



MANIFESTO FOR AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT



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OUR STARTING POINT

Cultural Heritage (CH) represents a significant **economic and social resource** for European and world-wide countries. However, its potential remains largely untapped due to persistent challenges. Amongst these, the lack of effective tools to broaden access and **participation for new audiences and local communities.**

An urgent requirement is the provision of professional development opportunities for CH professionals to open up a changing paradigm towards more **human-centred approaches** with fresh mindsets and more connection.

To enhance effectiveness and avoid a sense of isolation when promoting heritage experiences, CH professionals should be supported in embracing the challenge of managing **complexity**, placing people and their lives at the core of their practices, and fully recognizing the importance of **inclusion**, both within and outside their organisations.

They need to access opportunities to work at team level and acquire **new skills** to engage local communities, become relevant for new audiences, and improve communication and presentation strategies for their heritage sites.

THE AHEAD VISION

Cultural heritage museums, parks and sites that

- listen to, involve and empower **communities**
- provide **safe, fun and meaningful** spaces for all invest in **upskilling** their professionals
- activate **networks** and opportunities for social and economic development
- embrace a **people-centred** approach in preserving and promoting cultural heritage
- build a sense of **belonging**

LOCAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Cultural heritage places must

- involve local communities for engagement, emancipation, development
- listen to contexts to learn from context
- create spaces of active participation
- create diverse activities to foster sociality

We believe in...

THE AHEAD VALUES

We believe in...

ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION

Cultural heritage places must

- create a safe space where people feel a sense of belonging
- offer accessible, fun and unique experiences
- express relevance for the present and the people
- show the roots of who we are today in relation to our past

SUSTAINABILITY

Financial, environmental and social sustainability is our overarching principle. Cultural heritage places must

- inspire better models for sustainable living and quality of life
- follow a natural rhythm and think long term
- embed sustainability in their work processes

We believe in...

THE AHEAD VALUES

We believe in...

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cultural heritage professionals must

- take up an audience-centred approach
- be open to peers from similar or different backgrounds
- learn from trying new things and approaches
- be connected to the people inside and outside their organisations
- understand power distribution

THE AHEAD APPROACH

For us, audience development & engagement means

- recognising the role and perspectives of audiences and communities as equals
- **listening** to audiences and **learning** from them
- **understanding** and getting to know our existing and potential audiences
- putting ourselves in the shoes of audiences
- **being relevant** to audiences and catering to their needs
- working together, creating together, **experimenting together** from start to end
- inviting people to curate and preserve together
- **designing** interactive experiences
- empowering local communities
- building **long-term relationships**

THE AHEAD KEYWORDS

RECOGNITION **EMPATHY**

INTERACTION **EMPOWERMENT**

LISTENING **TOGETHERNESS**

UNDERSTANDING **RELEVANCE**

RELATIONSHIP **CO-CREATION**

THE AHEAD KEYWORDS

THE AHEAD METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Design Thinking and Human-Centred Approaches

Design Thinking is a human-centred approach where the main driver of innovation is empathy, the understanding of human needs. **Human-Centred Design** (HCD) results in solutions shaped by the relationships with audiences and the socio-technical system.

HCD approaches shift the perspective from solving “our problems” to addressing people’s needs and problems.

With HCD, cultural heritage institutions can:

- achieve a better **understanding** of what their **audiences** are, want, and feel in reality rather than making assumptions in theory
- achieve the **emotional engagement** of their key stakeholders, both their team members, their visitors and the local communities
- **innovate** their practices by testing new ideas at a smaller scale, then modifying and adapting them according to users’ feedback

From ACED (Audience-Centred Experience Design) to the AHEAD methodology

ACED is a framework developed in the ADESTE+ European project to help cultural organisations shift towards more audience-focused models. It's a method for designing **audience-centred cultural experiences** in any artistic, cultural, or creative sector. Simultaneously, it encourages internal collaboration, fostering change in manageable steps. The new AHEAD model, Accessible Heritage Experience for Audience Development, customises ACED for CH institutions.

AHEAD introduces **tailored innovations**:

- new components that balance audience development with the preservation of **heritage values**
- fresh approaches to **collaboration** between consultants and CH institutions, adapting to the constraints of state-run systems
- novel formats for **artists** to collaborate with CH institutions

AHEAD is not a one-size-fits-all approach but a generative, adaptive, and creative process. CH institutions use AHEAD to **create, test, and iteratively adapt** new ideas for audience experiences. This game-changing approach fosters internal organisational changes while enabling creativity and innovation to address the needs of **local communities and visitors**.

THE AHEAD NETWORK

We believe in the **power of diversity** within a consortium. Collaborating with diverse organisations is crucial to ensure a comprehensive approach. This allows for exploring different perspectives and solutions, leading to better outcomes.

We believe that by pooling together resources and expertise, organisations within the consortium can achieve a greater impact than they could individually. Collaboration fosters **networking** and **relationship-building** among organisations, creating opportunities for partnerships, knowledge sharing, and collective problem-solving beyond the project's scope.

We recognise the importance of spreading risk associated with projects. By distributing responsibilities among multiple organisations, we mitigate overall risk, enhancing the likelihood of project success.

We advocate for a consortium with a **complementary** mix of organisations. This ensures a well-rounded approach, reduces risk, fosters collaboration, and maximises the project's impact and success.

Together, we can achieve more than the sum of our parts.

PARTNERS

1 - Melting Pro, Italy

Small Enterprise specialising in audience development, strategic planning, team building, creative entrepreneurial competences and green management for the cultural and creative sector.

2 - Archaeological Park of Ostia Antica, Italy

An institution of the Ministry of Culture with special autonomy, it is in charge of the site's protection and public fruition. The Archaeological Park of Ostia Antica takes care of conservation, research, education, engagement and communication activities.

3 - Heritage Management Organization, Greece

An NGO specializing in capacity building through training for CH professionals including CH management, community engagement, communication strategy, fundraising and more. Since 2008, 2500+ professionals trained in 100+ countries.

4 - University of Deusto, Spain

A 130 year-old non-profit Higher Education Institution among Spain's leading universities with a long record of international cooperation. The research team on Leisure, Culture and Tourism for Social Transformation specialises on cultural management, audience studies and participatory models.

5 - Impact Valley, Belgium

A Social Innovation Agency founded in 2017 to train and coach people on innovation and co-creation processes and design innovation programmes for clients.

ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

National Museum and Research Center of Altamira, Spain

School of Agioi Deka, Greece

University of Bologna, Italy

Zetema, Italy

Symbola, Italy

Fundació Institut Català de Recerca en Patrimoni Cultural, Spain

Balkan Museum Network, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation, Egypt

Ephorate of Antiquities Of Heraklion, Greece

**EXPANDING
THE AHEAD
NETWORK**

JOIN US!

IF YOU WANT TO:

- **participate** in the AHEAD capacity-building programme and help us scale it up to impact more CH professionals and organisations
- **join a community** of peers to share and innovate audience-centred approaches
- **gain new competences** for audience engagement, diversity and accessibility
- **discover new participatory models** for cultural heritage
- **acquire practical tools** to tackle the audience challenges of your heritage place
- **learn** from international inspirational case studies
- **take your projects** in cultural heritage to the next level

JOIN THE AHEAD NETWORK

Endorse the Manifesto now!

[HERE](#)

discover more about the project
www.aheadeurope.eu/



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