ahead

ACCESSIBLE
HERITAGE
EXPERIENCE
for
AUDIENCE
DEVELOPMENT

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME
SYLLABUS

Project Number: 101131914

CONTENTS:

1. INTRODUCTION

The AHEAD syllabus outlines the curriculum of seminars and laboratories that compose the AHEAD capacity building programme. It is mainly intended for cultural heritage professionals with a strong interest in audience development and participatory practices, and it guides target users through the two main phases of the programme:

a) the AHEAD seminars: they cover the basics of audience development and different specific work practices for audience participation (e.g., design thinking, participative branding, facilitation methods, etc.), preparing participants for the second, applied phase of the programme;

b) the AHEAD labs: they offer a cycle of site-based workshops based on Design Thinking for cultural heritage professionals to ideate, prototype, and test new services and experiences for their heritage organizations together with their audiences through participatory methods.

The syllabus fosters collaborative and peer-supported learning environments, which can help mitigate negative physiological and affective responses, such as stress and anxiety, which are common in challenging educational settings like design thinking. The social support inherent in these environments provides a safety net that can reduce fear of failure and stress by fostering a sense of belonging and shared purpose.[1] This support can shift learners' interpretation of stress from a signal of their own inability to a manageable part of the learning process.

---

[1] Schell, J. (n.d.). Design thinking has a pedagogy problem: The way forward. School of Design and Creative Technologies, University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved from https://designcreativetech.utexas.edu/design-thinking-has-pedagogy-problem-way-forward#:~:text=Vicarious%20Experiences%3A%20Ensure%20students%20have,with%20the%20performance%20of%20others.

Both the seminars and the labs adopt a practice-oriented methodological approach, which allows participants to reflect, plan, and apply the newly acquired competencies in the context of the real challenges they face in their heritage places.

2. AHEAD SEMINARS

As part of the AHEAD project's commitment to knowledge sharing and capacity building, a series of nine online seminars was conducted offering a platform for in-depth discussion, expert input, and collaborative exchange on key topics related to the project's objectives.

Each seminar lasts approximately 1 hour, entirely in English, to ensure broad accessibility for participants across different countries and time zones.

The seminar series was specifically designed for the professionals involved in the AHEAD project. Its main objectives were to ensure a shared foundational understanding of audience development in the cultural heritage sector and to align all participants with the principles set out in the AHEAD Manifesto and the project's methodology. This common ground was essential to prepare for the next phase of the project - the implementation of the AHEAD Labs within each hub.

The evaluation conducted among participants following the seminar series highlighted several strengths and areas for improvement. The seminars were widely regarded as effective in achieving their intended goals: they provided a valuable foundation for the upcoming implementation phase and played a key role in fostering connections among project participants. Importantly, they also offered insight into the diverse local contexts of the different hubs where the AHEAD Labs would later take place, helping to build a shared understanding across the consortium.

However, the feedback also pointed to two main areas for improvement.

First, while the sessions were tailored to the professionals involved in the project, some participants noted that opening them up to a broader audience beyond the core partners could have enriched the discussions.

Second, although the online format allowed for broad participation, several respondents felt that the length of each seminar was too long for a virtual setting.

TOPICS & STRUCTURE

N.	Training partner	Topics
0	All	Overview of the AHEAD Seminars
1	Deusto University, Impact Valley	Introduction to Audience Development: definition, approaches and ethics Introduction to the AHEAD Canva
2	Melting Pro	ACED & Design Thinking: illustrating the process
3	Deusto University	Audience research, analysis, segmentation: simple tools; Customer journey
4	Melting Pro	Participative Branding for Heritage
5	HERITAGE	Foundations of Heritage Interpretation & elements of Interpretive Writing
6	HERITAGE	Community Engagement
7	Impact Valley	Impact Evaluation: framework of indicators for assessing impact

8	Impact Valley, Melting Pro	Facilitation Methods

Seminars are articulated according to a common structure, which includes an ice-breaker, a warm-up activity, presentations, followed by Q&A slots, and a peer-learning activity dedicated to group work and discussion. In particular, the seminars' recordings are published online on YouTube. The playlist where they are all collected is accessible at the following link https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNrK2Nmco1PtmHu316PzqC_5qQ1MAv0GT&si=qhrunkENvng-o8pT

Seminars conclude with an evaluation activity to assess participant satisfaction and learning, as well as a check-out activity for a brief reflection on the key takeaways from the session.

ahead

⋆⋆⋆ **Co-funded by**
⋆⋆⋆ **the European Union**

SEMINAR 0 - Overview of AHEAD Seminars

https://youtu.be/1SufGxe-ICw?si=CSBXA-qTW609IjEp

Training partner
All partners

Description

This seminar introduces the AHEAD cycle of seminars, a series of eight educational sessions that are part of the AHEAD capacity-building programme for cultural heritage professionals. The programme focuses on audience development, participatory practices, and design thinking to help professionals in the cultural heritage sector engage with diverse audiences and create more inclusive and innovative heritage experiences..

