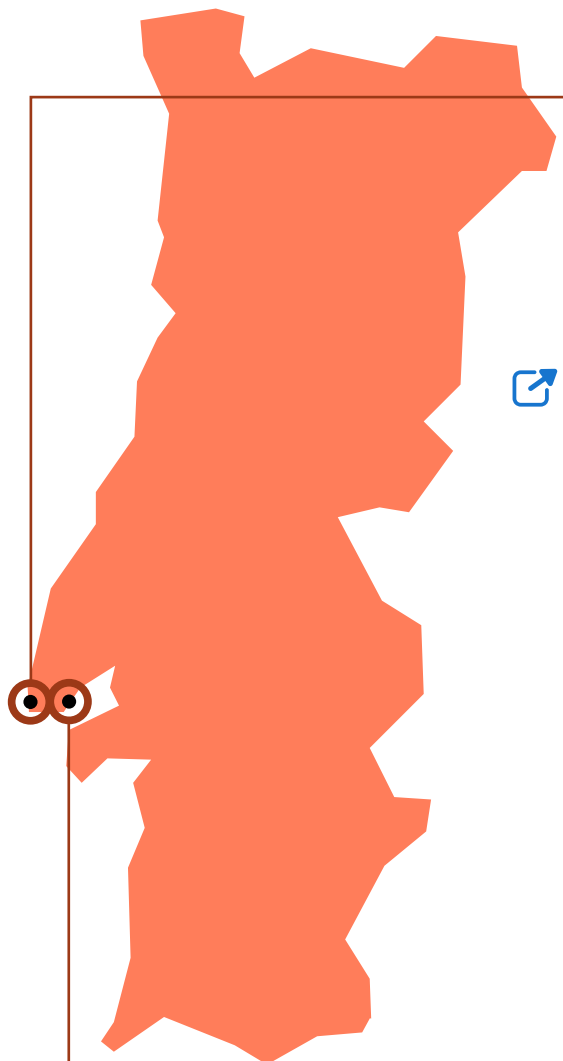
<https://www.nationalpark-schwarzwald.de/de/natur-wildnisbildung/natur-und-wildnisbildung-neu>



[www.nationalpark-schwarzwald.de/de/nationalpark/blog](http://www.nationalpark-schwarzwald.de/de/nationalpark/blog)



## 7.3. Portugal



### Integrated Educational Project in Oeiras

**Address:** Oeiras City Council.  
Schools and local heritage sites.



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### Discovering Lisbon's African Heritage

**Address:**

**Headquarters:** Avenida João de Freitas Branco, 12 .  
2670-073 Caxias, Portugal

**Lisbon Office:** Rua António Gedeão, Lote B3 .  
1950-151 Lisboa, Portugal.

**Tour area:** Lisbon Metropolitan Area



## Discovering Lisbon's African Heritage

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**Address:**

**Headquarters:** Avenida João de Freitas  
Branco, 12 . 2670-073 Caxias, Portugal

**Lisbon Office:** Rua António Gedeão, Lote B3 .  
1950-151 Lisboa, Portugal.

**Tour area:** Lisbon Metropolitan Area

[www.google.es/maps](http://www.google.es/maps)



### 7.3.1. Discovering Lisbon's African Heritage



Group of participants sharing personal stories prompted by the tour © Mapa das Ideias.

## Author

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Batoto Yetu Portugal

## Type of Heritage Interpretation activity

Itinerary / Guided tour

## Brief description

Batoto Yetu started as a programme to keep African culture alive within the diaspora, teaching dances and percussion of African tradition to young people. The association was created in 1996 to participate in the events organised on the occasion of Lisbon's Expo 98, where they represented traditional African culture in dances and percussion. In recent years, Batoto Yetu started to rethink its work to enhance African heritage, particularly among the new digital generations that, unlike previous ones, are less interested in physical activity.

Since 2016, Batoto Yetu Portugal's guided tours, "Discovering Lisbon's African Heritage", have been open to the public! The aim of these visits is to make known the African side of Lisbon, which is currently dispersed in numerous memories and visible and invisible traces.

The "migration" of African populations is a permanent element in the History of Portugal since the 6th century. Of the Moors' own free will (Islamized Africans and Arabs), or "by force" (until the end of the 18th century) or later "by force" (from colonialism since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to 1974, and the today's globalisation), several African peoples settled in the city of Lisbon.

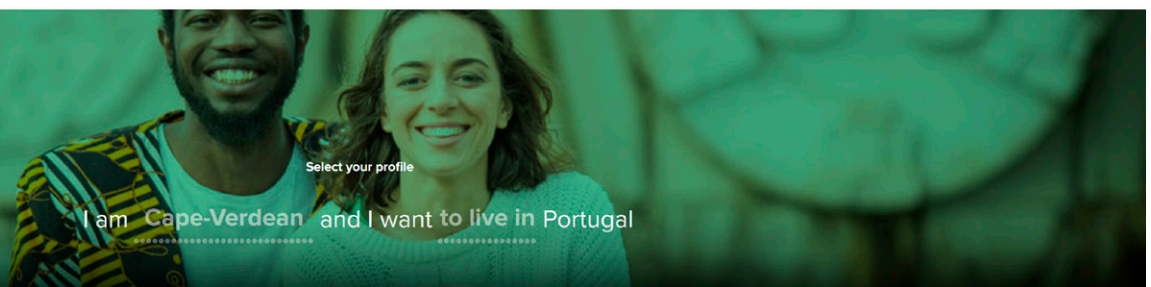
After 1974, different communities from different colonies migrated to Portugal as a result of the end of the Colonial War. Some of this migration has happened in waves due to economic reasons.

The presence of these populations has always been different to that of other people: most of these "recent" African populations did not come of their own free will, as it was the case with Romans, Moors (Islamized Africans) and Arabs.

Registration to the activities is always open, and it can be done by email or telephone. Guides and members of Batoto Yetu do the walks. There is not any specific target public, although most audiences are American and Brazilian tourists.

There are three prearranged itineraries, but they can be customised by the guide upon customers request. Adaptations to the tour are possible considering the weather, the available time that the group has (typical tour is 2-3 hours) and thematic focus. Visits are mainly made by Tuktuk and on foot and they are offered in Portuguese and English.

The project was possible thanks to the funding by the Portuguese Government (República Portuguesa), Lisbon City Council and the High Commissioner for Migrations (ACM). The association has also private sponsors, most of them from Europe and North America.



Select your profile

I am Cape-Verdean and I want to live in Portugal

living

studying

working

investing

portuguese

## Criteria it meets and justification

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### 1. Time and Sustainability

#### Time path of the project

Since 2016, all year round and by appointment. There are three available itineraries as well as a customised tour.

The African Presence in Lisbon can be done by foot and/or by Tuk-Tuk (auto rickshaw). Itineraries last three hours or more, and may include lunch, depending on which means of transport you take. The Sugar Cane tour in Loures (neighbouring town) and the Black Island or Sado Valley tour (region south of Lisbon) require buses or vans, depending on the number of people. The Sugar Cane tour lasts around three hours, whereas the Sado Valley tour takes about ten hours, including a meal.

#### Sustainability

As noted above, this project aims to show a pan-African perspective of Lisbon's African heritage, sometimes, contradicting what Portuguese children learn at school, where educational programmes focus on the glorification of the Portuguese maritime empire and undervalues the African contribution. So, in general, this programme provides educational and cultural services, as it tries to develop people's minds about a topic that has been manipulated in world and Portuguese educational programmes.

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### 2. Community engagement

#### Degree of engagement

##### Assistance:

Visitors follow the guide through the itinerary, playing mostly the spectator's role. With some groups, the guide will engage in a Q&A mode, asking participants about their knowledge and intuition about the history of Lisbon and the contribution of Africans to the history of the city.

##### Diversity of Audiences

This initiative is intended for the general public.

Most of the requests for these visits come from American tourists (mainly from the USA

and Brazil), partly due to the increase of American and Brazilian tourists, for whom these themes are significant subjects of debate.

In Portugal, the association has worked more regularly with *Casa Pia* school, within the framework of a partnership, but in general schools do not ask for these visits.

Occasionally university students or cultural professionals also participate in these activities.

### **Positive impact on the community**

This heritage offer presents an alternative account of the presence of African people in Portugal.

In schools and many governmental institutions, such as museums, the narratives that are presented regarding the history of Portugal and Lisbon range from the glorification of the Portuguese Empire to the superficial approach to the geopolitical history which does not reflect on demographic shifts along history. The view presented in these visits is a mirror to the Eurocentric narrative, and as such it invites participants to reflect on the ideas they have been exposed to. As such, it may trigger healthy critical thinking strategies from participants that are prone to it. It can also, similarly to Eurocentric speeches, promote a sense of pride to individuals who have the need to feel represented in historical events.

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The guide presenting the stories of notable Africans and African descendants in front of the statue of Doutor Sousa Martins, one of the notables. © **Mapa das Ideias**.

### 3. Heritage values provoke thinking or identity storytelling or media

As explained above, much like Eurocentric speeches, the approach in this project is strongly emphatic as it regards to identity. It promotes a reading of the history of African diaspora in Portugal that acknowledges the victimization narratives but complements it with a perspective of the diaspora as a community with some degree of influence that contributed to shape the course of events in the country and the city. Part of the tour also focuses on the achievements of specific individuals, such as the African descendant Doutor Sousa Martins or the bullfighter Fernanda do Vale (pen name to Andréa do Nascimento), among others.

### 4. Heritage Interpretation strategies applied: use of the Tore model / use of immersive techniques.

#### **TORE**

##### **Relevant:**

By showing a distinct perspective of the theme, this activity challenges the traditional narratives about the role played by Africans in the history of Portugal, a necessary process, given the growing number of citizens that share both Portuguese and African identities.

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##### **Thematic:**

The activity aims to deconstruct the stereotypes related to the African presence in the history of Portugal and proposes an alternative image of African communities as active agents in shaping that history.

##### **Organized:**

Although there is a specific, prearranged tour, itineraries may be changed. The tour that was experienced by the team started with a presentation of the association and a discussion about the representation of the African Diaspora in traditional discourses regarding history and identity. It was followed by the visit to key spots of Lisbon where the accounts of important Africans and African descendants was shared, and ended in a neighbourhood where the coexistence of African descendants and other natives is embedded in the identity of the community.

##### **Enjoyable:**

The guide interacts with the group. The tours may involve visiting restaurants and other places. The experience of African cuisine as part of the tour can create a moment that



The group sharing a meal after the tour in a Cape Verdean restaurant. © José Lino, Batoto Yetu.

bridges the cultural activity to leisure. The tour also passes through various boroughs of Lisbon, allowing participants to experience various locations and environments.

## 5. Innovative, research and creative elements used

The tours are based on research by several academics and literature authors like José Machado Pais, António Chainho, Adalberto Alves, José Ramos Tinhorão, among others. More recently, Isabel Castro Henriques has strongly contributed with research related to 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> century history. [!\[\]\(18569d183f428fd303d6b0a95ce89fc9\_img.jpg\)](#)

Among creative elements used in the visits, we identified the use of the history of key individuals as illustrations of the lives of the African Diaspora that differ from their sole description as slaves. These visits also dialogue with the current presence of the African Diaspora: during the tour, the guide travels across locations that have been adopted by specific communities, and areas where African people can be found performing trading activities (open-air markets, restaurants).

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## Why this activity should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice?

