



LOCAL REPORT CONCERNING THE MARKETABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF ICH

DELIVERABLE D.T1.2.1

(WP T1, ACTIVITY A.T1.2)

LP, T2I - TRASFERIMENTO TECNOLOGICO E
INNOVAZIONE

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INDEX

Overview and description of the local activities
(interviews and questionnaires)

Summary of the interviews

Summary of the questionnaires

Conclusion

Annexes

- Transcription of the key passages of the interviews
- Reflection notes of the interviews
- Completed Questionnaires
- List of the interviewed and questioned actors



Overview and description of the local activities (interviews and questionnaires)

We conducted our interviews, from November on, starting from the list of potential stakeholders prepared in October. That list was designed basically thinking of the ICH categories we had been studying the previous CCC - Capital Cultural Counts Interreg Central Europe project.

We took some assumptions, so to say. As usual in social studies, things had to change very quickly, as soon as we started actually meeting our first cultural operators and/or financial operators: they opened other perspectives and they presented their point of view. Fair enough, those were their interviews, not ours.

The list of people to involve quickly changed. Some ICH branches changed, for example we found pretty interesting the involvement of our Chamber of Commerce, that has been compelled by the law to open a Culture-Tourism Office! Also, we found it very interesting the line about Theatre, and the struggle between professional companies against amateur companies. A world we didn't know before opened little by little during our conversations.

Some difficulties were found in approaching Bank Foundations, they were very kind at the phone, very sensitive and sympathetic, but at the very end they were not very keen on sending the questionnaire back to us. Never mind, we got some good information on them all the same, by means of cultural operators who receive funds from those bank foundations. Banks were very friendly but scarcely collaborative.

So to say, cultural operators were more open to discuss their point of view and their visions. We tried to meet them at their premises, we wanted to touch where ICH is dealt by women and men directly involved in their work. Some other times we had to meet at our office, it was more efficient.

Cultural operators are busy people. Even it is so, we loved the fact that all of them found some time in their hectic life to have a chat with us. It may have helped a lot the fact that some of them already knew that we had been in CCC Interreg Project on ICH some years ago.

The other fact we liked a lot is that we talked a lot about values and territories and very little about money. Cultural operators want some money to continue doing what they like most: promoting and developing their culture, traditions and values.



Summary of the interviews with local cultural operators (at least 10)

The interviews have been conducted in an adequate setting and privacy has been preserved. We used the template as suggested and we recorder each conversation. During the conversations we tried to stay focused on the suggested items in the interview template, but most times we preferred not to stop the interviewees and we let them express themselves in the freest manner as possible.

We followed this pattern: first of all we introduced ourselves and our organization; then we introduced the ARTISTIC project, the development in work packages. We presented WP1 and the aim of our interview. We shared our mutual believes in ICH, in order to gather the interviewees' impressions and attitude towards the matter, definitions. It helped us a lot this sharing since we believe ICH UNESCO definition is pretty clear but it has to be concretely recognised in those who live directly traditions, landscapes, local dialects and so on. Then we started off a very free conversation keeping in mind the template of UniHamburg. Finally, we closed the interviews sharing phones and email and promising to stay in touch for further involvement.

All the interviewed acted in a very friendly attitude. Each of them turned out to be very interested and eager to be involved in the prosecution of the project.

In many interviews we found the close correlation between cultural enhancement projects and territory, also intended as physical place and natural environment in which the project is developed.

In many cases, the initiative also aims to raise awareness in order to make that place alive again, becomes protected in some way because it is taken over by the community, and sees new opportunities for development.

From this experience of confrontation with the realities of our territory, we understand more in depth the reasons why, even in the UNESCO documents, we speak of cultural heritage and natural heritage as often closely related.

At the same time, there are operators who emphasize the importance of enhancing cultural heritage that does not have a close link with a specific place, but with more universal practices, at the limit of anthropological investigation: they present themselves as practices that have long been carried forward as a species.