The AHEAD Seminars are led by a group of experts from various organisations that are training partners in the project. These include:

- Melting Pro (Italy) – As the project leader, Melting Pro coordinates the overall AHEAD programme and facilitates the AHEAD Labs. They also contribute to the seminars, bringing expertise in audience development and creative entrepreneurship.

- University of Deusto (Spain) – A leading institution in cultural management and audience studies, Deusto contributes by creating seminar videos and facilitating training on audience development and design thinking.

- Heritage Management Organisation (HMO) (Greece) – HMO specializes in capacity building for cultural heritage professionals. They lead seminars on community engagement and heritage management, sharing their extensive experience in cultural entrepreneurship and participatory approaches.

- Impact Valley (Belgium) – Impact Valley brings expertise in social innovation and co-creation processes. They lead the seminar on impact strategy and innovation, focusing on developing sustainable solutions and innovation strategies for cultural heritage professionals.

These organizations are all integral to the AHEAD programme and bring their respective expertise to the seminars, offering training on key methodologies such as audience-centered design thinking and participatory branding. Through this collaborative effort, participants will learn how to apply these tools and methodologies in their own organizations, enhancing their capacity for audience development and engagement.

SEMINAR 1 - Introduction to Audience Development

https://youtu.be/MCz9F5Mr4Kk

Training partner

University of Deusto

Description

Fostering active audience engagement and access to culture is currently a major challenge for the cultural sector, and one which entails reinterpreting the relationship between cultural organizations and the public. In this context, audience development is becoming one of the approaches that carries the most weight, as evidenced by support for it from the European Commission.

This seminar is aimed at practitioners working in the cultural heritage sector who are interested in putting audiences at the center of their work and implementing an audience development approach in their organizations. It consists of two presentations and a group discussion.

The first presentation starts with a reflection on the democratization of culture and cultural democracy, as well as related considerations of ethics. Afterwards, the concept of audience development is introduced.

The second presentation focuses on the eight main strategic areas of intervention in Audience Development that were identified in a European-level relevant study on Audience Development (Bollo et al., 2017): Programming, Audience participation and co-creation, Digital, Use of Data, Place, Alliances and Collaboration, Organizational change management, and Capacity building.

A recommended following group discussion could focus on sharing audience development initiatives of each organization that can be considered a success or a "small disaster" and on reflecting on the key

factors for success/failure, considering the eight main strategic areas of intervention.

Competences
- Comprehend the fundamentals of audience development and its implications for cultural organizations
- Set up audience development objectives
- Identify the success factors of audience development projects
- Develop a clear audience-oriented attitude

SMART Learning Outcomes
By the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:
- Describe the relationship between the audience development approach and the concepts of democratization of culture and cultural democracy
- Sketch specific audience development objectives for their organizations
- Explain the key success factors for an audience development case study

Evaluation
Peer learning
Check out
Questionnaire

Reference list and additional materials
Cuenca-Amigo, M. and Makua, A. (2018). Becoming an audience-centered organization. Guidelines for developing an audience approach at cultural organizations. *Deusto Social Impact Briefings*, 3. Retrieved from:
https://www.deusto.es/document/research/es/coleccion-briefing-2018.pdf
Letinić, A. (2022). *INSIDE AND OUT — Methods and Practices of Organizational Transformation for Participation in Culture.* Kultural Nova Foundation. Retrieved from:
https://kulturanova.hr/eng/resources/kultura-nova-edition/inside-and-out
Cuenca-Amigo, M., Pérez Santos, E. y Monteagudo, M.J. (2023). A satisfactory visitor experience: dimensions and contextual components of

Spanish museums. *MIDAS*, 17. Retrieved from
https://doi.org/10.4000/midas.4744.

  Bollo, A., C. Da Milano, A. Gariboldi and C. Torch. 2017. *Final Report - Study on Audience Development - How to place audiences at the center of cultural organizations*. Brussels: European Commission. Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture.

SEMINAR 2 - From Design Thinking to ACED: Unveiling the Creative Journey

http://youtu.be/W0qrZqHWv5k

Training partner
  Melting Pro

Description

   This seminar explores innovative approaches to enhancing museum and cultural experiences through human-centered design, inspired by Nina Simon's influential 2010 publication, "The Participatory Museum." The book criticizes traditional museum practices and champions a model of active visitor engagement and collaboration, asserting that failures in participatory initiatives often stem from poor design and execution rather than visitor disinterest. Simon's methodology emphasizes addressing visitor needs and interests through evidence-based strategies, which closely align with the principles of Audience Centered Experience Design (ACED).