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It presents an alternative account of African history in the Portuguese territory. The activity invites to review the shared awareness of the history of Lisbon and Portugal, and the role that the African Diaspora played in that history. As it contrasts with more common narratives, it can very much contribute to a dialectic of history, both as a process that assembles events around a speech as well as a mechanism of establishing political and social identities, creating, and reinforcing a sense of loyalty and kinship between current populations and individuals and communities of the past.





## Integrated Educational Project in Oeiras

**Address:** Oeiras City Council. Schools and local heritage sites.

[www.google.es/maps](https://www.google.es/maps)



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**Integrated Educational Project in Oeiras**



The guide and students during a session at the Marquês do Pombal Palace. © Mapa das Ideias.

## Author

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A Reserva na Fábrica

## Type of Heritage Interpretation activity

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Educational Program

## Brief description

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The Integrated Educational Projects (IEP) are co-creation and continuous learning projects designed to establish closer and more lasting relationships between the public and heritage.

In each IEP, a specific, tailor-made programme is defined for each situation, in which a class can transform heritage sites into their space for extracurricular (or even curricular) activities over the course of six sessions.

During the first session, a previously selected list of local heritage sites is briefly presented to the class, using dynamic and interactive resources. After this presentation, the class democratically decides the site to be studied. This selection determines the object (heritage site) that students will explore in depth during the following sessions. For example, if the class chooses to work with a military fort, they will learn all about that specific site, as well as other related themes, such as history, architecture, navigation, among other, always having into consideration the class's interests. The final product (approach) is entirely defined by the class; mediators only facilitate knowledge, orientation, strategies, and techniques.

Based on different themes and art techniques, the group sets out to discover the collection, the building, or the surrounding area, deepening their knowledge and interests to produce a final product which will be assessed by participants and shown or exhibited at the end of the project.

The guide and students during a session at the Marquês do Pombal Palace gardens. © **Mapa das Ideias**.



### 7.3.2. Integrated Educational Project in Oeiras

Working sessions (two per month) alternate work at the heritage site and school. Considering the specific interests of each group, the idea is to work on a theme related to municipal Local Heritage Routes, based on three axes (Memory, Identity and Heritage) and in direct relation with the school curricula of each relevant education level: elementary or secondary school.

Registration is done by the teacher using the *Oeiras Educa+* portal, free of charge for students, as the City Council pays all the activities.

Each session is accompanied by two mediators and visits to sites are guided by each heritage site staff. The two mediators of the sessions are experienced in heritage mediation as well as artistic production, allowing the students to choose from a wide range of artistic techniques. As the skillset of the mediators plays a particularly significant role in widening the class's choice of options, it is important that these types of projects are led by mediators with different training background and expertise.

## Criteria it meets and justification

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### 1. Time and Sustainability

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#### Time path of the project

This project was implemented in 2023. According to the project's methodology, each project has six sessions (two per month). It has been implemented four times with four different classes.

#### Sustainability

This program allows students to take on heritage as one's own. The project is developed by the heritage dynamization unit of Oeiras City Council, and the selected heritage sites belong to that municipality. As such, it acts as a local development project, promoting heritage enhancement among the community. Some of the heritage sites that were selected by classes are very meshed in the experience of the city or local transportation (for example, the forts can be seen by train commuters, and the palace gardens are in the historic centre and can be visited easily). Finally, the project not only promotes the knowledge of these sites, but it encourages appropriation, by asking students to critically think, observe, learn, interact, and create, which is likely to produce stronger memories than just one-time visits.

## 2. Community engagement

### Degree of engagement

#### Co-creation:

The projects are designed by the classes. Mediators function as knowledge providers, trainers, and mentors (monitoring project implementation and leading the decision-making process), but mostly as facilitators (encouraging all participants to be active, mediating discussions, creating bridges).

#### Diversity of Audiences

This initiative is intended for elementary and secondary school students. Since the project is made available using the *Oeiras Educa+* platform, it is open to any class in public schools within the municipality of Oeiras, to students from 1<sup>st</sup> grade (age of 6) to 12<sup>th</sup> grade (age of 18). As the enrolment in public schools is decided by specific criteria related to students domicile or the workplace of their parents, these schools represent the demographic diversity of the municipality, in which reside people from different nationalities, faiths, and economic backgrounds.

#### Positive impact on the community

The project had a positive impact within the class that developed it and the community (school and non-school) in which it takes place. In order to empower the group and give visibility and a sense of fulfilment to all the work made, a final presentation of each project – three books and one video – was prepared at each chosen heritage site and open to the public. Elements of the school community were present, as well as people from each heritage site staff and representatives of Oeiras City Council.

An evaluation survey of the methodology applied to the project was also conducted with the involvement of teachers, who keep providing data.

## 3. Heritage values provoke thinking or identity storytelling or media

This initiative explores the concepts of identity, memory, and knowledge. The aim of the project is for students to learn more about their local heritage and history, and how heritage intertwines with national history. Since three of the six sessions take place at the heritage site, students can create a closer relationship with such sites, seeing them as something else than just places to visit only for leisure purposes. By encouraging stu-

dents to think about the identity, memory and knowledge dimensions, the project also sets the grounds for students to establish personal bonds with these places and think of them as spaces of learning.

## 4. Heritage Interpretation strategies applied: use of the Tore model / use of immersive techniques.

### **TORE**

#### **Relevant:**

Each class selects and works on the enhancement of certain heritage sites. This builds on existing societal issues regarding heritage, as well as on novel educational policies being deployed in Portugal in recent years. Too often heritage safeguard and protection are disregarded by younger generations, in part because traditional policies of cultural democratization have failed to establish strong bonds between individuals and heritage, and, on the other hand, because heritage is often politicized, used as a tool for political grievances. As such, heritage education needs to pay closer attention to the creation of stronger bonds within society. The new educational policies recognize that the future of markets and employment is highly uncertain, so schools must give students cross-disciplinary competences, related to a number of sectors, as well as the curricula in school should adopt local-based knowledge to strengthen the resilience of territories. This project addresses both concerns.

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#### **Thematic:**

By doing so, they are encouraged to consider these sites as places linked to their own identities and where their collective memory is partly safeguarded. The collaborative methodology also promotes a sense of agency, allowing students to see themselves as actors of the heritage landscape and not just passive observers.

#### **Organized:**

Three of the sessions take place in the classroom, while other three take place outdoors, at heritage sites. The first in-class session is aimed at allowing students to democratically decide which is their site of choice, and the first on-site session provides an in-depth visit, so students become familiar with the history and collections with which they will work. Since the projects are decided by the students, the subsequent organization of sessions varies depending on the intended outcome. Despite this, mediators provide

students with the guidance they need to implement the activities they wish and help them keep a focus on the topics of identity, memory, and knowledge throughout the six sessions.

**Enjoyable:**

Students have the ability to choose the site and to create their own project. During the six sessions, there were always different creative dynamics to trigger artistic creation processes to define the final product. For example, word games were made, working on how to build stories, mood boards (using the Milanote app) to help find references and inspiration, among other tools.

## 5. Innovative, research and creative elements used

Co-creation project between the students and the heritage site. The creative elements used may vary depending on the project proposed by students, but the core methodology deploys several creative tools, dealing with the facilitation of selected heritage sites, decision-making processes, or artistic guidance involved in project production. For instance, games and other creative dynamics and tools were used to keep the sessions more enjoyable and goal oriented.

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## Why this activity should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice?

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It has a strong participative component, and it allows students to be involved in all decision-making processes, thus, creating something they like and feel as something of their own, based on the heritage site and the three key-concepts: identity, memory, and knowledge. One of the key aspects of this activity is that it attempts to overcome the lack of continued interest and engagement that resulted from traditional heritage education methodologies, which focused heavily on classical guided visits to heritage sites and yielded poor results in terms of audience retention once students have left school. It also values the mediation by professionals of heritage, strengthening their role as non-formal educators, allowing them to work with students in a short but continuous process, instead of having single interactions with the same individuals.



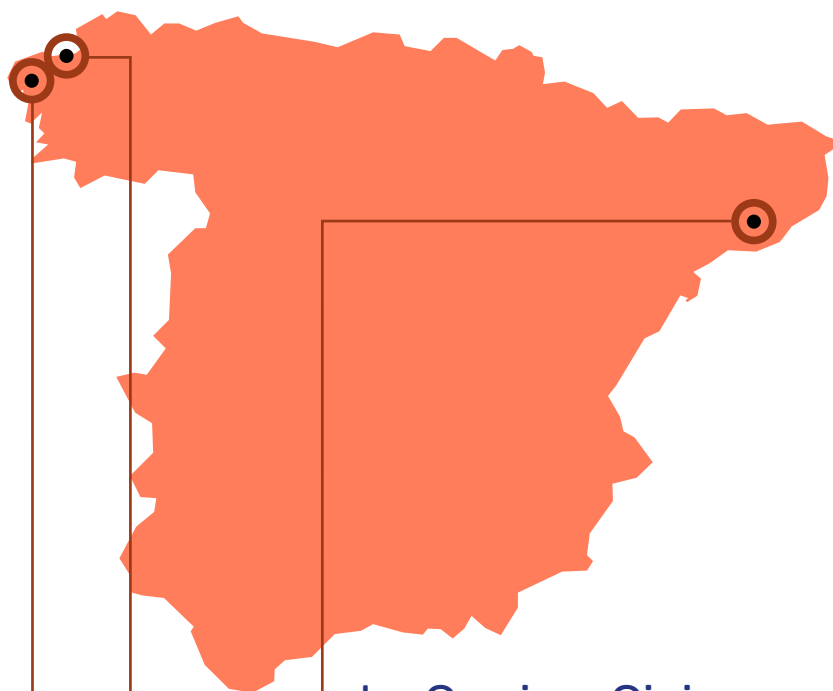
### 7.3.2. Integrated Educational Project in Oeiras

A group of students interacting with a model of the grounds at the Gunpowder Museum. © Mapa das Ideias.





## 7.4. Spain Spanish Association for Heritage Interpretation (AIP)



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### La Garriga: Giving meaning to the territory

### A Coruña of crafts guided tour



The guided tour takes place in the old town of A Coruña (Spain)

### Cabanas sen barreiras, Cabaniñas do Bosque



**Address:** Cabaniñas do Bosque. Areal, 19 Apriscos - 15230 Outes (A Coruña). Tel. + 34 981 850 903 / + 34 627 184 678  
E-mail: [info@cabanitasdelbosque.com](mailto:info@cabanitasdelbosque.com)

## A Coruña of Crafts guided tour



The guided tour takes place in the  
old town of A Coruña (Spain)

[www.google.es/maps](http://www.google.es/maps)



#### 7.4.1. A Coruña of crafts guided tour



A Coruña of Crafts Tour. Visiting the potter's workshop. **Picture by María Elvira Lezcano.**

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## Author

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Cascarilleiros Brand (an activity developed by a group of freelance tour guides).

## Type of Heritage Interpretation activity

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Guided tour

## Brief description

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This is a guided tour where the medieval city of A Coruña is explained, focusing on the importance of the various guilds that existed at the time. During the tour, shops or businesses that still preserve traditional and craft production are visited and demonstrations are performed by craftsmen.

## Criteria it meets and justification

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### 1. Time and Sustainability

#### Time path of the project

Visits are organised once a month during the central months of the year (April-October). The experience started in April 2021, and is still in operation.