Particular reference is made to the *“practice of breastfeeding and to the wealth of knowledge that was handed down by female line, from grandmother to mother and then to daughter”*. In some countries, such as Italy, it is no longer obvious that a young mother is prepared by this family oral culture to manage the first stages of her child's life, especially with regard to breastfeeding. The companies have equipped themselves with courses managed by the hospitals or by the local Local Health Authorities, but not all new mothers have access to them. This issue has opened us to broader considerations regarding what the intangible cultural heritage is to be preserved and handed down.



Another reflection that emerges is that it is often not a question of reconnecting to a place or a practice the function it had in the past. Reviving a place by opening it to new initiative and involving people that revolve around that territory allows bringing an innovative value.

If we mean culture ethnographically, as the complex set of knowledge, practices, beliefs, art, law, customs and any other capacity and habit acquired by man as a member of a society, then telling what is in danger of being lost becomes an opportunity. It means opening a space for reflection and experimentation of new connections and fostering the birth of new concepts and new practices, which enrich the culture itself in an innovative way. Once again, listening to the experiences of these realities, we see the motivation to transmit culture in a generative sense and not for conservation, like a static photograph of the past.

Talking about the recovery of the places of Baldo and Lessinia areas (in the Veneto Pre-alps), an operator interviewed commented, that *“a path linked to the activities of farmers and the earth, to “go for wood”, the availability of water, becomes a path that forces thinking and rethinking the relationship with Nature, listening and recreating new cultural meanings and practices”*.

Another operator, speaking about theatre, underlined how in the selection and writing of the texts to be represented there is a great work, even as a group: *“A choice of texts is made, one writes together and the script is generated. The texts draw on a cultural heritage, also linked to the local territory, and then everything is put on stage. The phases are therefore recovery, review and transmission. Here then we find the richness of a heritage that is transmitted over the centuries keeping alive”*.

An important aspect that emerges as a reflection, following the comparison with cultural operators, is that the great voluntary work, which is typical in cultural initiatives, can give rise to paid work, often in an indirect way: *“volunteering that generates indirect economies”*.

This happens in different ways: 1) the development of a cultural project requires to put in place different professions that meet, know each other, exchange information and experiences and can create functional connections to widen the network and professional opportunities, outside the project itself; 2) young people engaged as volunteers in a project acquire and strengthen transversal skills and technical skills that they then manage to finalize in the labor market; 3) companies or freelance professionals arise with autonomous activities as a result of opportunities created by collaborating on projects.

The Baldofestival Association, for example, has been working for 15 years also by stimulating scientific research to support targeted projects. A group of university researchers (especially geologists) have voluntarily made available their knowledge, and so have strengthened their professionalism and built professional networks. Many voluntary forces were fielded for communication and promotion; among these, one of the guys became a professional video maker. To finance projects, some volunteers trained and experienced fundraising. This also contributed to form a spendable professionalism. *“At least 5 freelancers were born from the Baldofestival experience”* an operator told us in the interview.



Some operators, with whom we are confronted, report a recent research from the Veneto Region that testifies "*that for every euro invested in culture, the territory has a return of 1.8 euro*". This is a stimulating fact, also useful to support investments in the sector.

In the same direction goes the reflection of Dr. Ruol of Veneto Lavoro, which emphasizes how the management of cultural heritage has economic repercussions on the territory: it creates jobs and an integration between different sectors, such as with tourism.

One of the considerations that we have shared with more than one cultural operator is that "*artistic and cultural businesses suffer from lasting sustainability*" also due to lack of entrepreneurial skills.

It is necessary to take a qualitative step: "*putting cultural work at the center ... but definitely strengthening the entrepreneurial dimension*". If these realities fail to make the leap, they remain amateur and do not turn into companies that allow members to make their passion a trade.

The aspiring entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs of the artistic-cultural sectors often "*are not sufficiently aware of the importance of keeping together the management, administrative and relational dimensions and they often delegate to external figures*". Also on financing they sometimes rely only on external donations, and this undermines the possibility of lasting sustainability.