   Therefore, the seminar delves into the genesis of ACED and how empathy and an iterative process of learning and adaptation, rooted in both ACED and Design Thinking principles, can revitalize cultural experiences. These approaches not only aim to understand and incorporate the diverse backgrounds and interests of audiences but also

lto earn the different stages of co-creation, understanding what it means to transform passive visitors into active participants.

The seminar includes a detailed exploration of the ACED process across three key phases:
- Overview of Design Thinking: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test
- Understand the principles and purpose of ACED
- Deep dive into prototyping and the iterative process.

Competences
- Understand Design Thinking basics as a human-centered framework for creative problem-solving focused on user needs.
- Identify ACED adaptations of Design Thinking for unique arts and cultural challenges.
- Recognize strategies to develop engaging, mission-aligned cultural offerings for diverse communities
- Recognize the pitfalls in design thinking and ACED methodology

SMART Learning Outcomes
By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:
- Identify the five steps of Design Thinking
- Explain what it means by Human-centered design in the cultural context
- Identify the 3 main phases within the ACED process
- Recognize the importance of audience-centered approaches in enhancing cultural participation and organizational development
- Recognize 4 common challenges and pitfalls in design thinking and ACED

Evaluation
Peer learning
Check out
Questionnaire

Reference list and additional materials
Adeste+ (2022). *Audience Centered Experience Design (ACED) Blueprint.*

Simon, N. (2010). *The Participatory Museum*. Santa Cruz, CA: Museum 2.0.

Samis, P., & Michaelson, M. (2017). *Creating the Visitor-Centered Museum*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Simon, N. (2016). *The Art of Relevance*. Santa Cruz, CA: Museum 2.0.

SEMINAR 3 - Audience research and analysis

https://youtu.be/poMGUjBnwGU

Training partner
University of Deusto

Description
Audience research is essential for ensuring that cultural heritage remains relevant, accessible, and meaningful to diverse audiences both now and in the future. By understanding the needs, interests, and perspectives of visitors, heritage professionals can better preserve, promote, and share our common cultural inheritance.

The seminar consists of two presentations and a suggested group discussion. The first presentation provides an overview of audience research. It emphasizes the idea that audience research does not need to be perfect to be useful. It also introduces the concept of segmentation, as well as the different types of audience research methodologies. Finally, it presents some examples of research tools.

The second presentation is divided into two sub-sections: Researching existing audiences, and Researching non-audiences. In each of them, a brief case study is presented.

The suggested following group discussion could focus on sharing an audience development decision that needs to be taken in each one's organization and proposing a small audience research that could be undertaken internally and that would help to make those decisions.

Competences
- Summarize different types of audience research methodologies and their uses in understanding audience behavior, needs, and experiences

- Distinguish between existing audiences and non-audiences
Identify appropriate research methods for different audience types

SMART Learning Outcomes

By the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:
- Outline a simple segmentation of the audiences of their organizations/projects
- Propose at least one audience research method to understand the existing audiences of their organizations/projects
- Propose at least one audience research method to understand non-audiences of their organizations/projects

Evaluation

Peer learning

Check out

Questionnaire

Reference list and additional materials

Arts Council England (2011). *Arts Audiences: Insight*. Retrieved from: https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/arts_audience_insight_2011.pdf

Hadley, S.; Johanson, K.; Walmsley, B. & Torreggiani, A. (2024). *Audience Data and Research. Perspectives from Cultural Policy, Arts Management and Practice.* Routledge.

Harder+company & James Irvine Foundation (2015). *Capturing Information on Arts Participants: Exploring Engagement Fund Toolkit*. Retrieved from: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED560805.pdf

Harlow, B. (2015). *Taking out the guesswork. A guide to using research to build arts audiences*. New York: The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from: https://wallacefoundation.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/Taking-Out-the-Guesswork.pdf

Jensen, J. T. (2014). Museums as mediators of cultural democracy. In Danish Agency for Culture (Ed.). *Museums - Knowledge, Democracy, Transformation*, pp. 8-33. Retrieved from: https://slks.dk/fileadmin/publikationer/Kulturarv/Museums_Knovledge_democracy_transformation.pdf

Quirk, R.; Olver, M.; Hammond, M. & Davies, C. (2008). *Guide to researching audiences*. Retrieved from: https://gulraizzafar000020743.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/audience.pdf

SEMINAR 4 - Participative branding for heritage

https://youtu.be/JDpWGBzJGKg

Training partner

Melting Pro

Description

Branding is an underused yet crucial tool for heritage organizations to boost their visibility, relevance, and connection with audiences. An organization's brand is the way people perceive it, a distinctive mental image made of the values, meanings, and emotions that people associate with the organization. If this image is strong, relevant, and authentic, then it is able to establish deep, long-lasting bonds with audiences. This is even more effective when the brand is developed in collaboration with people, both internally and externally; this means involving staff, visitors, and local communities in the branding process.