#### Sustainability

It is a regular activity concerning the three goals.

It is educational because it aims to transmit values to the community so that they are recognized and preserved. It is positive from a social and economic point of view, as it supports the work of many people who develop trades that are not always well-valued and/or in danger of disappearing. It is good for the community because people benefit from the experience, whether they participate as the audience or being part of the group of artisans involved.

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### 2. Community engagement

#### Degree of engagement

Before launching the tour, a search was made in order to locate businesses that still have a workshop or manufacture their own products using craft techniques. During each tour, three or four businesses are invited to participate, telling participants why they created the business, what it means, and partially explaining the artisanal process. "Cascarilleiros" collaborates with more than twenty local stores, putting them on the map.

#### Diversity of Audiences

All kinds of audiences.

#### Positive impact on the community

This activity has an impact on the community as local craftsmen are directly involved and most of the audiences are local people interested in their own history and traditions. There is a leisure contact between them, and eventually a commercial relationship in the future.

### 3. Heritage values provoke thinking or identity storytelling or media

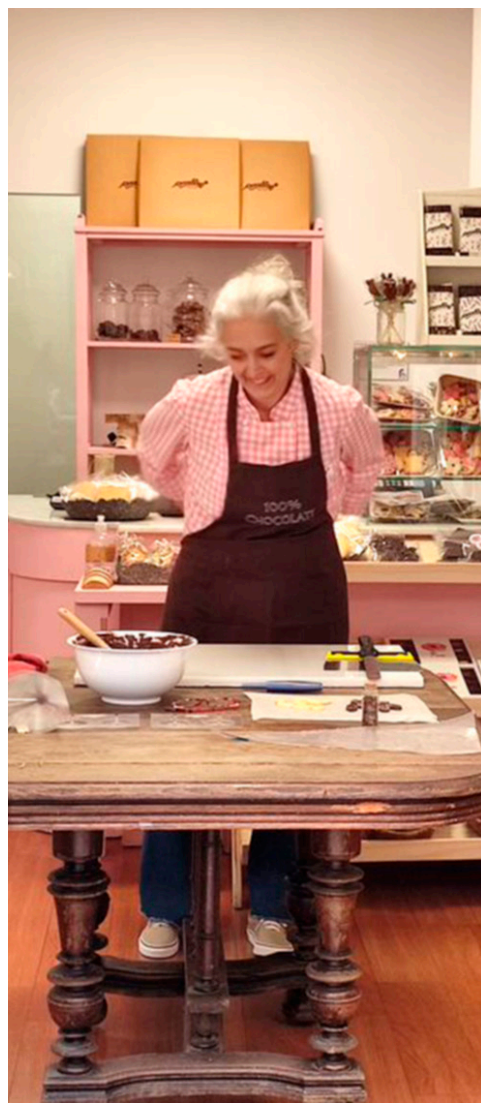
The visit is well linked to current reality, even though it is a historic tour. Tilden principles are well achieved.

The visit helps to create emotional connections with the people showing their daily work. It helps to raise public awareness of the importance of local trade and the need to maintain trades and crafts and to enhance them, so that audiences can appreciate them.

### 4. Heritage Interpretation strategies applied: use of the Tore model / use of immersive techniques.

The TORE model is used, the visits have a message, are well structured and organized, and the information is relevant for the audience. Guides always try to establish a connection between actual and real life and the explanations they provide. It is an enjoyable activity, because of the possibility to take part in the demonstrations and to speak to artisans. Humour is also present throughout the entire tour.

A Coruña of Crafts Tour. At the chocolate shop.  
Picture by María Elvira Lezcano.



Participants can leave their opinions on sites like Google Maps or TripAdvisor. For this guided tour, participants left more than twenty-five reviews, all of them positive with the maximum qualification. Businesses that collaborate in the experience have said that the tours have created a new flow of recurrent customers.

### 5. Innovative, research and creative elements used

For the research, talks were held with artisans. Demonstrations and conversations between them and the audience. Some tours end with a tasting at a chocolate shop or a specific restaurant that offers local and home-made food.

They implement immersive techniques such as demonstrations or the use of senses.



A Coruña of Crafts Tour. The watchmaker talking to visitors. Picture by María Elvira Lezcano.

#### 7.4.1. A Coruña of crafts guided tour



A Coruña of Crafts Tour. Visiting the Sustainable clothing shop.  
Picture by María Elvira Lezcano.

A Coruña of Crafts Tour. At the watchmaker's.  
Small business, big heart. Picture by María Elvira Lezcano.


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## Why this activity should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice?

It is a good practice example because it meets heritage interpretation principles: they try to connect with the audience experience, offering much more than just some information; they are thought-provoking. The visit is highly creative, linking the history of the old town of A Coruña with some current affairs by creating some parallelisms, so they are able to present a holistic vision of the site, allowing the people to understand it through specific and first-hand examples. Although the tour is not adapted for children, it is an enjoyable experience for any kind of audience.

They follow the TORE model.

Tours are promoted online, via social media, and through a WhatsApp distribution channel.

 [www.cascarilleiros.com](http://www.cascarilleiros.com)

 [www.instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com)

## Cabanas sen barreiras, Cabaniñas do Bosque



Cabanas sen barreiras,  
Cabaniñas do Bosque

A Quintella (Autonomous Region of Galicia, Spain).

*Cabanas sen barreiras*, is part of the company Cabaniñas do Bosque, located in Serra de Outes (A Coruña province, Spain). It is a permanent installation of a signposted interpretive experience within the premises of a private tourist accommodation made up of six accessible tree cabins.

The cabins and the itinerary are located in A Quintella, a village within the municipality of Serra de Outes in the autonomous region of Galicia (Spain), not far from Santiago de Compostela.

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[www.google.es/maps](http://www.google.es/maps)




#### 7.4.2. Cabanas sen barreiras, Cabaniñas do Bosque



General view of the cabins. **Picture DoArtesanato**

## Author

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Cabaniñas do Bosque  is a part of the company Do Artesanato. The project was designed by Isabel Fernández Domínguez, an expert on heritage interpretation. Information is available both in Spanish and Galician, as they try to enhance the regional language.

## Type of Heritage Interpretation activity

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This is a permanent installation of a signposted interpretive experience within the facilities of a private tourist accommodation, made up of six accessible tree cabins. It is a comprehensive tourist project on an interpretive basis.

## Brief description

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Interpretive experience/project in permanent service, consisting of:

- Welcome panels, including Spanish Sign Language, high relief, and guides for blind people.
- Signage panels in Braille at each cabin and guides for blind people.
- Tactile model, reproduction of one of the cabins, with pyrography logos of the project, that makes it perceptible by touch.
- Video in Spanish Sign Language, subtitles, and audio (the script follows interpretive criteria).
- Guide with tourist resources according to heritage interpretation criteria and accessibility.
- Instruction guide for some cabin services (jacuzzi, fireplace, TV).
- “*Recunchos máxicos*” (Magic Corners).
- Signposting
- Downloadable information in PDF
- Audios

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Details of the cabins. **Picture DoArtesanato**



## Criteria it meets and justification

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### 1. Time and Sustainability

#### Time path of the project

This activity is permanently in operation since 2017.

#### Sustainability

This is a private business project. However, we would like to highlight two aspects regarding its contribution to society:

- A The project is intended to integrate people with different abilities, working with universal accessibility standards.
- B The idea is to hire as many local people as possible for the development of the project and afterwards, during its entire life.
- C Tree cabins are blended into the landscape, aiming not only at showing or enjoying nature, but at raising awareness about the fragility of nature, the need to preserve natural environment and its relevance for the community.

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### 2. Community engagement

#### Degree of engagement

This is a private initiative, and although community engagement rarely occurs in such cases, we would like to note the following:

- The developer is a backbone of the community, a person who was born and lives in the village.
- Information has been gathered from other people in the village.
- Although it was not conceived as a participatory process, there were some contributions from local people.
- The recovery of micro-toponyms was one of the goals.
- During the opening ceremony, the owner organized a traditional feast, sitting politicians, workers, and local associations of disabled people at the same table.

### **Diversity of Audiences**

These accommodation facilities are focused on tourists. Diversity, therefore, lies in the possibility of accommodating people with different abilities. The whole experience followed this philosophy too.

### **Positive impact on the community**

There is an impact on the community in terms of nature and local culture preservation and of the economic impact of tourism and job creation in the area. All information is provided in Galician and Spanish, the two official languages of Galicia. The project makes particular emphasis in supporting the local language (Galician).

## **3. Heritage values provoke thinking or identity storytelling or media**

This initiative is highly inclusive, as it meets universal accessibility criteria. The project shows the role historically played by women in the community.

## **4. Heritage Interpretation strategies applied: use of the Tore model / use of immersive techniques.**

The project applies the principles of relevance and amenity of the scripts and is developed through interpretive planning.

- The project tries to make visitors take over the site and to present it as a magical and unique place.
- Use of self-reference.
- Use of metaphors and similes.
- Use of a poetic tone.

All descriptions have a core message and include universal concepts. For example, when describing a traditional wash house in one of the Magic Corners, the message is: "Local women watered these lands with life stories". All the Magic Corners have similar kinds of messages.

## 5. Innovative, research and creative elements used

Heritage interpretation techniques are used within a private business, adding value to the area and the accommodation facilities.

Universal accessibility is provided in private accommodation facilities.

Immersive and interpretive techniques are implemented: in the search of magical corners, as well as in scripts and poetic texts, constantly questioning the audience, like with the activity called “The voices, full of memories, come back to you.”



Permanent installation of a signposted interpretive itinerary in a private tourist accommodation. Scale model of one of the cabins.

Picture DoArtesanato

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## Why this activity should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice?

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This experience has been created according to heritage interpretation criteria, the TORE model, and accessibility in drafting the texts as well as in the graphic design and the manufacture of interpretive material. There is always an interpretive theme (message) using universal concepts and trying to connect to the visitor’s experience and personality in a creative, not only informative, manner.

The most interpretive part is the so-called “*recunchos máxicos*” (magic corners), in which spots which are considered particularly special are signposted. Each “*recuncho*” (corner) has a theme (message) and a text that can be downloaded in pdf or audio format.