Another interesting topic related to lasting effectiveness and sustainability is the need to actively involve the inhabitants of a territory. It clearly emerged in the Unesco project of the Val D'Alpone and in the redevelopment of the Veronetta district in the project for the rebirth of Ciak cinema. Likewise, AIDA Foundation enthusiastically shares an experience carried out in Trentino Alto-Adige, where a start-up management service for the theatre held by disabled children has been put together. The innovation of this project is not the service given by the disabled (there are already similar initiatives in Europe). Its added value is the fact that the structure that hosted the initiative was located in the Valle dei Laghi and became the centre for all the cultural activity in the territory, generating a substantial inducement for the local economy. It was "*an important example of cultural welfare*".

We find a strong involvement of the local population in a peculiar form also in the experience of "Le Falie", in which the entire town of Velo Veronese, in the heart of the Prealps of the Veneto called Lessinia, has been involved since 1990 in a unique experience theater and music. Le Falie have become a theater company, a polyphonic choir, a children's choir and a cultural association. "Since their foundation, more than 300 people from a country of just over 800 inhabitants have been involved as actors, singers, musicians, set designers, costume designers, toolmakers, locarobe ... An authentically popular art experience that made Velo Veronese known as the country on stage that relives its history on stage". The activity of coordination, management of participation and stimulation is certainly important. It can come from a group or in some cases from a strong, recognized personality, that invests professionally in this project, meeting needs and expectations of a territory. In the case of Le Falie, the creator of the initiative is Alessandro Anderloni, writer and director, founder and artistic director of



the group and the author of all the shows, *“a generative figure, for his ability to involve people and make them to grow up”*.



Summary of the questionnaires to local public and private financial operators (at least 10)

The questionnaires were sent after having contacted a specific person or a particular office involved in financing cultural projects. We decided to address the major bank foundations in the city, who incidentally represent some of the major banks in Italian bank sector, by the way. At the phone they were friendly, but very few of them answered the questionnaire. Very helpful on the other hand were our friends at the Chamber of Commerce, who now runs a Tourism Culture Office: the colleagues were very skilled and enthusiast to give us some good advice. Also, we moved towards private foundations, linked to industrial groups and which are very well involved in cultural promotion in our region.

We are wondering about an important issue: if banks do not even answer to us t2i, which is quite a well recognized institution in our territory, what is it going to happen when a little association apply for a little sponsorship?

Are they going to answer or would it be just a discouraging experience?

Fortunately, reality has always many facets.

As a matter of fact, actually asking some information to our cultural operators we got a lot of information about bank system and its approach to culture. Also, their web sites store a lot of compulsory reporting that enable us to shed some light on their activity: the good news is that they give some money and many projects and initiatives are funded. Some bank foundation prefer giving directly some sponsorship, other want to have annual tenders. They all want visibility and the opportunity to share their corporate values to as much people as possible. Even if they are not involved in the direct management, very often they want to know the people they finance; moreover, sustainability is a key word, since they want the projects once their funding has finished runs without difficulties on its own.

Nice answer from a Business Angel company: no matter what the project is all about, what matters is the 'exit', which in their jargon means the return of investment which is got to be *adequate*, whatever it means.

The Chamber of Commerce of Verona is very skilled. They run a Tourism Culture Office. In such a way they can contribute by sponsorship or by use of a public tender. We like the way the public sector deals with ICH: a mixture of respect and pride for the richness of our territories.

Most of the financial operators know what ICH is, but very little of them can actually name some experiences, except those of their local territories.

They say very properly that investing in ICH is mainly due to visibility reasons, but in general they approve every effort in developing cultural initiatives.

Very often CSR - corporate Social Responsibility comes beneath the conscious words: private foundations fund ICH projects because want to give back to the territories which made them rich. It is a matter of values and love for their fellow citizens.



