

Heritage for Young Professionals



**call
to
joint
action**

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CALL TO JOINT ACTION

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PREFACE

This paper is a collaborative work of young heritage professionals who have attempted to highlight some difficult aspects of the heritage sector. These aspects presented in the document, though highly influenced by the situation within Europe, may also link with realities beyond the continent's geographical boundaries.

The authors felt inspired to write this document, following the European Year of Youth¹, determined by the European Union. Throughout this time, as young heritage professionals, they were not fully satisfied with their integration or progression within the sector. They witnessed the (ongoing) struggles of friends and colleagues, which worsened with Covid-19² and, more recently, with the socioeconomic consequences of Russia's aggression in Ukraine. This led them to express their concerns in multiple contexts, individually and in connection with other people.

The following pages were composed based on the personal viewpoints of the authors, independently of their affiliations. Therefore, the viewpoints expressed in this document do not represent the official positionings of any institution, international, or intergovernmental organisation.

It is also vital to stress that the authors are immensely grateful to all of those who supported them in their collective and individual paths. Hence, nothing in this call for action should be understood as an offence or an attack on other working groups, individuals, or sectors. It should also not be misunderstood as a substitution for their work but rather as a complement to their generous efforts.

¹ European Union. (2022) . What is the European Year of Youth? [Online] Available at https://youth.europa.eu/year-of-youth_en.

² Leonor Amaral. (2020). Museums During the Pandemic: The Important Role of Social Media. In Revista PH. DOI: 10.33349/2021.102.4795.

Inês de Carvalho Costa. (2022). Between social needs and heritage safeguarding: examples of solidarity and cooperation during the Covid-19 crisis: the Portuguese study. In Libellarium 13, 1(2022): 111-126. DOI: 10.15291/libellarium.3464.

The authors understand and respect the position of some entities which might hesitate to be associated with Human Rights advocacy, especially concerning labour rights. Nevertheless, they also believe it to be important for the **heritage sector to rethink some of its practices to ensure its existence and development in accordance with Human Rights standards**. It is their belief that even though the cultural field - in particular, the heritage one - suffers from a lack of funding and resources, **there are some (ethical) changes that can be easily made to counteract some of the challenges elaborated upon in this document**.

These young professionals firmly believe in freedom of expression and opinion. They also support access to information and activities which facilitate increasing public awareness, and which are cornerstones of the EU. However, they are not looking for exclusivity, but only hope to encourage other groups of young people to express their concerns and possible resolutions, even if they may detach from the following perspectives.

Ultimately, this document expresses a will to integrate the heritage field, counteract some of its fragilities, and - by freeing it from these obstacles - apply all the passion in disseminating the positive potential of heritage.

This said, the authors appreciate all institutions, organisations, and heritage companies who have been (re)considering their structure and practice from a rights-led viewpoint. **They invite other entities to accept this challenge which can be better upheld with (self) kindness, (collective) perseverance, and (cross-generational) collaboration**.

“

Based on the challenges, the document proposes 5 calls for action which could help address the problems.

As the European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen in her 2021 State of the Union address said:

*“The pandemic has robbed young people of many opportunities - to meet and make new friends, to experience and explore new cultures. While we cannot give them that time back, we are proposing today to designate 2022 the European Year of Youth. From climate to social to digital, **young people are at the heart of our policymaking and political priorities.***

***We vow to listen to them,** as we are doing in the Conference on the Future of Europe, and we want to work together to shape the future of the European Union. A Union that is stronger if it embraces the aspirations of our young people - grounded in values and bold in action.”⁵*

”

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic had a huge impact on cultural and heritage sites. While tourism was drastically affected, there was also an increase in understanding regarding the importance of these places for mental well being.³ However, one also needs to take into account the well being of those involved in taking care of these heritage sites and cultural places. A topic which remains insufficiently discussed. These professionals too were affected by the stagnation brought forth during the pandemic. This coupled with the invasion of Ukraine, further redirected EU and member state finances leading to lay-offs in multiple sectors including that of culture and heritage. Furthermore, with limited opportunities for gaining practical experience, young people in the heritage and cultural sectors were left with even lesser opportunities to advance their careers.

In 2022, there were multiple programmes launched to help young people gain experience and recover from the pandemic. With the onset of 2023, a new development of the Cultural Deal for Europe, has revived hope to give the centre stage to culture in all EU policies.⁴ This also calls to consider giving emerging young professionals the centre stage in the cultural sector.

This document is thus an attempt to highlight concrete challenges faced by young heritage professionals, shared with other emerging workers in the sector. By emphasising the shared obstacles related to the sector and its job market, they hope to offer potential solutions, based on actions taken by various European countries, cultural institutions, and organisations. Among others, the suggestions put forth approach questions of mobility, formal education, mentorship, and career progression.

³ MAAT. (2022). Roadmap for mental health. [online] Available at: <https://www.maat.pt/en/event/roadmap-mental-health>.
Sofaer, J., Davenport, B., Sørensen, M.L.S., Gallou, E., Uzzell, D. (2021). Heritage sites, value and wellbeing: learning from the COVID-19 pandemic in England. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, pp.1–16. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2021.1955729>.

⁴ European Cultural Foundation. (2023). Cultural Deal 2023: re-energising Europe to 2024 and beyond. [online] European Cultural Foundation. Available at: <https://culturalfoundation.eu/stories/cultural-deal-2023-re-energising-europe-to-2024-and-beyond/> [Accessed 15 Mar. 2023].

⁵ European Commission. (2021). Press corner. [online] Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_21_4701.