In this seminar, are firstly presented commonly mistaken notions on the nature of branding, define what "brand" is and the 5 ingredients of a strong brand (identity, personality, relevance, reinvention, provocation), and explore the positive impact of branding on cultural heritage organizations and their audiences. Then the process of branding heritage will be illustrated, covering the research phase on the organization's values, the strategy phase, and the design phase, with a particular focus on participative methods.

Competences
- Distinguish between the concepts of branding and marketing
- Recall the ingredients of a strong brand
- Appreciate the central role of values in the life of a brand
- Recognise the different phases of the branding process
- Appreciate the positive impacts of branding for cultural heritage institutions

SMART Learning Outcomes

At the end of the seminar, participants will be able to:

- Summarize the difference between 'brand', 'branding', and 'marketing'
- Define the 5 components of their organizations' brand
- Recognise the 3 phases of the branding process
- Sketch a simple plan for carrying out the participative research phase of the branding process in their organizations

Evaluation

Peer learning

Check out

Questionnaire

Reference list and additional materials

J. Schwartz (2022). *The 7 Elements of Creativity That Drive Brand Value*. Retrieved from:

https://medium.com/higher-order/the-7-elements-of-creativity-that-drive-brand-value-c1cfe0d9c49a

General Public. *8 Tips for Successful Museum Branding*. Retrieved from: https://generalpublic.co.uk/thinking/tips-for-successful-museum-branding/

J. Richardson (2019). *How to Create a great Museum Brand Identity?*. Retrieved from:

https://www.museumnext.com/article/how-to-create-a-great-museum-brand-identity/

SEMINAR 5 - Heritage Interpretation

https://youtu.be/nVI2AEo43Os

Training partner
HERITAGE

Description
Heritage Interpretation is a structured approach to non-formal learning, specialized in making visitors' experience meaningful and unforgettable. And when visitors connect in a meaningful way to our heritage, it increases the probability of becoming active citizens themselves, mindful of our common future.

In this introductory workshop, the topics presented are the principles of value-based heritage interpretation, how these can be implemented in different interpretive services (personal and non-personal), and the role of heritage interpretation within the management of a site to comprehend what role the local community can play, as co-creators and/or interpreters.

The session includes a discussion and lecture on the definition and principles of heritage interpretation, followed by a suggestion for a group work on co-creating one interpretive service (focussed on interpretive writing); then the evaluation criteria of quality heritage interpretation are presented, followed by a possible group work and discussion on the evaluation of an interpretive service used as sample; finally, practical aspects of using heritage interpretation in the management of a heritage site are discussed.

Competences
- Identify the benefits of incorporating heritage interpretation into a site's management plan
- Comprehend the methods for implementing heritage interpretation principles in interpretive services.

- Analyze and compare different evaluation criteria on existing or planned interpretive services.
- Outline interpretive services / Apply basic principles of interpretive writing

SMART Learning Outcomes

By the end of the training, participants will be able to:
- Recall the four fundamental principles of heritage interpretation and explain their core values and purposes.
- Describe at least 3 ways in which value-based heritage interpretation can be used to help people connect to the site
- Identify the steps for designing an interpretive service using HI's basic principles
- Identify and explain at least three roles that heritage interpretation can fulfill within the management of a site
- Evaluate an interpretive medium, including one's own, based on HI quality criteria.

Evaluation

Peer learning

Check out

Questionnaire

Reference list and additional materials

Tilden, F. (2007). *Interpreting our heritage*. 4th edn. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press

Interpret Europe (2017). *Engaging citizens with Europe's cultural heritage: How to make best use of the interpretive approach.* Witzenhausen: Interpret Europe

Ham, S. (2013). *Interpretation – making a difference on purpose.* Golden: Fulcrum Publishing

Ballantyne, R., Hughes, K., and Moscardo. G. (2007) *Designing interpretive signs*. Golden: Fulcrum Publishing

SEMINAR 6 - Introduction to Community Engagement for Heritage Managers

https://youtu.be/tskkrjzcRwQ

Training partner
HERITAGE

Description
Local communities are essential stakeholders in managing heritage, as keepers, primary beneficiaries, and yet primary threats and, ultimately, as experts. Any heritage project that ignores local communities is a poor project with a high level of risk. This seminar explores the importance of local communities for heritage, their current context, and the ways in which we should identify them. It also discusses ways to identify our own aims in community-based projects and how to achieve them.