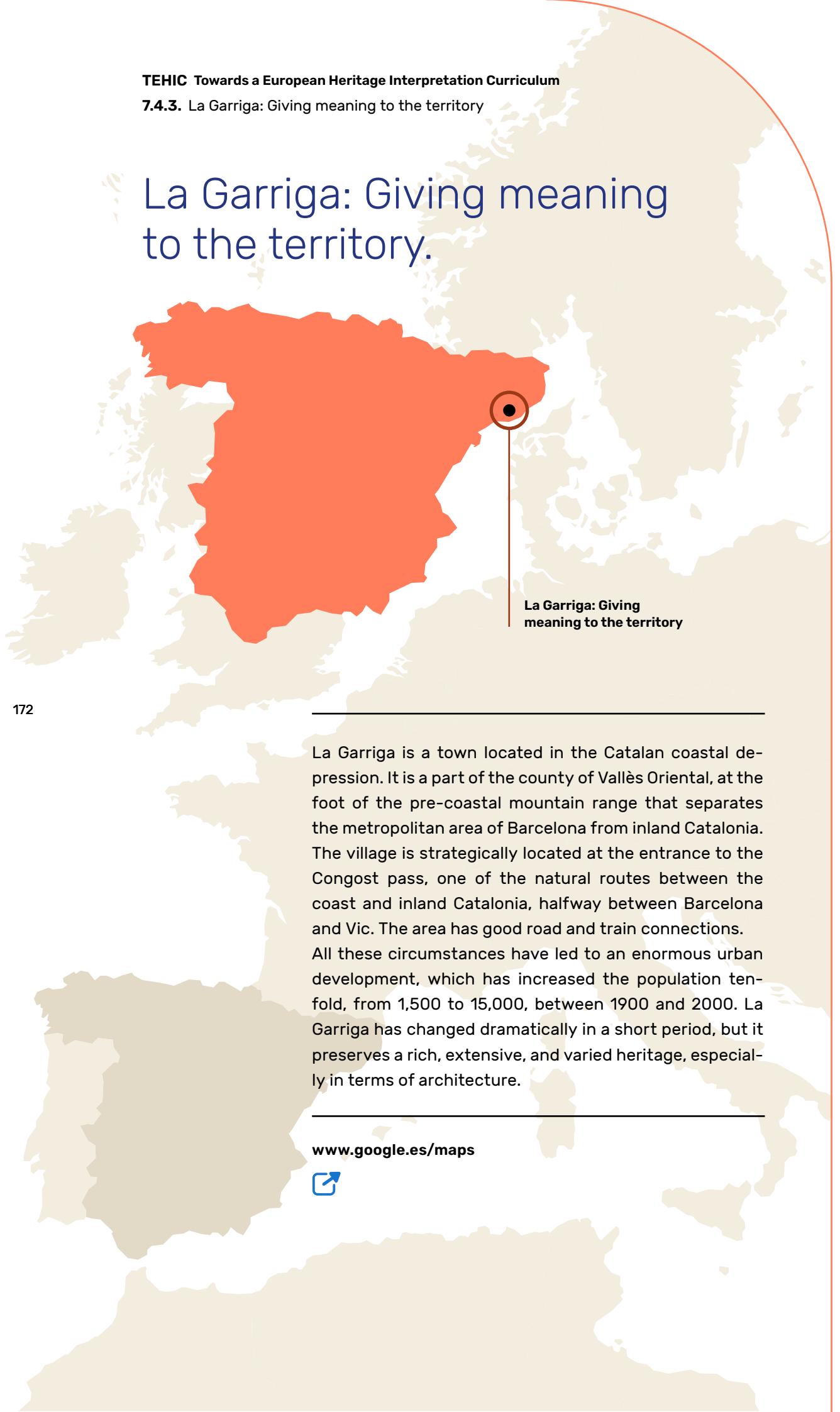
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 [www.cabanitasdelbosque.com](http://www.cabanitasdelbosque.com)

 Magic corners (*recunchos máxicos*)

 Interpretive presentation available

## La Garriga: Giving meaning to the territory.



La Garriga: Giving meaning to the territory

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La Garriga is a town located in the Catalan coastal depression. It is a part of the county of Vallès Oriental, at the foot of the pre-coastal mountain range that separates the metropolitan area of Barcelona from inland Catalonia. The village is strategically located at the entrance to the Congost pass, one of the natural routes between the coast and inland Catalonia, halfway between Barcelona and Vic. The area has good road and train connections. All these circumstances have led to an enormous urban development, which has increased the population tenfold, from 1,500 to 15,000, between 1900 and 2000. La Garriga has changed dramatically in a short period, but it preserves a rich, extensive, and varied heritage, especially in terms of architecture.

[www.google.es/maps](http://www.google.es/maps)



### 7.4.3. La Garriga: Giving meaning to the territory



Can Barbey interpretive station, one of the town's main summer homes. The station highlights the work and the role played by anonymous people who built the house and took care of its maintenance. **Picture by Anna Mas**

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## Author

La Garriga City Council, Heritage Department.

## Type of Heritage Interpretation activity

La Garriga (Barcelona) is a town where heritage is used as an excuse to give meaning to the territory. The tourist-cultural offer created around heritage uses heritage interpretation as a basis. All actions are related and developed under this philosophy.

Some means or strategies implemented in La Garriga are routes (guided and self-guided tours), activities, signage, territory museum, heritage interpretation-based management strategy, and training.

La Garriga is organized, above all, as a **museum territory** or an open-air museum, based on the town's numerous heritage attractions.

7.4.3. La Garriga: Giving meaning to the territory

The aim was to explain the area's evolution, the town planning of the municipality, and the stories behind it through its heritage and the creation of equipment, products, visits, and brochures. To this end, since 2012, projects have been based on Heritage Interpretation as a discipline, understood as an effective tool for what we were trying to achieve, and also as a strategy to build a unique offer.

Most activities are based on heritage interpretation, such as guided tours by interpreter-**guides and self-guided tours**. Some of these visits have been dramatized or conducted by experts or specialists on different fields, spaces, or people.

**Signposting and site musealization** are the most common tools employed. These are more ambitious projects, especially with the implementation of interpretation elements (**Interpretation Stations**) in the street, on site, in the open air, that try to put the focus on the meanings of the area. All these items also play a relevant role as landmarks in the landscape, helping to focus attention on the elements we want to be highlighted.

Heritage Interpretation is a tool for social and environmental transformation too, as it tries to give visibility to inequalities and to the diversity found in La Garriga (social, urban, landscape, economic, territorial...), with an intersectional approach and storytelling.

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The **Visitors' Centre** management and the town's tourism and heritage offer is outsourced through a public service concession. Knowledge and **training in heritage interpretation** are required in order to be able to develop any activities. In the same vein, since 2014, an annual heritage interpretation training course has been organized , being the goal of this course the provision of ongoing training for the staff involved in the management of La Garriga and, at the same time, to raise awareness of this discipline in Catalonia. As a result of these courses, the first **Heritage Interpretation manual** in Catalan was published in 2020: "Heritage Interpretation. How to provoke thoughts, questions, and meanings".

Image of the *Centro de Visitantes de la Garriga* (La Garriga visitors' centre). The gateway to the village.  
Picture by Anna Mas



## Brief description

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When the Heritage Department of La Garriga City Council began its work in 2004, they decided that these areas had to be approached with as broad a perspective as possible when considering heritage enhancement, communication, and socialization. Because what mattered was anything that could be told through the diverse legacy, highlighting the close connections between all these aspects. So, from the narrative point of view, it made no sense to hierarchize or isolate this heritage. As pointed out before, heritage interpretation is the basis of all projects. All actions are related and developed under this same philosophy.



Picture of interpretive signage at *Can Terrors Roman villa*, which takes advantage of the virtual 3D reconstruction of the site. **Pictures by Sara Riera**

## Criteria it meets and justification

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### 1. Time and Sustainability

#### Time path of the project

The global project is twelve years old, and it includes a regular annual programme. Educational, social, cultural, and natural services that benefit from or improve the quality of life of the community.

Besides the usual quarterly programme, activities are offered on *à la carte* basis. All kinds of services are provided: educational, social, and cultural. Work is performed with schools and tourists, trying to deeply involve the community in all these activities.

## 2. Community engagement

### Degree of engagement

Most actions have been conducted with the assistance of the community only. Some projects have included participatory mechanisms for information and data collection and project development.

### Diversity of audiences

All kinds of audiences are encouraged to participate, creating activities to attract local and visiting audiences and people of all ages. Different admission prices try to make the offer accessible for everyone.

### Positive impact on the community

There has been a positive impact on the community, especially concerning (re)education and an increased appreciation of local history and heritage.

Image from interpretive activity *Desperta Holmes!*, conducted at the old parish church of La Doma.  
Picture by Anna Mas



#### 7.4.3. La Garriga: Giving meaning to the territory



Picture of interpretive signage at *Can Terrers Roman villa*, which takes advantage of the virtual 3D reconstruction of the site. **Pictures by Sara Riera**

### 3. Heritage values provoke thinking or identity storytelling or media

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In La Garriga, Heritage Interpretation has always had a vocation for social transformation. For this reason, special attention has been paid to ensuring that contents have a gender/feminist perspective and, usually, a cross-cutting approach that makes inequalities visible.

### 4. Heritage Interpretation strategies applied: use of the Tore model / use of immersive techniques.

#### **TORE**

Most activities and programmes try to accomplish the TORE model.

#### **Use of assessment techniques**

A new evaluation sheet is being implemented. The aim is to specifically assess the success (or unsuccess) of the use of heritage interpretation with a series of specific questions to measure the fulfilment of interpretive goals and, in particular, the reception of the theme.

## 5. Innovative, research and creative elements used

Research processes (which subsequently have led to heritage interpretation projects) have attempted to address new issues and perspectives. At the same time, the thematic approach, and the use of museography techniques in the interpretative elements have also entailed diverse, innovative, and creative approaches.



Picture of interpretive station at Pou Calent, a public hot spring. Signage highlights the importance of hot springs for the village layout and frequent conflicts and struggles between public and private interests. **Picture by Sara Riera**

A wide range of communication strategies and techniques have been used to ensure that the public creates affective and cognitive links with heritage and territory. To provoke a critical questioning of what the public sees through constant references between past and present. It is common to link the content of what they want to tell and what everyone knows from their daily experience in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

In 2023, an immersive and interpretive experience will be implemented using virtual reality.

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## Why this activity should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice?

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La Garriga is an example of holistic and global heritage interpretation. It is not just one project but many projects in one. Heritage is the project's starting point, but it tries to base management and dynamization on the core principles of interpretation by using many different and varied tools. The objectives are based not only on the transmission and preservation of this heritage but on the awareness of the people who come to know it. There is a concern with inclusion and intersectionality so that heritage bequeaths to all people and the formulas of interpretation are adapted to them, taking them as a starting point and also as direct participants. The project includes training in heritage interpretation and the scientific dissemination of the outcome.



#### 7.4.3. La Garriga: Giving meaning to the territory



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Picture of one of the photo viewers which are frequently used for interpretative signage at La Garriga, showing images of some interpreted resources. Sometimes these devices are integrated into interpretation stations and sometimes, like in this case, they are independent items. **Picture by Roberta Esteves**



## 7.4. Spain

Andalusian Institute of  
Historical Heritage (IAPH)



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Herstóricas trails,  
tours, and workshops



Caicena River Ecomuseum,  
Córdoba.



Museum of La Rinconada.  
La Rinconada, Seville.  
Permanent exhibition and  
programme of activities.

## Caicena River Ecomuseum, Córdoba.

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Caicena River  
Ecomuseum, Córdoba

This is a territorial project located in a small rural town in the southeast of Córdoba province (Spain). The municipality is crossed by the Caicena river and has a population of around 2,500 people, distributed into a main village and a group of smaller villages and scattered houses. It is dominated by a landscape of mountains and olive groves, where traditional orchards of small landowners survive. The exploitation of olive trees is partly ecological and partly traditional. The urban landscape consists of steep, white streets. Population growth is stagnating, and youth migration remains a problem.

[www.google.es/maps](http://www.google.es/maps)





Cordoba Subbaetic landscape. Almedinilla. **Picture by Caicena River Ecomuseum.**

## Author

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This Ecomuseum is a municipal initiative.

The scientific and technical director is Mr. Ignacio Muñiz, municipal archaeologist.

## Type of Heritage Interpretation activity

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This is an integral planning activity.