LEGAL TOOLS AND SCOPE

This document follows the premises of the **International Human Rights** framework, in its civil, political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions.⁶ Knowing the international doctrine regarding Cultural Heritage has accompanied the progressive defence of human dignity, liberty, equality, and respect for cultural diversity,⁷ the authors believe **the challenges faced by heritage workers within the field should not be a taboo. On the contrary, these problems must be taken as a pressing (and shared) concern, to guarantee the sector is in line with its values and aspirations.**

Our work also takes into consideration and re-emphasises the **European Parliament Resolution on empowering European youth: post-pandemic employment and social recovery** (2022) which calls on the Member States to facilitate access for young people to paid, quality and inclusive traineeships, and apprenticeships. The Resolution condemns the practice of unpaid internships, naming it as a form of “exploitation” of young workers (Para. 15), and a violation of their rights. It also calls for a common legal framework to ensure fair remuneration for traineeships and apprenticeships to avoid “exploitative” practices (Para. 15), like zero-hour contracts.⁸

⁶ UN. (1948). Universal Declaration of Human Rights. [online] Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

UN. (1966a). International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. [online] Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>.

UN. (1966b). International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural rights. [online]. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>.

⁷ Council of Europe. (2005). Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society. [online] Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treaty-num=199>.

Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. (2021). Porto Santo Charter: Culture and the Promotion of Democracy: Towards a European Cultural Citizenship. [online] Available at: <https://portosantocharter.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/PortoSantoCharter.pdf>.

UNESCO. (2001). Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. [online] Available at: <https://en.unesco.org/about-us/legal-affairs/unesco-universal-declaration-cultural-diversity>.

UNESCO. (2003). Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. [online] Available at: <https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/15164-EN.pdf>.

⁸ European Parliament (2022). Empowering European youth: post-pandemic employment and social recovery (2022/C 342/18). Official Journal of the European Union. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TEXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022IP0045> [Accessed 15 Mar. 2023].

Another important pillar of this work shall be the ongoing talks on the **Cultural Deal for Europe 2023**. The paper shall attempt to focus on some aspects brought up in the policy recommendations which were discussed as part of the Cultural Deal for Europe Annual Policy Conversation, entitled ‘Culture is the new energy for Europe’, which took place on 28 February 2023 in Brussels.⁹

Lastly, we encourage the sector to consider the ‘**Reinforced Youth Guarantee**’, which has been accepted to be implemented in the council recommendation of 2020. *“This is a commitment by all Member States to ensure that all young people under the age of 30 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship and traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education.”*¹⁰

Following these lines of thought, in this paper, the authors limit their scope of research to **understanding the ongoing efforts in the heritage sector related to financial, representation, and mobility issues.**

It is equally important to highlight that though there has been an effort to include multiple perspectives, considering the various challenges faced by young professionals coming from different territories, socioeconomic contexts, and careers, the authors are aware that there may exist other pressing issues worth exploring which might not have been expanded or touched upon in this very document. **This paper is only a modest contribution to discuss some topics and align efforts in finding creative and optimistically-driven solutions with whoever may want to join the young heritage professionals in this call for action.**

⁹ European Cultural Foundation. (2023). Cultural Deal 2023: re-energising Europe to 2024 and beyond. [online] European Cultural Foundation. Available at: <https://culturalfoundation.eu/stories/cultural-deal-2023-re-energising-europe-to-2024-and-beyond/> [Accessed 15 Mar. 2023].

¹⁰ European Commission. (2022). The Youth Guarantee. [online] Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>.

1

.....

Heritage as a profession



cultural and creative sector

FIVE MAJOR CHALLENGES

The following paper attempts to underscore **five major challenges** faced by young heritage professionals and also the causes behind these, as understood by the authors. **For each of these challenges, the authors request a call for action and mention the impact of its implementation.**

Heritage as a profession



The field of heritage is a sub-part of the cultural sector. Experts working within this domain make swift shifts between jobs related to heritage and those of culture in general.

The heritage sector thus faces a challenge of sectoral definition, pointing towards the **lack of definition of a heritage professional**. It is not clear who these heritage professionals are, what are their roles, and what kind of jobs they are fit for. This aspect is being covered by an ongoing EU funded project- CHARTER, which aims to professionalise the cultural heritage sector by highlighting and researching on the skills and also bridge the statistical gap in the field which can prove to be economically useful.¹¹ **We recognise this effort and hope that some suggestions made in the document would also be considered for the mentioned project.**

It is to be noted that due to the direct association of the heritage field with other aspects of the cultural sector, more attention is given to creative workers in policy segments, overseeing the needs and regulations regarding the (wider) cultural sector, and ultimately, the heritage one. This is evident when one reflects upon the demands made by the cultural sector. For example: In the 2023 Cultural Policy deal,¹² the call for action demands to improve the

¹¹ European Cultural Heritage Skills Alliance. (2023). Project Overview. [Online] CHARTER. Available at: <https://charter-alliance.eu/about-us/what/> [Accessed 18 Mar. 2023].

¹² European Cultural Foundation. (2023). Cultural Deal 2023: re-energising Europe to 2024 and beyond. [Online] European Cultural Foundation. Available at: <https://culturalfoundation.eu/stories/cultural-deal-2023-re-energising-europe-to-2024-and-beyond/> [Accessed 15 Mar. 2023].

Assert the roles and responsibilities of heritage professionals by drafting a clearer definition for heritage professionals and their skills.



CALL TO ACTION

This challenge calls for creating a strong and clear definition of the heritage sector at a European level, which recognises and asserts the expertise put forth by a heritage professional in the field. Such a definition can then be adapted and adopted by member states, before incorporating in domestic legislation.



Impact:

By legally defining the concept and range of the ‘heritage professional’, these workers would be encompassed by the legal basis required for obtaining social security and benefits in the market. Moreover, their work would get concrete recognition and appreciation. This action, complemented by specific programmes for the heritage field can promote the work of these professionals and guarantee sustainability and continuity.

working conditions of artists and cultural professionals thereby reflecting the slow pace of moving towards basic employment and human rights in the cultural field.