Firstly, the session presents different reasons for approaching local communities and invites participants to reflect in groups on identifying the specific local communities relevant to their organizations and future projects. Then it illustrates the "vicious circle" in engaging with local communities and the motivations and aims of potential public heritage projects; in this context, participants are asked to reflect on ways they will engage with local communities in their projects in line with their motivations, and sketch three activities that will achieve the desired outcomes.

Competences
- Identify the mutual benefits of engaging local communities in heritage projects, both for the heritage sector and the local communities

- Comprehend the context, dynamics and implications of the relationship between heritage and local communities within the participants' environment
- Recognize the diverse motivations and interests of local communities
- Comprehend the main challenges of communities in relation to heritage projects
- Outline approaches to engaging local communities

SMART Learning Outcomes

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:
- List at least three reasons why engaging local communities in heritage projects is crucial, and describe at least two benefits for the communities and heritage
- Identify and analyze the key motivations and interests of local communities in relation to a specific heritage project within their own environment
- Examine the challenges and opportunities of community engagement in heritage projects through one case study
- Appraise strengths and weaknesses of participants' own current community engagement strategies and activities, offering a critical analysis of their successes, failures, and areas for improvement.
- Sketch one basic community engagement activity for participants' real-world contexts

Evaluation

Peer learning

Check out

Questionnaire

Reference list and additional materials

E. Kyriakidis, A. Anagnostopoulos (2018). Engaging Local Communities in Heritage Decision-Making: the Case of Gonies, Crete, Greece, in A. Killebrew and A. Dakouri-Hild, *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean. Archaeology and Heritage Studies*, 5:334-348. ISSN: 2166- 3556.

E. Kyriakidis (2019) *A Community Empowerment Approach to Heritage Management: From Values Assessment to Local Engagement*, London: Taylor and Francis, ISBN 9781138368309.

A. Anagnostopoulos, E. Kyriakidis, E. Stefanou (2022), *Making Heritage Together: Archaeological Ethnography and Community Engagement with a Rural Community*, with A. Anagnostopoulos and E. Stefanou, London: Taylor and Francis, ISBN 9781032194745.

SEMINAR 7 - Impact assessment methodology and collection strategy

https://youtu.be/QlXog5KA7W0

Training partner

Impact Valley

Description

Impact assessment refers to the systematic process of identifying, evaluating, and analyzing the potential effects, both positive and negative, of a proposed project, policy, program, or activity on various aspects such as social, economic, environmental, and cultural factors. It aims to understand and predict the consequences of these actions before they are implemented, thereby enabling decision-makers to make informed choices and mitigate any adverse impacts.

In the cultural heritage sector, it is important to consider impact assessment early in the planning stages of a project, for several reasons:

- Clarity of objectives: It helps clearly define the project's objectives and goals and provides a roadmap for what the project aims to achieve.
- Alignment with stakeholders' expectations and empowerment: It ensures alignment with the expectations of stakeholders, especially audiences and artists.
- Risk identification and mitigation: It facilitates early identification of potential risks and challenges associated with the project. It also ensures compliance with legal frameworks, helping to avoid legal disputes and ensuring accountability for any damage caused to cultural resources.
- Resource planning: It assists in planning and allocating resources effectively based on the anticipated impacts.

- Decision-making support: It provides a basis for informed decision-making by considering the potential positive and negative consequences of different actions.
- Monitoring and evaluation: It establishes a framework for monitoring and evaluating the progress of the project against its intended impacts.
- Communication and transparency: It facilitates clear communication about the project's impact on internal and external stakeholders. It enhances transparency by openly discussing the potential consequences of the project.
- Sustainability considerations: It allows for the integration of sustainability considerations into the project from the very beginning. It supports the development of environmentally and socially responsible projects.
- Enhanced project success: It increases the likelihood of project success by addressing potential challenges and optimizing positive impacts.

This seminar illustrates a methodology for developing, implementing, and deploying an impact assessment strategy for a cultural heritage project. It proposes a 7-step methodology, which must be followed by the project team and in collective intelligence with the relevant stakeholders.

The first 2 steps allow the project team to develop the framework for the impact assessment:
- Step 1 - Define the questions you would like to answer;
- Step 2 - Choose the right criteria according to your brainstorm.

The next two steps allow the project team to build their data collection strategy:
- Step 3 - Choose the impact indicators (quantitative & qualitative);
- Step 4- Choose the most suitable tool for your data collection, appoint a person responsible for the collection, and decide on data accessibility.

The final steps include running the evaluation and learning from the results:
- Step 5 - Run a mid-project evaluation and adapt the trajectory of your project;
- Step 6 - Run an end-of-the-project evaluation;
- Step 7 - Draw conclusions, identify areas for improvement, and communicate to your key stakeholders (audiences, partners, internal collaborators, etc.).

theoretical principles are provided, as well as an extensive case study, and a canvas template to facilitate participants in the creation of an impact assessment strategy.