## Brief description

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This initiative was born thanks to the encouragement of local social movements (the Was-ka association, the publication “La fuentezuela,” neighbourhood associations...), who were concerned about saving the archaeological site of *El Ruedo* village from being partially destroyed by a road project. As a result of this concern, the Town Council capitalised on this effort and supported the creation of the Caicena River Ecomuseum. This type of museum coordinates the museological planning of the entire cultural heritage of the

municipality and its narrative is divided between cultural spaces and territorial actions, following a scheme of balanced local development in accordance with the town's historical and natural heritage, but in constant dialectical and critical debate. It uses the tools of heritage interpretation for the programming and implementation of the activities.

The Ecomuseum includes the Historical-Archaeological Museum, the Peasant Classroom and the visitor and temporary exhibitions centre, as well as accommodation facilities for researchers. All these are complemented by a regular programme of activities focused on heritage: conferences, workshops, training courses, guided tours, educational activities, and so on.

The project's main goal is to raise awareness and promote active participation among local population, and then diversify into inland tourism as a rural development strategy.

## Criteria it meets and justification

### 1. Time and Sustainability

#### Time path of the project

Although the initiative was born in 1994, in 1997 it was materialised in a series of museum nuclei. Since 1999, the management of the Ecomuseum has been consolidated for the organization and planning of a wide range of activities.

#### Sustainability



The Ecomuseum provides educational, social, and cultural services for the local community as well as for visitors: interpreted visits, schoolchildren workshops, open visits during archaeological excavations, educational activities, a Roman festival (*Festum*), historical recreation, dramatization, interpretation and cultural use of public space (Roman meals, "The pleasures of the Roman table", since 2006; Ibero-Roman Meeting *Festum*, since 2007).

*Festum*, Almedinilla.

Picture by Caicena River Ecomuseum.

#### 7.4.4. Caicena River Ecomuseum, Córdoba

These meetings include conferences, workshops, music or theatre performances and parades, always linking antiquity with the present; street theatre, in which the immaterial oral heritage is recovered, the local legend “La encantá”; dramatization and dissemination, night visits to *El Ruedo* Roman villa; Greco-Roman youth theatre Festival “Villa de los Sueños”, since 2016; “Walking along goat trails”, walks with the goatherd and cheese making with the goatherd’s wife; “A day in Roman Betica”, a guided tour to *El Ruedo*, the Iberian settlement of Cerro de la Cruz, the Museum of History, and lunch (or dinner) in a place that resembles a Roman domus with a menu taken from a 1<sup>st</sup> century recipe book and a theatre group that animates the evenings; “sofa archaeology”, online sessions from the Covid19.



*El Cerro de la Cruz* archaeological site. Almedinilla, Córdoba. Picture by Caicena River Ecomuseum

## 2. Community engagement

### Degree of engagement

#### Involvement:

The local community was engaged in the development of the interpretive activity.

#### Attendance:

In the heat of the project, a classical theatre group, Sommus, was formed, with most of the actors coming from the village. In the case of the Roman banquet or the *Festum* parade, up to two hundred people have been actively involved, including children and young people of all ages.

There is a high degree of attendance in specific activities, such as the talks “Between Gods and humans”, with short historical recreations in the Roman *villa*, where pieces from the museum are taken out of display cases so that the public can see them up closer; or in “Archaeology al fresco”, talks about the excavations materials and the museum during summer evenings (an attendance of up 200 people was reached in one summer). The director of local magazine “Fuentezuela” said: “Who would have ever thought that so many people would come to see archaeological pieces”. In short, the museum has succeeded in building visitors’ loyalty.

The challenge now is to keep active participation and to reach real co-creation.

### **Diversity of Audiences**

Schoolchildren, families, disabled people, the elderly, specialized visits.

### **Positive impact on the community**

The image projected of heritage in the private local sphere is symptomatic of the community’s social appropriation of its heritage. Businesses, schools, etc., using local heritage as a sign of identity are a symbol of identification and social recognition: like a pub called Hypnos or the *Taberna de Baco*, a rural hostel called *El Ruedo* or the olive oil brand *Hypnos*, all of them references to the ancient Roman world.

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There are also examples linked to the Caicena river and its natural environment. In the period close to the *Festum*, some shops are adapted to perform tasks linked to the festival, such as the local manufacture of Roman costumes. As a symbolic scenario of local appropriation, the photographic reports of weddings in the Museum of History on both sides of the Hypnos or their celebration in the rooms of the Visitor Centre of the Roman *villa* stand out, not to mention street art murals on local heritage topics.

Street art. God Hypnos. **Picture by Isabel Luque.**



### 3. Heritage values provoke thinking or identity storytelling or media



Woman in Roman world. *Festum*.  
Picture by Isabel Luque.

The storytelling of local cultural facilities is interpretive and is related to the evolution of rural and human landscape, offering a comprehensive view of the village's history, connecting them with unconventional tales, such as the recovery of stories of rural life in the Peasant classroom and the historical memory in work camps and workshops. The work of recovering invisible heritage is conducted through the accompaniment of protagonists such as local shepherds, the recovery of vegetable gardens and traditional irrigation ditches, in order to prevent the loss of knowledge. Specific examples include the I Meeting of Archaeology held in Almedinilla in June 2018, a meeting point for groups and associations that are part of the network of mutual support for a free and collective archaeology; the visibility of the role of women in the *Festum*, through the 2019 programme dedicated to women in antiquity and the conference "Making women visible through history. Past and present", by the working group *Arqueólogas Feministas* (Feminist Archaeologist Women), among others.



Almedinilla. Picture by Isabel Luque.

## 4. Heritage Interpretation strategies applied: use of the Tore model / use of immersive techniques.

The Ecomuseum prepares the storytelling and organises activities in constant renewal, connecting with local people through leisure and heritage (parades, informative talks, workshops, etc.). For example, the work on recent history and intangible heritage serves to interpret collective memory from an emotional point of view, from people's close and specific experiences (relevance).

For example, the interpretive speech deals with four main narratives:

- Archaeology linked to local sites, research applied to the territory;
- Recovering historical memory;
- Recovering local trades, traditions and lifestyles;
- The cross-cutting and innovative relationship between archaeology and other disciplines such as contemporary art, dreams, gastronomy, medicine, music, theatre, etc.

Almedinilla. Picture by Caicena River Ecomuseum.



## 5. Innovative, research and creative elements used

The Ecomuseum has developed a continuous work, especially in the field of archaeological research, which has been disseminated by its own or other publications, in collaboration with universities and other scientific institutions. The results have been spread through the planning of activities and the interpretation of *El Ruedo* and *Cerro de la Cruz* sites (for instance, the reconstruction of examples of Iberian settlement huts).

It is also considered as an innovative project because it tries to create cross-cutting heritage narratives from other perspectives such as contemporary art, theatre, music, medicine: for example, a musical pilgrimage of twelve continuous hours was organized through the four heritage sites of Almedinilla: Cerro de la Cruz, the Peasant Classroom, the Historical-Archaeological Museum and the Roman *Villa* of *El Ruedo*, all of them led by a flamenco musician, el Niño de Elche.

Sound parades were adapted to each of these heritage sites.

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## Why this activity should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice?

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We consider it to be a good practice because it uses interpretation strategies in its planning and programming, as well as in its activities, which are aimed at connecting heritage with local population and visitors. A wide range of means are used, and criteria established for their assessment are met. In particular, heritage interpretation is used to improve the well-being of local people, understanding that the appropriation of heritage is a right and a way to improve the quality of life.

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Festum



Caicena River Ecomuseum blog



Interview with Ignacio Muñoz. I Encuentro Patrimonio de Proximidad, IAPH



II Encuentro Patrimonio de Proximidad, IAPH. El Vuelo de Hypnos: diálogos entre patrimonio histórico y arte contemporáneo. Ignacio Muñoz Jaén, Caicena River Ecomuseum, Almedinilla; Juan López López, video producer.



The waking of sleep. The flight of Hypnos XIII.  
Picture by Caicena River Ecomuseum.

## Herstóricas trails, tours, and workshops.

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Herstóricas trails, tours,  
and workshops

Herstóricas is a cultural and educational project that aims to highlight the contribution of women to society throughout history. Although these activities might be conducted anywhere in Spain, at the moment they are only performed in Granada (southern Spain) and Madrid (central Spain): albeit these two cities are very different, both are good examples to show the role traditionally attributed to women in Spain and how women have been disregarded in Spanish history, art, and other disciplines.

**Address:** Granada & Madrid (Spain).

[www.google.es/maps](http://www.google.es/maps)



Granada



Madrid

#### 7.4.5. Herstóricas trails, tours, and workshops



Tour around Güéjar Sierra (Granada) with the group “Alhucema”.  
Picture by Herstóricas.

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## Author

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Association *Herstóricas*.

## Type of Heritage Interpretation activity

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Itinerary, interpretive visit, educational programme.

## Brief description

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This is a cultural and educational project where trails, guided tours and/or workshops are developed, focused on the role of women in history (thematic), from a feminist point of view.

All activities organised by Herstóricas also reflect the absence of women's contributions to society according to official history.

These activities follow the criteria of heritage interpretation, since they present female references in a dynamic and interactive manner, defying gender stereotypes and the role attributed to women by the patriarchal system.

In their activities, Herstóricas promote participation, debate, and critical thinking.

They also conduct interpretive visits to museums and community projects, all of which enhance the role played by women, in order to recover the history of women, and always from a heritage interpretation perspective.

Examples of interpretive trails:

- "In search of Granada's women: community spaces."
- "The Alhambra: an inhabited town" (Granada).
- "The Herstóricas of the Civil Cemetery" (Madrid).



A stroll through Albaicín quarter (Granada) during the European Heritage Days. **Picture by Herstóricas.**

## Criteria it meets and justification

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### 1. Time and Sustainability

#### Time path of the project

The project was created in 2015 and includes regular planning since 2017.

#### Sustainability

Herstóricas has a yearly planning of interpretive walks, museum visits and community projects. A good example could be “In search of Granada’s women: community spaces.” In this activity they implement tools interactively in order to analyse the representation of women in history, in literature or in the local environment, from a gender perspective. The tools and stereotypes in the community and spaces associated with women over the ages are analysed: how public spaces were used, access to leisure and culture, etc., that is to say, women’s heritage.



Training on inclusive cultural management at the Escuela Pública de Formación Cultural de Andalucía, Granada. (Andalusian Public School of Cultural Training, Granada)

Picture by Herstóricas.

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### 2. Community engagement

#### Degree of engagement

There is a different degree of engagement depending on each project requirements, the community and funding availability. In some projects, we have co-creation, since women associations or neighbourhoods cooperate in designing, creating, and managing the activity.

In other projects, we have active participation, with the local population involved just in the development of the activity. And in some other projects, such as visits to museums, the engagement consists just in participating in the relevant visit.

### **Diversity of Audiences**

Herstóricas team designs various activities: most of them are intended for adults, but they also have activities for children, such as “Menudas herstóricas” (Great little herstóricas) or for high school students. Most of their activities are accessible for disabled people.



“Menudas Herstóricas”, a stroll around Madrid with children. Picture by Herstóricas.

## Positive impact on the community

Most of the activities developed by Herstóricas have a positive impact on the community, particularly those created in cooperation with local communities.

In order to produce a positive impact, all activities are previously assessed among people with and without links to the contents of the activity, people of different ages, professions, and social backgrounds, to check whether the activity is enjoyable, provocative and appeals to the group.