With the creative and cultural sector being clubbed together, cultural heritage professionals may find more obstacles in being recognised as part of the sector. Therefore, it might be helpful to introduce **separate programmes targeted for the cultural heritage sector and its professionals**, ensuring a continuous and ongoing work plan for the enhancement and preservation of cultural heritage.

2

Unemployment & lack of financial security

The Green Climate Fund has financed climate projects of approximately **12 billion USD** in three years,¹⁴ as opposed to UNESCO World Heritage Fund which has a budget of **5.9 million dollars** for 2022-2023.¹⁵

Unemployment & lack of financial security

It is safe to say that many in the heritage and cultural sector are reluctant to discuss the economic value of heritage and culture. As David Thorsby mentions in his book 'The Economics of Cultural Policy', *"Despite the obvious relevance of economic concepts to answering such questions, the initial efforts by economists a decade or so ago to enter the heritage arena were resented by heritage professionals, who feared a process whereby their 'cultural' decisions would inevitably be transformed into 'economic' decisions."*¹³

Today, this reluctance seems to have hindered the financial sustainability and growth of our sector.

Underfunding of the sector

The cultural sector when compared to other sectors is under funded. This can be understood by comparing the budget secured by culture as opposed to other sectors within a year or a short span of years.

Although we understand and agree with the pressing fight against climate change, we also believe the cultural sector - and specifically the heritage one - could benefit from an increase in funds. This lack of investment (both public and private) in culture and heritage, can end up restricting the sector to those who can navigate through the financial obstacles it poses, thereby diminishing its accessibility. It can also create opportunity discrepancies between those who prefer a career in the field and the ones who devote themselves to knowledge production. The latter are often crucial to heritage innovation, despite their lack of recognition. We understand the interconnectedness and complementariness of these two positionings, and believe they must be equally valued. **We also hope for the heritage sector to integrate young heritage workers coming from all kinds of contexts, including social and economic ones.**

¹³ Thorsby, D., 2010. The Economics of Cultural Policy. New York: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁴ Green Climate Fund. (2023). [online] Green Climate Fund. Available at: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/> [Accessed 15 Mar. 2023].

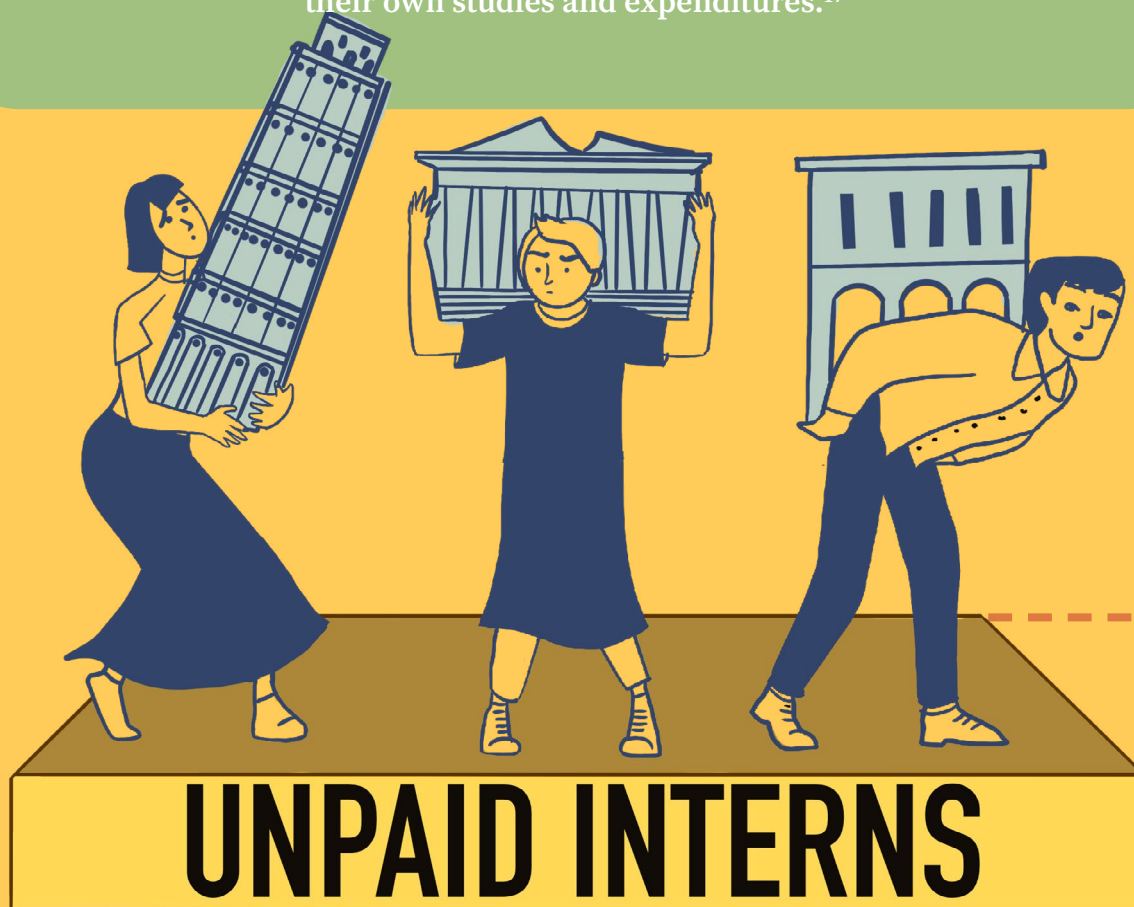
¹⁵ UNESCO. (2023). World Heritage Fund [online] UNESCO. Available at: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/world-heritage-fund/>.