Competences
- Identify the macro steps of the methodology for evaluating a project's impact
- Select suitable indicators
- Define a data collection strategy
- Use the Impact Measurement section of the AHEAD Canva

SMART Learning Outcomes
At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:
- Recall all 7 steps of the impact assessment methodology
- Set up at least 1 indicator per criterion chosen in the framework, fitting the project
- Define a stakeholder map, including people to contact in order to have a successful impact assessment

Evaluation
Peer learning
Check out
Questionnaire

Reference list and additional materials
AHEAD Impact Assessment Framework
Ashoka, *The guide to the seven key questions that all social entrepreneurs should ask themselves to have a clearer idea, develop their*

project and maximize their impact. Retrieved from:
https://www.ashoka.org/en-us/files/7qc-ashokaswitzerland-eng-webpdf
    B Lab, *B Corp impact assessment,* available at:
https://www.bcorporation.net/en-us/programs-and-tools/b-impact-asse
ssment/

SEMINAR 8 - Introduction to facilitating co-creation workshops

https://youtu.be/nMTG5BiY25U

Training partner
Impact Valley

Description
Facilitation is the act of helping other people to deal with a process or reach an agreement or solution without getting directly involved in the process or discussion. A facilitator is:
- A collective intelligence expert: The facilitator ensures the collaborative posture of each participant, the respect of the framework of collaboration, and equity in speech.
- A safe space & psychological safety provider: The facilitator screens the needs of the team and of each individual to provide for these needs.

The role and practice of the facilitator is particularly relevant for cultural organizations interested in involving audiences.

Based on Impact Valley training 'Train-the-facilitator', in this seminar, people will learn how to facilitate co-creation processes to support complex problem-solving with a sustainability lens. Learning how to facilitate is learning how to provide safe, fun, and meaningful spaces for all, and listening to the audience's needs.

Firstly, the key elements for a successful facilitation dynamic are presented, describing the role of the facilitator and how to set up a collaborative framework. Then the topic covered are the specific elements of co-creation, including the definition of the starting problem, the facilitation of idea development (Divergence), the evaluation of these

Co-funded by
the European Union

ideas, and the definition of a unique value proposition (Convergence). Finally, methods for situated decision-making (vote, consent, consensus) are presented.

The seminar combines awareness raising, theory points, and illustration of concrete tools.

Competences
- Comprehend the role of the facilitator
- Identify the key elements for a successful group dynamic in a co-creation context
- Use basic tools to facilitate co-creation workshops

SMART Learning Outcomes
At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:
- Recall at least 3 postures of the facilitator
- Set up a collaboration framework that fits co-creation
- Explain the co-creation dynamic: diverge/converge
- Use 3 ways to reach collectively for a decision: vote/ consent/ consensus
- Design a simple agenda for a ½ day co-creation workshop

Evaluation
Peer learning
Check out
Questionnaire

Reference list and additional materials
Impact Valley Sustainable Innovation Toolkit
Impact Valley Collective Intelligence Toolkit
Brown, T. (2009). *Change by Design*, Harper Business.

3. AHEAD LABS. GUIDELINES

Following the AHEAD seminars, the AHEAD labs are a cycle of site-based workshops to ideate, prototype, and test new services and experiences for heritage organizations together with their audiences through participatory methods and design thinking. The AHEAD Labs are in-person laboratories where training partners and the AHEAD cultural organizations co-design innovative audience products, activities, and services to improve the visitor experience. The Labs will be structured in three steps: 1) Empathise & Define, 2) Ideate & Prototype, 3) Test the solutions.

The Labs are a fundamental component of the AHEAD training programme, and a main driver of innovation. Firstly, they transfer and adapt the Audience-Centered Experience Design blueprint to the context of cultural heritage institutions wishing to transform their capacity to attract and engage diverse visitor segments.

Secondly, they involve the participation of three local artists in the participative design process. The role of the three artists is pivotal: they actively participate in steps 1 and 2 of the process, drawing inspiration from these experiences to inform their creative works. Their new artistic productions will be designed to explore and highlight the dynamic relationship between the local cultural heritage organization and its communities. By engaging in this process, the artists contribute uniquely to both the laboratories' activities and the broader dialogue between the organization and the community, enriching the cultural and creative landscape.

Evaluation is key since it will lead to an innovative blueprint for the AHEAD capacity building programme.

STEP 1 – EMPATHIZE & DEFINE

Description

This workshop is all about understanding the perspective **of the selected target group - audience(s) or communities.** Where do they live, what do they do? Do you really have something to offer them? Are they real and reachable? Why do they need you?