Participants usually feel so identified and involved with the activities that a community has been developed around the general project by Herstóricas.

## 3. Heritage values provoke thinking or identity storytelling or media

The activities offered by Herstóricas provoke thinking regarding the absence of women's contributions to society according to official history, since all those activities highlight the unknown role of many women who are linked to the place, the exhibition, or the museum.

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All the activities incorporate a gender perspective, are inclusive and emphasise social diversity throughout history. They fight gender stereotypes and promote equality.

For example, during the trail "In search of Granada's women: community spaces," they collectively analyse the connections of women from different periods, backgrounds, and socio-economic contexts with several venues within the city.

The educative and training materials developed by Herstóricas also reflect such values.

## 4. Heritage Interpretation strategies applied: use of the Tore model / use of immersive techniques.

Their activities are designed and conducted using heritage interpretation strategies and from this perspective. For example, they use role dynamics, searching for visitor's empathy and participation, which is always voluntary.

The TORE model is also applied, as all activities are thematic (focused on the role of women in a specific period or event of history, or in a specific space, or on specific groups of women...), organised, relevant and enjoyable, such as the interactive activities.

## **Assessment**

Herstóricas send surveys to participants about all heritage interpretation activities to assess both the contents and the materials and methods used. There is also a space for suggestions: they ask about other topics of interest, also related to women's history.

They pay particular attention to non-quantitative answers and to direct feedback from people who participate in the activities in one way or another.

They also use social networks for such assessments.

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Tour around Güéjar Sierra (Granada) with the group "Alhucema". Picture by Herstóricas.

## 5. Innovative, research and creative elements used

The Herstóricas team is always up to date on the latest research, implementing those findings into heritage interpretation activities.

Immersive techniques are used in some of the activities organised: for example, in some visits and trails people listen to “recordings” of sounds of radio broadcasts from the time of the interpretive activity.

Furthermore, their activities have always innovative and not mainstream contents: when an issue becomes broadly known, because it appeared on TV news for example, they immediately swift to another topic.

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## Why this activity should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice?

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Herstóricas project should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice because it uses heritage interpretation strategies to safeguard and promote women history and heritage. In their workshops, held with local communities, Herstóricas team contributes to the recognition of the role of women in history and to the self-empowerment of participants themselves.

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[www.herstoricas.com](http://www.herstoricas.com)

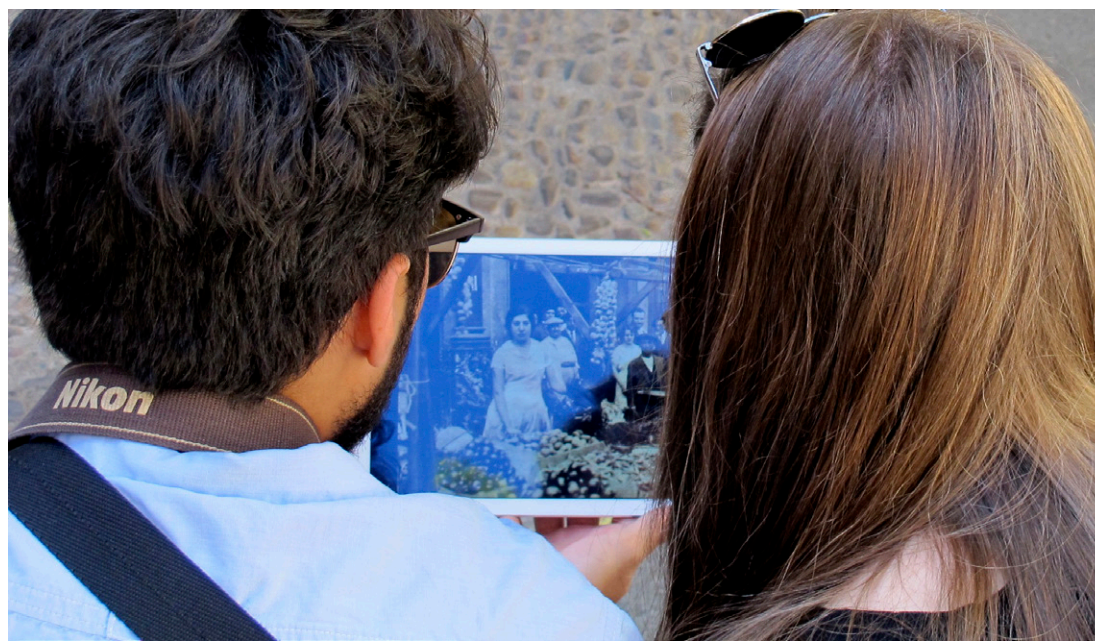


[www.facebook.com/herstoricas](https://www.facebook.com/herstoricas)



[www.twitter.com/herstoricas](https://www.twitter.com/herstoricas)


Participants checking images during the tour “En busca de las madrileñas”. **Picture by Herstóricas.**



## Museum of La Rinconada, La Rinconada, Seville.

Permanent exhibition and programme of activities.

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Museum of La Rinconada, La Rinconada, Seville.  
Permanent exhibition and programme of activities.

La Rinconada (Seville) is a large village (or a small town), with approximately 38,000 inhabitants, close to Seville (14 km.). Its population is divided into two main urban areas: La Rinconada, the historic quarter, with around 10,000 inhabitants, and San José de La Rinconada, a district four kilometres away, where the museum is located. La Rinconada is not a monumental town and is not particularly charming.

Industry plays a significant role in the economy of La Rinconada, as it hosts large industrial estates such as El Cáñamo (in the area of San José) and the Andalusian Aerospace Technology Park (*Aerópolis*). The tertiary sector is also important. However, part of its agricultural sector has survived, with new potatoes being the main crop. The town also serves as a dormitory town for people who work in Seville.

#### 7.4.6. Museum of La Rinconada, Seville. Permanent exhibition and programme of activities.



General view of La Rinconada Museum. **Picture by Anna Elías.**

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## Author

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The Museum is a municipal initiative.

Design, execution, and interpretive programming by *Espiral Patrimonio*.

## Type of Heritage Interpretation activity

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The Museum is an example of a permanent exhibition based on heritage interpretation criteria and the use of interpretive techniques by the programme of activities which are conducted with the community.

## Brief description

Since 2009 the Museum hosts an archaeological and palaeontological collection.

This initiative was born as a municipal response to citizen's request, after a secondary school teacher, Mr. Francisco Sousa, handed over an archaeological collection of lithics and Palaeolithic fossils gathered by his students and local people, mainly workers in the aggregate industry, who drilled the terraces of the river Guadalquivir.



The Museum opened in 2009 and became the only cultural heritage institution in the municipality. Since the beginning, and in addition to the contents of the collection itself, the Museum has been promoting broader and cross-cutting programmes and activities related to gastronomy, identity, democratic memory (vindication of the Spanish Civil War victims) and industrial heritage.

The permanent exhibition is highly visual, as well as thematic, with a good hierarchy of information.

Educational activities at La Rinconada Museum.  
Picture by La Rinconada Museum.



"Adiós a la libertad" ("Goodbye freedom") exhibition opening. A participative event with secondary school students. Picture by La Rinconada Museum.



Lacratory. 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Piece from La Rinconada Museum's collection. **Picture by Anna Elías.**

## Criteria it meets and justification

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### 1. Time and Sustainability

#### **Time path of the project**

The project was created in 2009.

In the year of its opening the Museum began to offer a series of activities for infant and primary education (from 3 to 12 years). Since then, it has been organising activities for high school groups (from 12 to 18 years old), a programme of temporary exhibitions, annual conferences on archaeology and radio broadcasts to disseminate heritage, or actions for urban embellishment addressed to the general public.

## Sustainability

The Museum provides educational and cultural services to the local community and schools. Some of these are:

- Participatory activities with teenagers, in which groups research and produce scripts and create:
  - Exhibitions about democratic memory: *"El canal de los presos"* (The prisoner's canal, *"Tras pasar la frontera"* (After crossing the border), *¡Andaluces levantaos!* (Andalusians, rise up!) among others.
  - Radio broadcasts about local heritage
  - Guided tours for associations.
  - The Museum has transformed one of its sites, *Cerro Macareno*, into a practice site for students on the Archaeology course by the University of Seville and collaborates with the course by organising a Heritage Interpretation workshop with practical work experience in the village.
- The Museum develops exhibitions of interest for the local community (Covid Experience, with testimonies from local people), of historical photography or by local artists.
- The Museum organises scientific dissemination days.
  - The Museum participates in Radio Rinconada, with the fortnightly programme *"El Museo en las Ondas"* (The Museum on air), a programme for heritage dissemination.
- The Museum offers family workshops on the weekends.

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Experimental archaeology internships for students at the University of Seville. Construction works with adobe. Picture by Francisco José García Fernández.



## 2. Community engagement

### Degree of engagement

The activities organised by the Museum are primarily addressed to the local population, as the town lacks a tourist industry.

The most frequent form of engagement is just through citizens' involvement.

However, some annual activities are co-organised, particularly with high schools.

Finally, sometimes, particularly in the case of exhibitions that are a citizens' initiative, the Museum provides technical support for their execution.

### Diversity of audiences

The Museum collaborates particularly with local schools (seven nursery and primary schools and four secondary and high schools), but also with various local groups, such as:

- Families: activities are organised on the weekends for local families or even birthday celebrations are hosted in the Museum (with special activities).
- General public: through dissemination programmes (radio and conferences).
- Programme of exhibitions of local interest, with active participation of local people who have any specific interest (artists, local historians, artistic creation groups, etc.), as well as exhibitions produced by these groups themselves.

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Activities with teenagers from La Rinconada.  
Picture by La Rinconada Museum.

### Positive impact on the community

La Rinconada does not have an extremely attractive emerging heritage, since most of its resources lie in the archaeological sites located within its municipal area, which in many cases are difficult to make visible and interpret. This means that one of the Museum's main tasks has been to work on the town's own identity and make the richness of its heritage visible.

The impact on the community is therefore of an identity and cultural nature, which can be observed by the emerging interest of the population towards the site of *Cerro Macareno*, in their participation in the activities organised

by the Museum (guided visits, conferences, workshops, etc.) and above all in the increasing number of initiatives directly requested by the community, such as archaeological volunteer work, organisation of exhibitions, and so on.

### 3. Heritage values provoke thinking or identity storytelling or media

The permanent exhibition storytelling is interpretive and is based on the search for the identification of citizens with archaeology: by letting them participate in the setting up of the Museum's original collection and by using (with images and texts) familiar land-

scapes, the same landscapes that their ancestors walked through.

On the other hand, there is a whole line of work with young people based on the promotion of their own personal work and the presentation of their findings through different means: exhibitions, radio broadcasts, or guided tours.

General view of the permanent exhibition. **Picture by Anna Elías**



### 4. Heritage Interpretation strategies applied: use of the Tore model / use of immersive techniques.

The Museum's permanent exhibition uses a variety of heritage interpretation strategies. The storytelling is thematic, focused on the local character of the collection, and is organised into three levels of reading (general texts, posters, and computers to find out more), it is relevant, as it appeals to the local character of the collection, and uses easily understandable language. Finally, the speech is enjoyable as it is expressed through different means (texts, illustrations, audiovisuals), using metaphors, similes, and other interpreting techniques.

The programme of activities is designed to appeal to emotions as well as to convey knowledge.