The European Youth Forum's report on internship policies in the 27 European countries highlights that **unpaid internships are banned only in France, Croatia and Latvia.**

Approximately half of the countries in EU-27 have some legal regulations on durations for unpaid internships.

Whereas around **48% of the countries do not have any regulation** to protect the rights of those doing unpaid work. Despite this many countries like Germany, France and Romania have laws to prevent over exploitation of unpaid labour.¹⁶

It is also estimated that unpaid interns lose over **6000 Euros** over their duration of internship, which is a huge loss considering that some young people finance their own studies and expenditures.¹⁷



The lack of financial resources, coupled with the lack of regulations regarding the financial security and rights of cultural and heritage workers, drives many established or emerging entities **to offer unpaid, under-paid internships or even full-time positions with precarious contours.**

Unpaid internships

Many organisations want to integrate enthusiastic young minds in their practice. However, due to these limitations they may end up offering unpaid or underpaid internships which do not suffice the basic financial needs of these emerging workers. Despite this, some young professionals can feel pressured to have a work permit, procure health insurance, have a laptop, and a mobile phone with 2 factor authentication. To access these positions, many of these young workers may even have to relocate to expensive cities such as Brussels, Geneva, Paris, and Berlin on their own account. It is also to be noted that mobility programmes like ERASMUS+ were designed to be considered as an ad-hoc to financially sustain interns and not replace the professional fees offered by entities. This creates an issue for those who have to give up on interesting opportunities to learn and gain practical experience, only because of financial constraints. Moreover such internships can thus be availed only by students with financial resources. **Thus these internships can exclude marginalised groups such as under-represented genders, intellectuals belonging to least developed countries, students with disabilities, ethnic minorities, or students from lower and middle income families.**

¹⁶ Ng, J., 2022. European Youth Forum. [Online] High Quality or Unpaid and Unregulated? Uncovering National Internship Policies in Europe, Available at: <https://www.youthforum.org/news/high-quality-or-unpaid-and-unregulated> [Accessed 22 Mar 2023].

¹⁷ Dan Moxon, C. B. S. D., 2023. European Youth Forum. [Online] Available at: <https://www.youthforum.org/news/unpaid-internships-cost-youngsters-over-1000-per-month-deepening-inequalities> [Accessed 22 Mar 2023].

REward, the young professionals with fair payment, following the EU regulations on labour laws



CALL TO ACTION

All heritage and cultural organisations should offer internships and opportunities which cover the living expenses of the intern in the city where the organisation is based. A contract should be signed by both parties mentioning the rights and responsibilities of the intern. The contract should be drafted keeping in mind the EU labour and employment laws as well as minimum wage in member states.^{20 21} Moreover, in cases of smaller organisations, funding mechanisms such as scholarships, or possible internship grants should be advertised along the internship and a support letter to access the scholarship for the internship period should be issued by the hiring organisation. Alternatively, small heritage organisations can also fund interns on project bases and apply for projects which allow for internship stipends/ student assistants/ student research assistants/ master thesis students. This also makes the project more convincing from an academic and capacity building perspective.



Impact:

This would ensure a financial and professional development of young heritage enthusiasts who have obtained the required knowledge through a relevant degree or through prior experience. A contractual agreement would also provide young workers with security and working rights protected by a legal framework.

Lack of awareness

As seen recently, there does exist some regulation to protect the rights of young people. A complaint registered by the European Youth Forum against Belgium on the EU Collective Complaints resulted in the EU Committee on Social Right¹⁸ recommending Belgium to act on certain **“Bogus Internships”** on the basis of **Article 4§1 of the EU social charter**. Additionally defining “bogus internships” to be the ones which are not remunerated, without allowing real learning experiences, and excluding disadvantageous groups who are unaware of their legal rights. **The EU social Charter¹⁹ which was adopted and signed by all member states in 1961 in Turin clearly states the right to fair remuneration in a view to recognise rights of workers (in all sectors) and for a decent living.** This confirms the existence of a legal tool at European level to protect young people from financial instability in the labour market.

Many young people are unaware of their rights. To help them avoid situations of precariousness, we believe it is important to foment education on Human Rights, especially labour ones. We also believe that, in the long run, all members of organisations and institutions could benefit from the same kind of training.

¹⁸ Council of Europe. (2022). Guide to Procedures. Recommendation CM/RecChS(2022)20 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on European Youth Forum (YFJ) v. Belgium, Complaint No. 150/2017[online] Available at: https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680a80cae

¹⁹ Council of Europe. (2022). The Charter in four steps [online] Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-social-charter/about-the-charter>

²⁰ European Commission. (2022). Rights at Work. [online] Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=82>.

²¹ European Commission. (2023). News. [online] Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=82&furtherNews=yes&newsId=10504>.

3

Volunteering



Anonymous Testimony

“I once worked in a heritage ‘company’ that used volunteers to help in mega-events. These young heritage aspirants were called for a day or two because the company didn’t want to pay extra hours to its employees (it was a highly lucrative business). These individuals offered their time and skills, however, I later heard one of the company representatives saying that none of them would ever be hired because they didn’t fit the image of the company. This person even stated that these individuals were “ugly”. I found the situation unfair because if these people were competent enough to help in such initiatives, they probably had the capacity to be good coworkers. Also, after talking with some of the volunteers I realised they expected this to give them better chances of working in the company later on. Which never happened.”