The **"Empathize" step** in design thinking is fundamental and involves deeply understanding the people you are designing for (and with)—your target group, audience, or community. This stage is about more than just identifying their basic needs; it requires gaining a profound insight into their lives, experiences, and emotions to grasp their perspectives fully, which might differ significantly from your own.

This is particularly important if you want to attract a new or different audience or community. The aim here is to use all the information available to bring your target group alive, as credible people who everyone in your organization can get to know and love. Importantly, you will need to talk directly to people about what they think of your organization, what you may have to offer that matters to them.

In the AHEAD methodology, cultural heritage organizations select a particular audience or community to focus on and develop a clear understanding of what they expect and require from the organization. This involves exploring where they live, what their daily activities are, and what challenges they face. The goal is to see the world from their perspectives and to comprehend their needs, desires, and emotional experiences profoundly. This step is essential for developing a strong connection with the target group, ensuring that the solutions proposed are not only relevant but also genuinely valued by them. Key activities include direct interactions and discussions to gather insights on the target group's views and needs concerning the organization's offer.

ahe
ad

**Co-funded by
the European Union**

The **"Define" Step** focuses on pinpointing the specific needs and challenges that are most critical for the organization to address. The outcomes of this step include a detailed definition of the problem, refined personas that represent the target group, and the formulation of "How Might We" questions that will guide the ideation of solutions. This stage sets a precise direction for the project by establishing a design brief that encapsulates the essential needs and goals identified through empathetic engagement.

Together, these steps ensure that the design thinking process starts with a solid foundation of **user understanding and a clear problem definition, which are vital for developing impactful and sustainable solutions.**

The purpose of this stage is to clarify and prioritize the needs that are most significant to both the audience and the organization. It involves convergent thinking where the vast information gathered is distilled into a focused inquiry, aiming to overcome specific problems and enhance the relationship with the target audience.

Activities and schedule

Identification of Target Group: Determine which audience or community is crucial to your organization and define their unique needs and interests. This is done through a variety of methods, including **Ethnographic Research, Observation and Shadowing, User Interviews, Persona Development**, Empathy mapping, and **Customer journey** mapping to detail the digital and physical touchpoints between the audience and the organization, adding detail to the personas, and making them relatable to everyone in the organization.

Problem Definition**:** Articulate the primary challenges or barriers that inhibit deeper engagement with the chosen audience. This could relate to various aspects of their journey, such as their creative experience, communication, or environmental factors.

Development of User Needs Statements and Questions: Formulate specific statements and "How Might We" questions that focus on addressing the critical needs and challenges identified. These serve as a

foundation for generating actionable design ideas. It will guide the creation of new experiences tailored to make a meaningful impact on the target group, laying a solid foundation for the subsequent stages of the design thinking process.

Methods and Processes

In design thinking, empathy is not just a mindset but also a practical, actionable part of the process. There are specific methods and processes used to cultivate and apply empathy effectively within design projects.

Each of these methods and processes contributes to building a thorough understanding of users, which is critical for effective empathy-driven design. By employing these techniques, participants are better equipped to create solutions that truly resonate with users and meet their needs in meaningful ways.

Recommended duration

Two intensive, full day workshops, 16 hrs.

Learning Outcomes
- Recall the definitions and key components of empathy
- Demonstrate the use of empathetic listening and responding in simulated interactions
- Assess the effectiveness of different empathetic approaches in specific organizational contexts
- Develop a team-based action plan to integrate empathy into daily professional practices
- Integrate empathy into one's belief system and professional ethos
- Exhibit consistent empathetic behavior across a range of professional interactions
- Identify the real problem to address

Bibliography

"Empathy" step in *ACED Blueprint*:
https://aced.adesteplus.eu/explore/empathise

ahead

Co-funded by
the European Union

Battarbee, K., Suri, J. F., & Howard, S. G. (2014). *Empathy on the edge: Scaling and sustaining a human-centered approach in the evolving practice of design*. IDEO.

Mattelmäki, T. (2006). *Design probes*. Aalto University.

Goleman, D. (2005). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Bantam Books.

"Define" step in the *ACED Blueprint*: https://aced.adesteplus.eu/explore/define

Brown, T. (2009). *Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation*. Harper Business.

IDEO. (2016.). *Design thinking for libraries*. Retrieved from https://www.ideo.com/journal/design-thinking-for-libraries

Costanza-Chock, S. (2020). *Design Justice: Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need*. The MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/12255.001.0001

STEP 2 – IDEATE & PROTOTYPE

Description

In the Ideate stage of design thinking, following a detailed design brief crafted from the needs of a well-researched persona representing your target audience, participants engage in dynamic brainstorming to generate a variety of solutions. Cultural heritage professionals are trained to ideate and prototype specific solutions for the key challenges shared by selected audience segments.

