



EU Heritage.

Skills for promotion,
valorisation, exploitation, mediation and
interpretation of European Cultural Heritage

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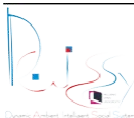
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The role of stakeholders for local development

CHAPTER ONE: From cultural heritage to local development

When we deal with “local development” projects or policies we should be widely aware of the fact that this is a definition encompassing a variety of methods, approaches and aspects, of purposes and applications.

So how could we define “local development”? As “a comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of problems in a territory and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change”. However, over the years, the concepts and the approaches have changed quite a lot and, consequently, also the kind of players to be involved and their role or contribution.

In the 1970s the more recurrent approach towards “local development” was mainly *top-down* and based on the idea that economic, social and physical aspects were separate and independent entities which needed to be coordinated by central governments. with material infrastructures such as (buildings, streets, public spaces, historical city centers, traditional products and services, etc.) with no significant, or little interest in social impact, in the relation with the local communities and as a consequence no significant role expected for local players.

Coming to the present, the leading idea is different and based on the need to combine top down with bottom up approaches, based on the idea that the very important and essential goal is to produce social impacts and to involve actively local players. In this different perspective cultural heritage has a different role, but is very important. The importance of cultural heritage in this new “local development” concept is not based on the “intrinsic” cultural or artistic value of the building or the manufacture but in more related with the relation with people – local players - how they get in touch, how they use cultural heritage, what kind of relation or connection cultural heritage is able to activate in a territory.

Nowadays – compared to the past - policy makers are more aware of the fact that in order to generate both social and economic values, Cultural Heritage has not to be restored and protected as an isolated entity, but on the contrary it has to be interconnected, deeply interconnected with the other local resources, mainly who lives and works in that specific territory. Only material restoration is not enough to transform any piece of cultural heritage into a source of local development. The involvement of local stakeholders is, in this perspective, essential, crucial.

However, this is not an easy task. The action of restoring an ancient building or the opening of a museum is quite a lot easier than to make different kinds of players get along and share a strategy or an action plan. The very reason is that not only any category but also every single person has their own ideas, perspectives, specific expectations, specific needs, different ideas of what are the goals to aim for the benefits of their own territory. And, we also need to remember that every person on

the territory is not moving as an isolated entity but is interconnected with other people everyday. This complex system is an ecosystem where economic, social, demographic, environmental factors combine together to engage people, local communities and to make them participate in a local development project. It is not an easy task, make it is the most difficult one.

However, some categories seem to play a more relevant role in local development projects regarding the enhancement of material and immaterial cultural heritage as a sort of local development. Let's see them, shortly.

CHAPTER TWO: Key stakeholders in local development projects: part one

Institutions

Local public institutions are one of the most important categories in almost every local development project. They can assume a variety of different roles.

First, they are generally in charge of defining policies at the broadest level, or at least they dramatically contribute to the definition of policies.

Second, public institutions usually are the owners of important pieces buildings or sites of Cultural Heritage interest located in the territory. The enhancement of such invaluable pieces of cultural heritage usually exceeds the financial and managerial capabilities of single municipalities, making the case for the involvement of private players – either for-profit or non-profit - interested in using heritage for their own aims and purposes.

Lastly, public institutions can motivate the active involvement and participation by people, by private players owners of local, cultural heritage in local development processes. How can they do it? For instance by providing some fiscal and tax benefits connected with restoration and re-use of their private properties, especially for abandoned, dismissed, empty or underused sites.

Non - profit organizations

A second category is the one regarding not for non-profit organizations. Social and cultural organizations are of the utmost importance for turning cultural heritage into a driver for local development, cultural participation and social inclusion.

In fact, non-profit organizations are able to reach new audiences (yet not customers), engage them through cultural, artistic and educational events or activities, promote community development through the revitalization of abandoned or underused historical buildings or sites.

This category encompasses different typologies of players, organizations, both the organizations to ones operating as enterprises and the more amateur ones (such as associations, committees , informal groups of citizens, sharing common goals, etc.).

In the framework of local development projects, sometimes it's better to consider these two macro typologies of different players separately because of the different roles they can play and the different contributions they can provide, also for different expectations and needs they have.

CHAPTER THREE: Key stakeholders in local development projects - part two

Profit organizations

The third category is about profit organizations because their contribution to any local development processes and projects is essential, especially in urban areas. The presence of economic operators is an important condition for an economy to flourish, for the creation of job opportunities and to foster innovation locally.

In spite of this, sometimes local development projects and strategy fail to strategically involve these kinds of players especially in long-term processes.

Profit organizations (firms, companies, enterprises, industries) are interested in working in a specific area, or a territory or moving to a new territory for different reasons: for instance, to benefit from economic incentives or to better reach and engage a specific target; to improve their brand reputation or to better enhance their corporate social responsibility, etc. Different reasons and you need to meet the right one in order to engage every specific company.

Let's have a look at the more recurrent typologies of profit players and at the role they could play within local development processes in relation with the use of Cultural heritage.

The first category is the one of the general users. "General users" are those companies or firms, or organizations which contribute significantly to the overall enhancement of a territory providing useful services and facilities but considering Cultural Heritage mainly as an asset for commercial exploitation rather than for intrinsic, artistic and cultural value. This category of players encompasses the majority of commercial activities, such as hotels and restaurants, organizations providing services and supplies to offices and institutions, tourists facilities and services, etc.

In all these cases, to involve actively "general users" in local development projects could be more useful to provide some commercial or economic or financial facilities benefits or to set up some important events, cultural events or artistic events, such as an exposition in order to draw audiences into the territory that in their perspective means to draw potential customers for the activity, commercial services and product.

There are two other interesting kinds of profit players, very interesting in relation with the enhancement of cultural heritage they provide, even for different approaches and purposes.

- The so-called "General Enhancer" that are companies using culture heritage to establish or strengthen their overall reputations as a tool for ends of communication, marketing or Corporate Social Responsibility even if their business is not culture-related. In this case, locating the headquarters in historical city centers or even inside

artistic or historical buildings or sites can represent a profitable added value. For this reason even though they are not operating in the cultural sector or moving for business and business goals they provide and enhance cultural heritage or pieces of cultural heritage.

- Profit organizations making business in the cultural sectors. The difference is that in this case these players are operating in the cultural sector. This case is interesting because profit organizations operating in the cultural fields are usually looking for territories which history, culture, arts, and these types of organizations are considered as a sort of natural habitat, because they are completely aligned with their business approach, their activities, products and services. These kinds of profit organizations are the so-called “cultural enhancers”.

So there are three typologies for profit organization:

- general users;
- general enhancers;
- cultural enhancers.

Each of them is useful for the overall success of any local development processes, and the goal is how to involve them and how to create and run, not a temporary alliance, collaboration with them, but long-term synergies.

CHAPTER FOUR: Public-private partnerships (PPP)

To achieve specific local development goals, public institutions should better join with the private sectors, not only for the no profit but also the for profit sector or those profiles players mentioned before. In order to attain a shared goal such as tourism development of an area, territory, an interesting tool, based on public-private partnership is the one called Destination Management organization whose aim is to make private and public players work together to transform their own territory in a touristic destination for real, not only in terms of general vision and strategy but also in terms of management and promotion and business development, in terms of action and intervention in the territories in order to create new products, to promote networking among all different companies and professionals operating in tourism and in culture in order to set up different and innovative services and facilities.

Every DMO, as a consequence, is very site-specific in order to enhance the peculiarities of the territory, in order to engage those actors and players operating in that territory and in order to find out the right strategy to promote and to reach the shared goal for local development in that area.

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