Volunteering

Besides the afore-mentioned obstacles when it comes to entering the sector, the field of cultural heritage is often faced with the prerequisite of volunteering to amass the necessary experience so as to advance one's skills and, thus, increase the chances of employment later on. **While volunteering is definitely an incredible way of building connections, gaining new skills, experiences, and boosting one's personal development- it must not be advertised as "employment".**

Volunteering is a noble contribution to the field and society in general. Notwithstanding it must be always understood as something facultative, that should not be imposed. We do not want to perpetuate a culture of (self) exploitation, that may lead to an increasing number of people with burnout. Each individual has the right to decide how to spend their free time, and the duty to respect other people's freedom to do so. We wish our emerging and established professionals the same standards of living and well being that we proclaim for the heritage communities we work for.

However, the issue arises when volunteering becomes more than a choice and turns out to be a symptom of higher education failing to prepare students for the actual reality of practising their profession, as well as a replacement for possibly more individually-suited opportunities but which are, unfortunately, cost-prohibitive.

Educational gaps

Curriculums intended for future heritage professionals need to prepare and equip students with adequate information about skills needed for the labour market, as well as brace them for the practical aspects which they will need to implement in order to successfully enter the market. In this sense, it may be interesting to join efforts between organisations, employers, professors, and students to rethink how heritage-related studies are being led.

“It is important to understand that it may be easier for established professionals to volunteer when they have other sources of income, while young heritage practitioners seeking jobs may feel compelled to volunteer as a prerequisite.”



However, it is common knowledge that despite gaining a university education in the field, most established organisations are hesitant to hire paid young workers. This hesitation comes from the presumption that emerging professionals lack the skill set to enter the job market.

With volunteering as a prerequisite coupled with the lack of practical guidance given to heritage students during studies, the students end up devoting hours to both volunteering as well as learning theoretical aspects of the field. Therefore, the presumption of the established entities only stretches the time span needed for an emerging professional to be an established one.

Volunteering as a choice

Some stakeholders see their engagement in the heritage field as pro bono, as a voluntary, non-paid contribution to heritage and its associated communities. On the other side, there are professionals who work in areas related to heritage but who also have another source of income. There are also (young) professionals who actually depend on heritage work to make a living. Each one of these groups has something to offer to the heritage field. Nevertheless, many of our points of view apply mostly to what we consider the most ‘vulnerable’ group. **The one composed of individuals that depend on the heritage sector to make a living. It is important to understand that it may be easier for established professionals to volunteer when they have other sources of income, while young heritage practitioners seeking jobs may feel compelled to volunteer as a prerequisite.**

Therefore, while there exist some who depend on heritage jobs as a means of their livelihood, there are also others who do not necessarily wish to depend on the sector for financial sustainability.

Communicate, through written legal contracts, the roles, responsibilities and rights of a volunteer and acknowledge their contributions towards the organisation.



CALL TO ACTION

All organisations within the cultural and heritage sectors should integrate young people as volunteers only with a contract for a realistic and well planned period of time, signed by both parties and making provision for a certificate of recognition after the termination of the contract. If the contract or agreement states a title other than volunteer, arrangements on compensation must be made, in regard to the needs and standards of the country where the employment will be implemented.

In addition, if the volunteer works on projects involving fund-raising and project acquisition which financially sustain the organisation, provisions should be made to financially compensate the volunteer. We also believe that it would be fair to duly quote the contributions of volunteers, so their contribution is rightly acknowledged.



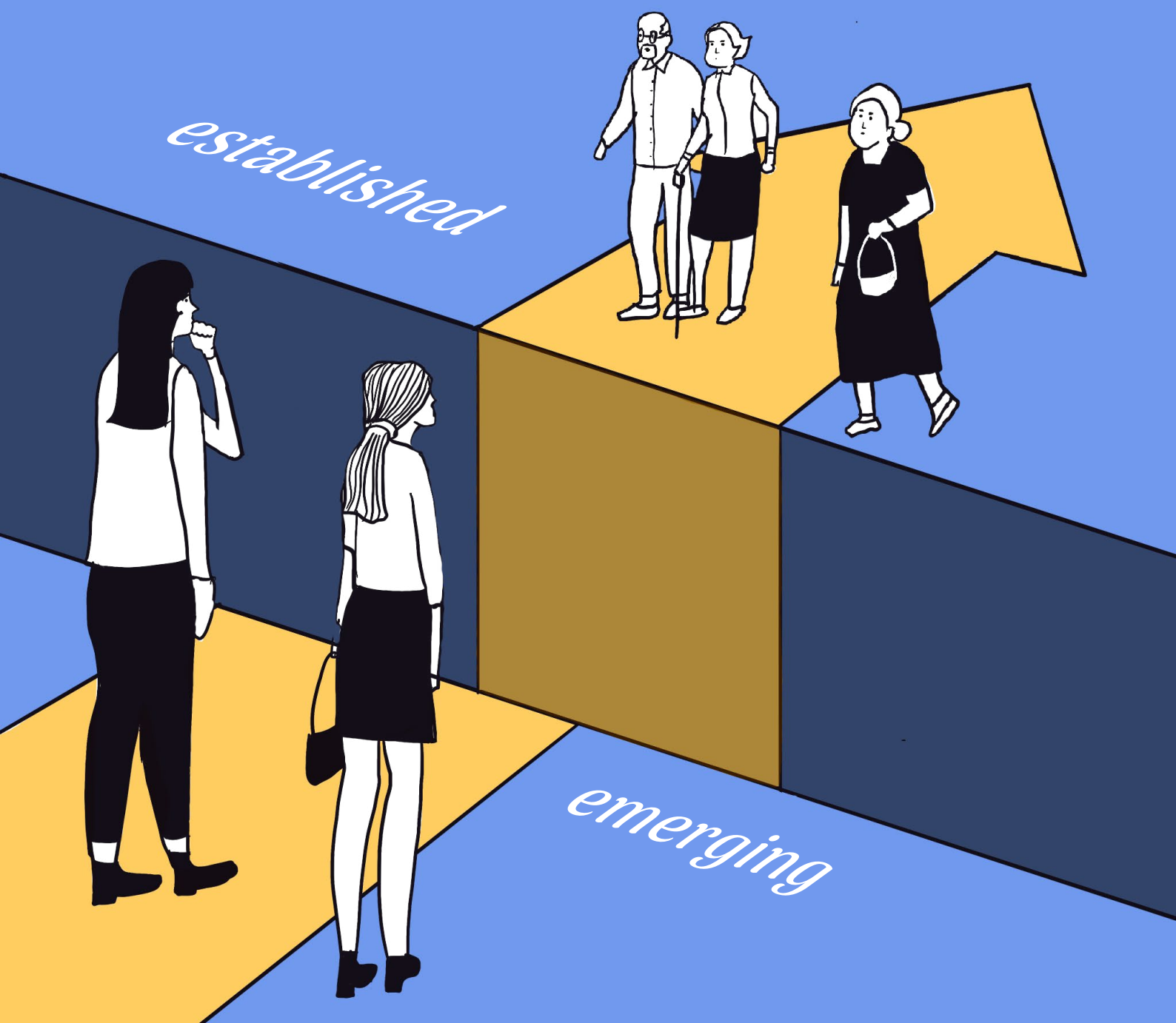
Impact:

A proper volunteering contract allows young professionals to get recognition for their work and assert their rights when needed. Furthermore, this practice would provide young professionals with proper acquisition of their tasks and positions within the organisation they are volunteering at. This would also forbid the misuse of the young workforce by eliminating the possibility of confusion, over working, and undertaking “ambitious” tasks (such as fund raising, project acquisitions, and project management) which are meant for mid-level professionals and should be compensated.

To counteract this, it might be useful if the entities advertise the positions by openly referring to the monthly allowance they offer. This will help those interested in understanding if they can maintain an acceptable living standard with the conditions that are offered. **There is also a need for reformation of the existing system to acknowledge the heritage professionals for their skill sets, technological knowledge, and enthusiasm to work towards conserving heritage.**

4

Representation



Representation



We must call attention to the discrepancy of opportunities between different world regions, Europe being one of the best well-served in this matter. In this sense, we believe that one important aspect to change is to recognise the importance of multiple perspectives when it comes to heritage issues.

In other words, the funds allocated for mobility programmes could prioritise individuals with lower financial stability, coming from economically fragile countries, territories affected by armed conflicts, climate disasters, but also people from underrepresented ethnic and gender groups.

This measure would contribute to a fairer, more egalitarian, and diverse sector. It would reduce the challenges faced by individuals with less economic comfort in accessing these opportunities, while freeing them from having to sacrifice basic living standards.

Lack of financial and professional security

The positions held by early career professionals are very often at the risk of instability (due to, for example, short-term contracts) and are of ephemeral character, without any guarantee of permanent employment and stable income.

It is also common to witness young people and early career professionals in conferences, events and seminars as a mere background support for the actual event. On one hand, this allows the youth to be part of such events but on the other it also eliminates them from decision-making processes. **This partial arrangement with young and early career professionals secludes them from participating in the processes which concern or affect them.**

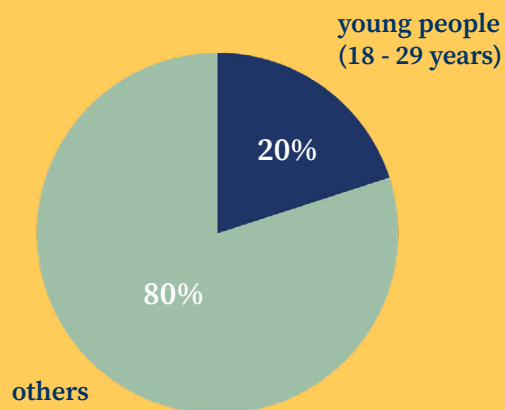


Chart 1: Percentage of employed people in Culture

The percentage of young people (below 30 years of age), employed in the cultural sector as of 2018.

As seen, young people represent only 1/5th of the total cultural workforce.

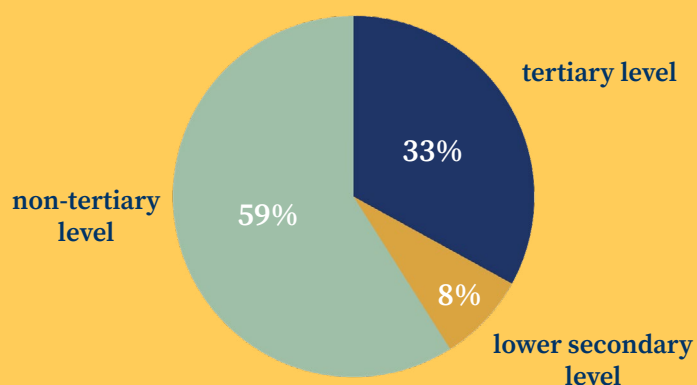


Chart 2: Level of education of young people in Culture (2018)

The different levels of education, attained by the young population who are working in the field of culture.

Most young people who work in culture have acquired a tertiary level of education.

By EuroStat Culture Statistics 2019²², the cultural sector has the highest rate of young people who have attained tertiary level education. (as defined by the international standard classification of education (ISCED) levels 5-8), but still made only 1/5th of the total workforce in the sector as of 2018.

Therefore, despite having a tertiary level of education (59%) which was higher than the average recorded for the whole economy. (35%) as of 2018, the young people failed to get employed in the sector. This proves that though young professionals are present in the cultural sector, this does not necessarily mean that they are adequately represented or included in decision-making.