Among the instruments used, most times they intervene directly with a sponsorship and they prefer investing in social and medical projects. Culture is important but maybe comes after other more urgent priorities: social emergencies, health care, children care, family care. As a matter of fact, culture is not in the first places of foundations' ranking, it comes second or third. Some money comes all the same, anyway.

We wanted to know crowdfunding, we found micro-credit: one of our financial private operators runs an initiative of funding as a bank would do, but the parameters used to decide if to fund or not are different from those of a bank. Definitely faith and trust are their means of judging a potential entrepreneur. Judging means also know each other very well, it means share vision of life and walk along the same path for some time. The amount of money lent is very little but it is very often enough to start a business and to realise the dream of a dreamer!



Conclusion

The most relevant actors for marketability and sustainability we found in Veneto, according to the interviews we realised, are basically:

- banking foundations, such as Fondazione CariVerona, that is one of the most mentioned institution when talking about economic resources for the promotion of synergies between territories, associations, the voluntary world and public bodies;
- private foundations, as Fondazione San Zeno, that is a grant making foundation giving funds to organisations which undertake schooling, education, training and work projects all around the world;
- companies that act as sponsors;
- public bodies, as Regione del Veneto, with funding lines that support cultural activities and the birth of new cultural, creative and entertainment enterprises.

Foundations in general use invitations to tender but most times they directly get in contact with the organizations which need financing. In this case, it is interesting to underline that grants are not given blindly: financiers pretend to see if what they finance really exists, they are interested in knowing how money is spent concretely and they take part actively in the financed activities.

The same happens with some sponsors, such as the Chamber of Commerce of Verona and Hermete Onlus, that participate in projects with a sponsorship but also as a partner with a direct involvement.

Another interesting way to support the activities concerning ICH is microcredit, that gives the possibility of receiving a bank financing but with less restrictive criteria, in order to help also the most disadvantaged subjects.

Talking about networks and connections, t2i - trasferimento tecnologico e innovazione is linked to the system of the chambers of commerce, which has by law an office that deals with culture and tourism. In the Chambers of Commerce network are also included the trade associations, as for example Federalberghi, that represents the interests of hotel businesses and is linked to Confcommercio, one of the most powerful in our area. This leads us to be in a privileged position, as it gives us the opportunity to get in touch with other networks, profit but also non-profit organizations. Talking with our interviewees, it is confirmed that a key role is played by GAL - Local Action Groups (such as GAL Baldo Garda), ProLoco (Association for the promotion of the territory), Consortium for the Protection of specificity of production (as for Vino Durello and Radicchio di Treviso) and other associations and spontaneous committees, where the voluntary work is fundamental.

Concerning joint projects, we can highlight the experiences of Tocati, the international festival of ancient games, and Val D'Alpone e Bolca, in which many stakeholders of our region are involved. Among others the UNESCO Office, host in the Municipality of Verona: we have met the UNESCO Officer, a very skilled person. In his opinion, more



than funding, the real issue with ICH is matching economic expectations with the involvement of a whole region: there is a crucial aspect that Zugliani emphasizes, and it is the importance that the candidacy is known, carried forward and sustained by a territory. *“If this is not so, then you pay the price in terms of management and conservation of the place itself. It is necessary to involve the entire territory from the very beginning. Only in this way, it will take charge of it”*.

The most used financial instruments and models for ICH are: direct financing by foundations and sponsor companies; financing derived from the participation in public tenders or call by private entities and foundations; microcredit; widespread ownership; crowdfunding (even if with little success); fundraising activities carried out professionally.

As a short summary, we can say we have shown that:

-there seem to exist a correlation between ICH and Territorial Heritage: there is no Culture without a territory;

-in those territories it is then crucial to refer to a community, who has got a dialect, a story, some rites...

-moreover, at the very basis there is also the concept of innovation: we cannot link our future and the future of our community to ancient times without questioning them, if you want that ICH survives you must innovate the way community, and among it the young people, lives their values and traditions.