## 5. Innovative, research and creative elements used



Protohistoric-style construction of a ceramic kiln using experimental archaeological techniques by the University of Seville in cooperation with La Rinconada Museum. **Picture by La Rinconada Museum.**

Innovation and creativity at the Museum of La Rinconada can be identified in two ways.

On the one hand, the design of activities is renewed every year, with new formats being explored that become part of the annual programme if they are successful. This is how participatory exhibitions, radio broadcasts and heritage interpretation workshops for Archaeology students (whose internship involves visits or exhibitions for the general public) began.

New experiences are currently underway, with the creation of reels (short videos) on heritage and history and their integration on a touchscreen at the Museum's entrance.

On the other hand, we have the collaboration with research projects of the University of Seville, in which the heritage content is renewed, and experimental archaeology is included: the creation of a Turdetan-style pottery oven or building and experimentation with adobe architecture for the future enhancement of Cerro Macareno, among other actions.

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## Why this activity should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice?

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We think it is a good practice because it uses interpretative strategies, both for its permanent collection and for its programming. The Museum is constantly exploring new means, trying to make people feel identified with their heritage through the activities offered.



Ayuntamiento de La Rinconada- Museo (La Rinconada City Council - Museum)



Example of radio broadcast (in Spanish)



Museum Facebook

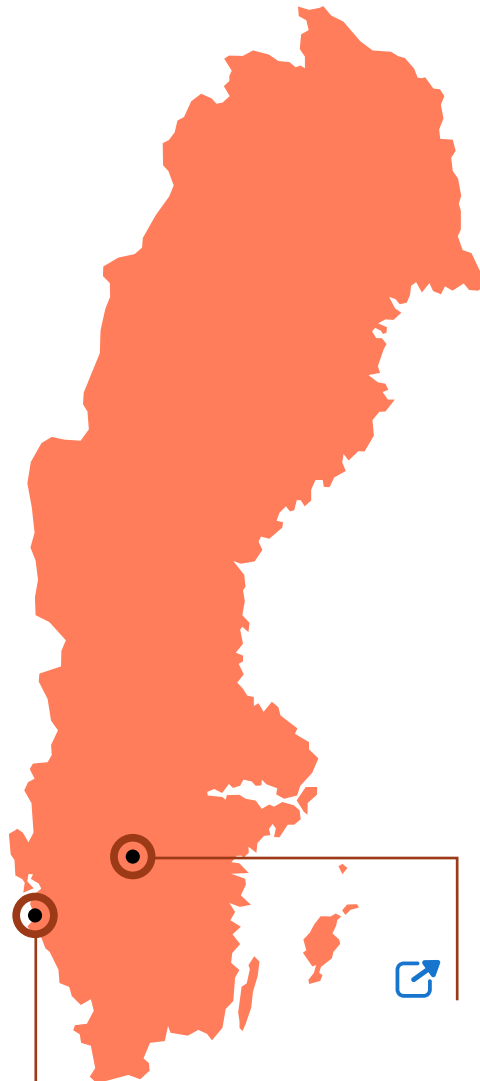


Video created by the students of IES San José (High School San José) about an activity organised by the Museum (2015)



## 7.5. Sweden

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### Forsviks factory

**Address:** Forsvik, Sweden.

### Bergsjön 4000 years at Siriusgatan

**Address:** Bergsjön, Gothenburg, Sweden.

# Bergsjön

## 4000 years at Siriusgatan

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Bergsjön, Gothenburg, Sweden.  
Bergsjön is a suburb of the city of Gothenburg. In the middle of the high-rising buildings there's a megalith grave from the Stone Age.

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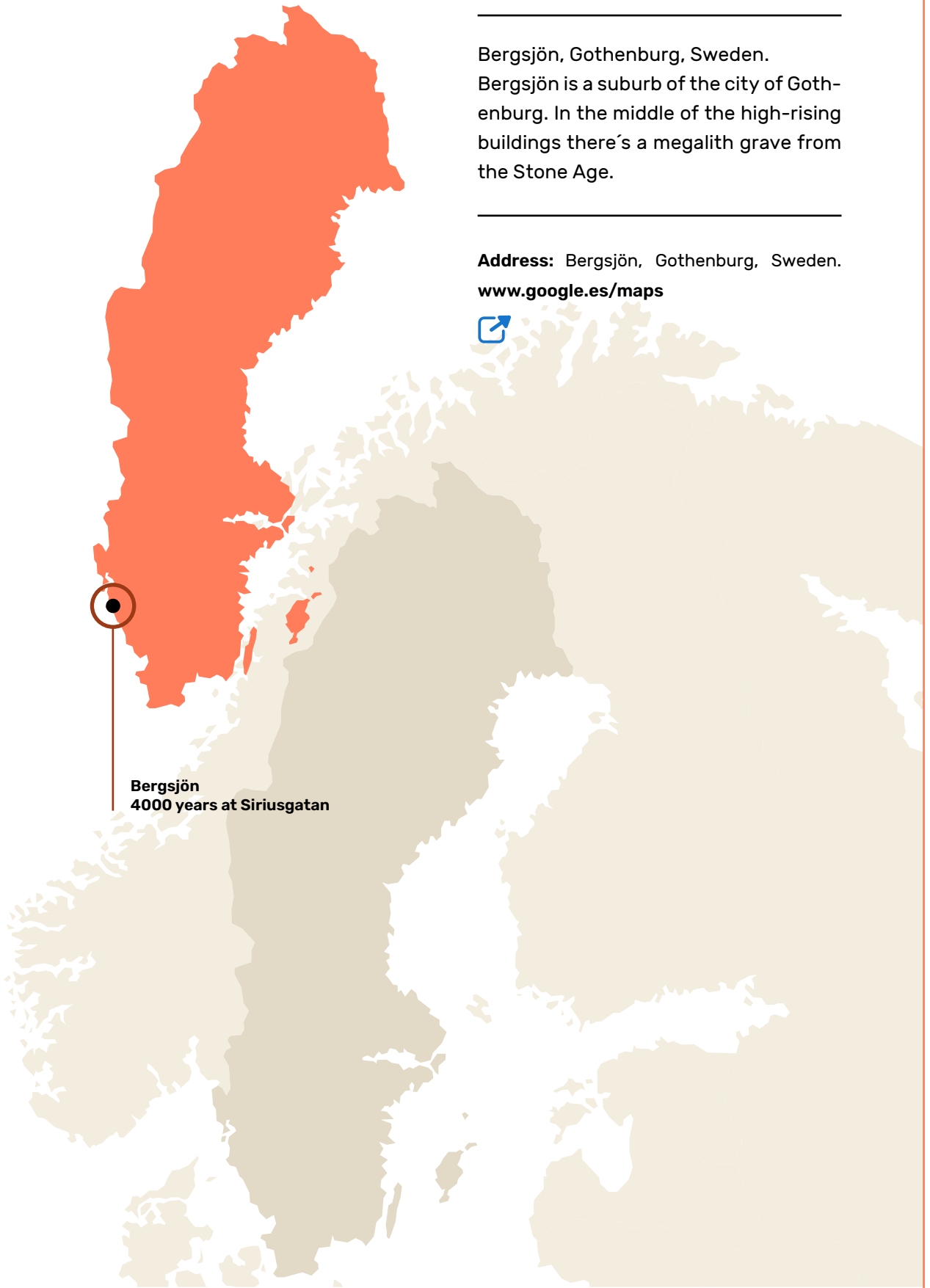
**Address:** Bergsjön, Gothenburg, Sweden.  
**[www.google.es/maps](http://www.google.es/maps)**



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**Bergsjön**  
**4000 years at Siriusgatan**



### 7.5.1. Bergsjön – 4000 years at Siriusgatan



Stones of the Megalith grave in front of the installation at the site. **Picture by Maria Persson**

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## Author or promoter of the activity

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The project is run by archaeologist Anita Synnestvedt, researcher at the University of Gothenburg in cooperation with many different stakeholders, such as schools, inhabitants, local history society, private companies, and the City of Gothenburg.

The very first initiative was taken by the local housing company. They were in a great need of finding and creating public meeting places in the area that could be of a positive force.

## Type of Heritage Interpretation activity

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- Outdoor museum exhibit
- Educational programme – outdoor classroom
- Interpretive visit

## Brief description

The area is a multicultural place, with about 100 different nationalities and 50 languages. There were many problems with criminality, drugs, unemployment and social, cultural, and economic exclusion and the question was how archaeology and heritage could be employed to improve the sustainable future of this place. This led to the project 'Here I live: 4000 years at Siriusgatan'. The aim was to create a new installation at the site, which would function as an inviting meeting place for residents, and which would encourage storytelling.

This case is a community archaeology project, which, in different forms, has run for over 15 years. The heritage in question is a Neolithic cist grave, surrounded by predominantly tall high-rise buildings from the 1970s. The archaeological site in the middle of it all stands out as something completely different. This project, known represents a community archaeology initiative that has been ongoing for over 15 years. It is situated in one of Gothenburg's suburbs, a multicultural area characterized by the presence of approximately 100 different nationalities and the use of 50 different languages. However, this diverse community has faced various challenges such as criminality, drug-related issues, high unemployment rates, and social, cultural, and economic exclusion.

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The project's primary objective is to leverage archaeology and heritage to contribute to a more sustainable future for this place. The focal point of this endeavor is a Neolithic cist grave, which stands out as a unique archaeological site amidst the high-rise buildings of the rough suburban environment. The project aims to transform this heritage site into a welcoming gathering place for residents, with a particular emphasis on encouraging storytelling. As part of the project, a permanent installation has been created with an exhibition, stage and benches very close to the ancient site. The design has taken place in consultation with students from a nearby school. At the installation, the visitor is taken to different time periods at the heritage site, where children talk about their lives there, spanning 4000 years.

Festive opening at the installation in 2018. **Picture by Maria Persson**



## Criteria it meets and justification

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### 1. Time and Sustainability

#### Time path of the project

Ongoing since 2006

#### **Educational, social, cultural, and natural services that benefit or improve the quality of life of the community.**

The project aims to create a meeting place in the suburb, which will also function as an outdoor classroom. Today, at the cultural heritage site, there is a permanent installation with benches and good opportunities for gathering. Schools in the vicinity have the opportunity to gather at the heritage site, for teaching in various subjects, not only in History. The story of the place is told using the voices of different children throughout past and present. The installation also includes pictures and stories about megalithic tombs from different places in the world. This aims to refer to a common context in an area with many different nationalities.

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### 2. Community engagement

#### Degree of engagement

##### Co-creation:

This interpretation project could not have been accomplished without the public, stakeholders, and local communities. The design and content of the new installation took place in consultation with pupils from a nearby school. Other heritage communities have also been involved during all years of the project.

The stones of the heritage site among the high-rising buildings.

Picture by Maria Persson



### **Audiences' diversity**

The main target group is children. The perspective of the child has been in focus all since 2006. The second target group is the community in the vicinity of the heritage site.

### **Positive impact in the community**

The project has an interesting aspect of linking the local and the global. Here, the local heritage has been seen in a global context and vice versa. A majority of the people living in the suburb where the project has been conducted are born outside Sweden and many have come to Sweden as immigrants and refugees. The project shows that local heritage can play a key role in creating local identity and a sense of place, even if you are born far from the place/context.

## **3. Heritage values provoke thinking or identity storytelling or media**

Inclusiveness is in focus.