Age gap between professionals

The situation regarding the age gap between professionals poses another important problem. As we know, this is a cross-sectoral issue worsened by the lack of funds within the cultural and heritage fields. There are socioeconomic circumstances for professionals in all age groups which impose difficult choices including the need to delay retirement or to engage in multiple working positions to reach better living standards.

This reality not only forces established professionals to keep working more than expected but it also reduces the possibility of young professionals getting paid opportunities within the sector. In other words, the field is still trying to compensate the previous generations for their sacrifices.

²² Eurostat. Cultural Statistics. Luxembourg: European Union, 2019. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-statistical-books/-/ks-01-19-712>.

REpresent, young people in your workforce by introducing a tailored scheme that ensures a mentorship culture.

CALL TO ACTION

Organisations should tailor a scheme of their workforce which would have to incorporate young professionals. This would ensure a continuous flow of new practices and approaches within the sector, accompanying the already established methodologies and experiences which keep the sector going. These future employees should be rightfully paid as per EU national laws, and have a contract signed by both parties. Furthermore, the entities should also promote mentorship culture where the young emerging professionals get the opportunity to exchange views and expertise with those experienced in the field.



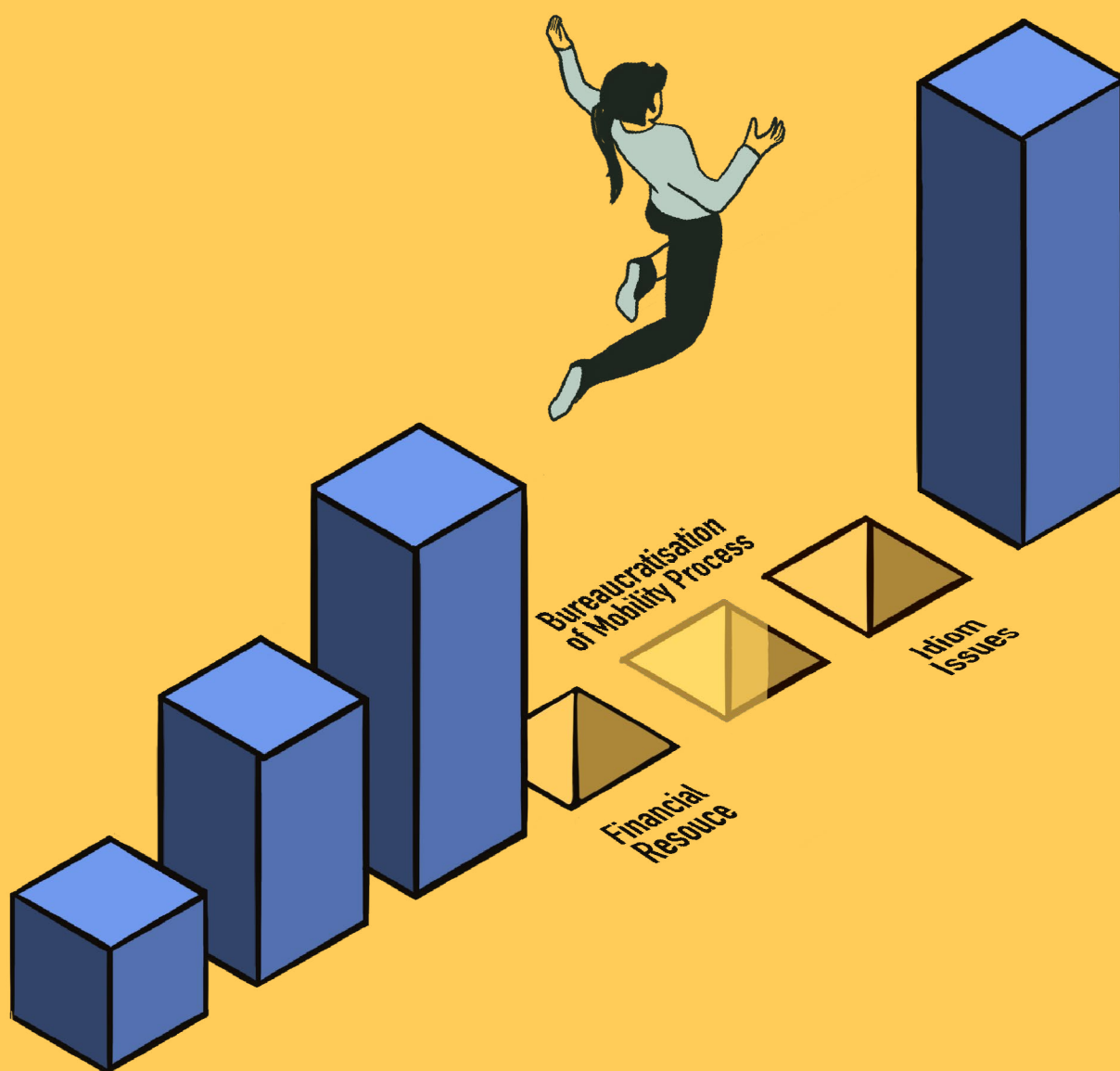
Impact:

Such an attempt will ensure a shift towards a younger workforce in the heritage sector who are also fairly represented and legally recognised. This would create an ideal amalgam of previous experience and knowledge with new approaches and techniques, creating fruitful conditions for the sector, its development, and existence.

For the greater good of the sector, there needs to be an equality with regards to age, because it guarantees the continuance of work and keeps the sector from falling behind in comparison to other sectors which frequently incorporate young professionals. Furthermore, young professionals are equipped with new and mandatory skills for the contemporary times they are set in, which could only benefit the sector with regards to its preservation and vitality.

5

Mobility



Mobility



The cultural field embodies people from all over the world, with multiple academic and professional backgrounds, coming from diverse social, cultural, economic, and political contexts. Each one of these complex and layered realities creates specific challenges and/or possibilities for everyone and/or groups within the heritage sector.

Financial constraints

One of the most difficult obstacles to overcome regarding mobility opportunities, pays respect to the **lack of financial resources**. It is common knowledge that the heritage sector - and the cultural one – remain to be subsidised arenas. The reasons behind this shortage of resources vary according to the country, its socioeconomic and political frameworks, but also its priorities and aspirations. It is important to recognise that each country is cementing its own path towards what it considers a better future, while also pursuing development.

Bureaucratisation of mobility processes

This issue may be particularly impactful for individuals coming to Europe from outside the Schengen Zone but also, for instance, people going to the US, from Asia or Middle Eastern Countries. **The difficulties and delays in obtaining visas and the costs associated with it, may become real impediments to the realisation of mobility periods by young heritage professionals/students.** For example, it takes approximately 18 months in Bangladesh to get a visa for EU countries despite having an invitation from an academic partner.

Aware of the complexity of the issue, it might be useful to put more effort in the creation and implementation of bilateral agreements focusing on creating better conditions for the mobility of cultural and creative workers, resulting in a more efficient circulation of people and ideas, as well as solutions for the contemporary problems the sector is facing. This could be done primarily on a regional level, where there is already a familiarity with



the work of neighbouring countries. Furthermore, open calls for cultural exchange could be brought to a wider audience – through the release of calls by national ministries, heritage organisations – to increase their visibility and broaden their scope to a wider audience.

When possible, hosting organisations should also make an effort to find sponsors for the attendees involved in their exchanges, seminars, workshops, ensuring a sure and secure path to a successful mobility. This applies, for instance, where visas are mandatory for some attendees.

Idiom issues

Another determinant factor for the accessibility, integration, and success within the field is the idiom. This means that a great amount of the knowledge, measures, and policies produced and implemented require heritage stakeholders to master multiple idioms, English being the most prominent one as can be seen in the Eurostat report of 2019.²³ In this sense, mobility opportunities may not be accessible to all of those interested in the field due to linguistic barriers.

To counteract the problem of idiom encountered during mobility programmes it might be useful to establish partnerships between cultural and heritage institutions, language schools, universities, and entities responsible for language courses provided by the state, to:

- 1) Provide free or low-cost language classes to individuals arriving to a country from a different place;
- 2) Offer the same conditions to locals and native speakers interested in learning the idioms of the arriving individuals and/or groups.

²³ Eurostat. Cultural Statistics. Luxembourg: European Union, 2019. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-statistical-books/-/ks-01-19-712>.

Transform the current regulations and initiatives to make mobility programmes accessible to all, especially to the under-represented and underprivileged.

CALL TO ACTION

We invite countries to develop and transform the mobility programmes to facilitate an inter-cultural exchange between experts from different regions. Arrangements should be made to financially support such efforts to encourage networking, research and exchange of ideas. Furthermore, the mobility programmes could be designed to offer tax reductions to institutions, organisations, and enterprises who want to integrate new professionals, or individuals. When possible, financial incentives could be offered to students and young professionals engaging in mobility programmes and coming from under-served or isolated territories.



Impact:

These programmes would benefit heritage institutions, organisations, and the ones located in under-served territories. This option could also boost the sustainable development of these institutions, organisations, and enterprises, by integrating young workers with new ideas and sets of skills. It can foment intergenerational and trans-disciplinary dialogue, and bring new methodologies and perspectives to already-established work environments.

On the other hand, this option would create opportunities for young professionals who do not have the capacity to integrate in international mobility programmes and enhance the chances of seeing these young professionals finding medium to long-term contracts with the collaborating entities.

This scheme would not only facilitate the involvement of heritage actors in a broader set of activities, but it could also potentiate the dialogue between locals and the individuals arriving to the receiving place. When possible, there should be an attempt to promote linguistic diversity, to translate knowledge, measures, and policies to the biggest number of idioms. And, for further accessibility, to transpose that information to different formats (such as video, audio, braille, etc.). When there are no available human or economic resources to do so, the collaboration with schools and universities to produce the necessary materials should be encouraged. This would not only lower the costs associated with the production of the materials as it would give the opportunity for students to apply their knowledge in a project with a societal impact. To guarantee some ethical standards, all students involved in the production of the materials should be duly quoted and, when possible, receive some form of compensation.



REWARD

the young professionals with fair payment, following the EU regulations on labour laws.



REPRESENT

young people in your workforce by introducing a tailored scheme that ensures a mentorship culture.



ASSERT

the roles and responsibilities of heritage professionals by drafting a clearer definition for heritage professionals and their skills.



COMMUNICATE

through written legal contracts, the roles, responsibilities and rights of a volunteer and acknowledge their contributions towards the organisation.



TRANSFORM

the current regulations and initiatives to make mobility programmes accessible to all, especially to the under-represented and underprivileged.



CONCLUSION

The authors have attempted to bring forward some potential solutions for the issues and challenges faced by the young people in the field of cultural heritage. **It is their small contribution to work for a more inclusive sector which appreciates the role of young people and understands the enthusiasm, passion and skills they can bring.**

With the calls and recommendations put forward in the document, we intend to not only find new ways in which heritage can have a direct and positive impact in counteracting social, cultural, economic, and environmental challenges but also propose ways by which the sector can be more inclusive and sustainable for and to the future generations.

We hope to have offered propositions which might help enhance the “value” of heritage for society by involving the future generations, thereby helping to measure its impacts, revenues, contributions for the wider audience and, increasing the chances of attracting new investors, public and private funds for its sustenance.