## **4. Heritage Interpretation strategies applied: use of the Tore model / use of immersive techniques.**

### **TORE**

<b>Theme</b>	The everyday life of children at the heritage site through the millennia is a very clear and a good choice. It enables today's children in the area to imagine children in other times who did similar things at the same place. The choice of theme is excellent for creating place connection and inclusiveness.
<b>Organized</b>	From having only a traditional information sign, today's interpretation is organized around a permanent ice installation, with an exhibition right next to the archaeological site.
<b>Relevant</b>	Things make sense to us if we can relate them to something familiar. The interpretation at the site is both meaningful and personal for the target groups and has good chances of making them reflect on their own lives.
<b>Enjoyable</b>	We estimate that heritage interpretation is engaging for the audience and has the possibility to enable strong experiences at the site.

### ***Use of evaluation techniques***

Evaluation of the project has been made by master students at the University of Gothenburg.

## **5. Innovative, research and creative elements used**

The project shows a high degree of innovation and creativity. Through the years of the project, local pupils have, among other things, been able to create art with a connection to the place that has also been exhibited there. The interpretation that the visitor takes part in today includes objects on display, replicas of what can be found in megalithic tombs, children's stories, and pictures in a time span of 4000 years, and stories and drawings about what it is like to be a child there today. In terms of research, the project is built with heritage interpretation as a starting point, as well as theories from cultural heritage research and community archaeology.

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## **Why this activity should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice?**

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We think this is a good practise because it shows how theoretical concerns linked to inclusion, sense of place and heritage can be put into practise, using heritage interpretation. Also, it shows that this long-time engagement has led to success in another way than many "moon landing projects".



[www.gu.se](http://www.gu.se)

Researcher Anita Synnestvedt, project leader for the HI project. **Picture by Maria Persson**

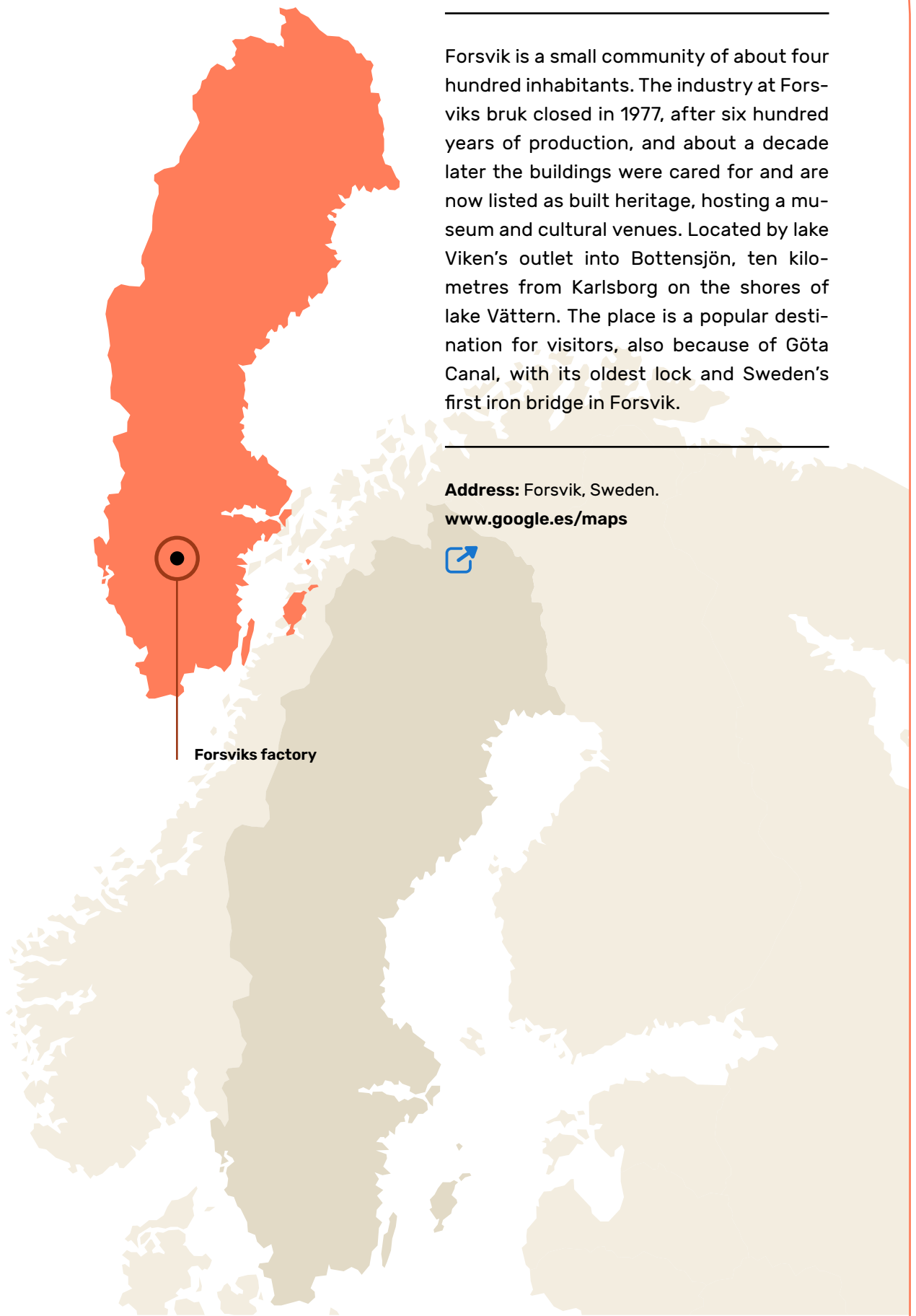


## Forsviks factory

Forsvik is a small community of about four hundred inhabitants. The industry at Forsviks bruk closed in 1977, after six hundred years of production, and about a decade later the buildings were cared for and are now listed as built heritage, hosting a museum and cultural venues. Located by lake Viken's outlet into Bottensjön, ten kilometres from Karlsborg on the shores of lake Vättern. The place is a popular destination for visitors, also because of Göta Canal, with its oldest lock and Sweden's first iron bridge in Forsvik.

**Address:** Forsvik, Sweden.

[www.google.es/maps](http://www.google.es/maps)



Forsviks factory

### 7.5.2. Forsviks factory



The wood pulp mill and our permanent exhibition.

The Cultural Development Administration (Förvaltningen för kulturutveckling)

## Author or promoter of the activity

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Forsviks Factory is run by the Swedish Cultural Development Administration (Förvaltningen för kulturutveckling), Sweden's largest administrator of nature and cultural heritage. The Administration mobilises know-how and expertise in art in all its forms, regarding both natural and cultural heritage, and runs museums and visitor destinations. It also focuses on bringing cultural perspectives to the fore across every area, including sustainability, accessibility, and activities for children and young people.

## Type of Heritage Interpretation activity

- Museum exhibit
- Educational programme
- Interpretive visit
- Digital exhibitions

## Brief description

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One of Sweden's oldest industrial sites: a beautiful, unique environment with a works railway and historic buildings housing a smithy, a foundry, and a wood pulp mill for manufacturing paper. Here you can see an industrial environment with a history stretching over six hundred years, where unique buildings and fascinating exhibits tell us about metal crafts, technology, and life in an industrial community. Open daily from May to August, free admission. Open throughout the year for booked groups, conferences, courses, seminars, and so on. Permanent exhibitions (both in place and digital) are complemented with themed and personalized guides around the area.



Avtryck i sand och avtryck i historien. En utställning om gjutjärnet och om människorna som arbetade med att gjuta järnet. (Imprints in sand and imprints in history. An exhibition about cast iron and the people who worked in the foundry). **The Cultural Development Administration (Förvaltningen för kulturutveckling)**

## Criteria it meets and justification

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### 1. Time and Sustainability

#### Time path of the project

##### Sustainability

“Without Forsviks factory, no Forsvik.” This means that industry built the small community, and its present content continues to be an important community hub: the buildings, safeguarded as architectural heritage, host for example a theatre company and a craft workshop. The place, with well-kept buildings in a beautiful setting, along with its many stories, is important for the community’s identity. The museum and the various activities indirectly support the municipal economy as tourists stay at the local hostel, eat at local restaurants, etc.

### 2. Community engagement

#### Degree of engagement

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##### Active participation in its development:

Ideas for exhibitions and narratives are consulted with locals, of which many used to work at the industry, which closed down in 1977. They are thus considered “the real experts”. Locals can give their opinions and input to the content, which is revised accordingly by museum staff.

##### Audiences’ diversity

All visitor segments are targeted, and narrative themes are adjusted accordingly. There is a slight dominance of senior men with previous experience in industrial work, because of the focus on an industry which they feel familiar with and want to share their stories about.



“Make your own water wheel and learn about waterpower.” The Cultural Development Administration (Förvaltningen för kulturutveckling)

### 3. Heritage values provoke thinking or identity storytelling or media

The heritage of the area hinges upon industry. Besides the current buildings and other tangible assets being displayed, Forsviks bruk highlights stories about workplace hierarchy and the working environment. This includes hierarchies between workers and patrons, but also between different workforces. The systematic use of child labour as well as workers living conditions are explained to children and families, giving perspectives on children's and women's rights.

### 4. Heritage Interpretation strategies applied: use of the Tore model / use of immersive techniques

An example of a theme: Children at Forsvik. School kids are presented with facts about child labour and living conditions of the past. Guides use food, colouring, musical instruments, and games to make history come alive. For example: A guide draws a 10 sqm area on the ground, making ten kids stand in that area. This is the living space for an average family of ten kids in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Discussion come up on what you need in a room, sleeping conditions, sibling rivalry, and homework stations (which leads to discussions about rights to education, and today's technologies like computers). Other examples include playing games which were popular a hundred years ago such as stilts and various forms of hide-and-seek games.

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#### Assessment

Only direct assessment is implemented by direct communication with visitors, who also often send emails to thank the guides or to give further suggestions.

### 5. Innovative, research and creative elements used



BeCULTOUR (BEyond CULTural TOURism) is a Horizon 2020 project focusing on industrial heritage destinations, where Forsvik is used as a case study.

Illustration of Forsviks bruk.  
The Cultural Development Administration  
(Förvaltningen för kulturutveckling)



"Vi som arbetar med våra kroppar/Forsviks bruk" (We, who work with our bodies/Forsviks bruk).  
Exhibition at Forsviks bruk 2022. **The Cultural Development Administration (Förvaltningen för kulturutveckling)**

The idea is to establish a community, cultural, (hand)crafts and innovation centre in the historical buildings of the old foundry which currently "just" host events, theatre, and arts exhibitions.

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## Why this activity should be considered a Heritage Interpretation Good Practice?

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The "living" museum of Forsviks bruk, displaying six hundred years of industrial machinery, environments, and people, has a strategy to use heritage interpretation. Guides have undertaken Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) courses, and/or have an extensive experience working with metal castings, for example, making them truly engaged with their subject. Their expressed desire is to give visitors a deep connection to the place and tie contemporary stories to historic events and contexts. Flexibility in themes and narratives includes listening to the visitors' stories, rather than to tell stories. Often the guides give the floor to locals, or other "real experts," as the guides see themselves more as moderators of a discussion than providers of information. Material and immaterial aspects of the past are equally considered, made understandable and relatable by a variety of exhibitions and tours. Themes such as child labour, waste management and social rights are highlighted with a critical heritage approach, aiming for visitors to contemplate on the past and the present (and the future), and its various connections.