The primary aim of this stage is to utilize creative potential to invent new experiences that might lead to lasting relationships with new or existing audiences. It provides an opportunity for extensive creative exploration and the practical application of ideas through co-creation and co-curation with various stakeholders.

Activities and schedule

Ideation Sessions: Conduct diverse ideation sessions, possibly tailored around different aspects of the user journey or specific challenges identified in the design brief. These sessions should be designed to encourage a free flow of ideas in a supportive and playful environment.

Training and Guidance in Ideation: cultural heritage professionals receive specific training on how to imagine a wide array of possible solutions that address the common needs or desires of two selected audience segments.

Idea Generation and Selection: Engage a broad range of participants to brainstorm ideas extensively. Following this, in a structured voting process, the most innovative solutions are chosen for further development.

Sketching and Prototyping: Quickly draw or build rough and ready prototypes to visualize an idea. This can help make abstract ideas concrete and often sparks further innovation. Develop initial, cost-effective versions of the top two selected solutions for each cultural heritage organization involved in the capacity building. These prototypes might be physical mock-ups or trial experiences designed to test the viability and impact of the ideas.

Methods and Processes

Ideation is a critical phase in the design thinking process, acting as the bridge between identifying and understanding the problem (through research and empathy) and creating tangible solutions (through prototyping and testing). The significance of ideation lies in its role as a catalyst for innovation, enabling teams to explore a wide array of potential solutions. There are several key reasons why ideation is so important:
- it generates a broad range of ideas
- it encourages creative thinking
- it promotes collaborative engagement
- it facilitates User-Centered Design
- it democratizes the design process
- it builds a foundation for innovation.

Prototyping is another crucial step in the design thinking process and serves multiple purposes in developing new products, services, or systems.

Ideally, in the prototyping also the users should be involved.

Its importance can be broken down into several key areas:

- It supports experimentation and exploration
- It allows feedback gathering
- It serves cost-effectiveness
- It facilitates stakeholder communication
- It reduces misinterpretations
- It supports the integration and testing of new technologies
- It allows the gathering of empirical evidence.

Recommended duration

Two intensive, full day workshops, 16 hrs.

Learning Outcomes

- Recall the key principles and techniques of ideation.
- Identify the steps involved in the ideation process.
- Apply various ideation methods and techniques to generate creative solutions to design challenges
- Evaluate the outcomes of ideation sessions to determine the most promising solutions
- Assess the potential impact of selected ideas on addressing the identified design challenges
- Describe the purpose and process of prototyping within the design thinking framework
- Assess prototypes to identify strengths and weaknesses in relation to user feedback and project goals
- Develop a refined prototype that incorporates feedback and innovative solutions to design problems.

Bibliography

"Ideation" step in *ACED Blueprint*:
https://aced.adesteplus.eu/explore/ideate

"Prototype" step in *ACED Blueprint*:
https://aced.adesteplus.eu/explore/prototype-test

STEP 3 – TEST THE SOLUTIONS

Description

Prototyping and testing are closely related phases. What you are testing and how you test it are fundamental aspects to consider before creating a prototype. Examining these two phases together prompts consideration of the various levels of prototype testing. Although prototyping and testing are closely linked, planning and executing the test is often a considerable extra step after creating the prototype.

It should not be assumed that it is sufficient to simply put a prototype in front of a user to test it; often, the most informative results are the product of careful thinking on how to test a prototype in a way that allows users to offer the most natural and honest feedback
In step 3, cultural heritage professionals are guided in implementing the testing phase of their prototypes.

Activities and schedule
The testing will take place in 2 phases:
- Internal Testing: This stage involves an internal testing mechanism where prototypes are first introduced to staff members from various departments. This diverse group of internal testers helps ensure that the prototypes are evaluated from multiple perspectives, enhancing the robustness of the feedback. During this internal evaluation, prototypes are scrutinized for functionality, user interaction, and overall effectiveness. The aim is to identify any immediate areas for improvement before broader exposure. This internal test helps fine-tune the prototypes, making them ready for the next step.

ahead

- <u>External Engagement and Feedback Collection:</u> Plan how you will collect data – ticketing data, surveys, web analytics. Most important of all, make sure you have an opportunity to talk directly with your target group. If your work is participatory and co-creative, make sure participants are involved with the testing. This step brings the prototypes directly in front of the people they are intended to serve. Each organization will organize a structured meeting with selected members of its audience of interest to test the refined prototypes in a real-world setting. Feedback is meticulously gathered through structured methods such as surveys, analytics, and direct observations. This data collection is critical as it provides direct insights from end-users, which is invaluable for further refinement of the new practices. The feedback collected is not only used to improve the prototypes but is also shared with all partners involved in the project, including Impact Valley. This collaborative review process ensures that learnings are disseminated widely, allowing all participants to benefit from each organization's experiences and insights.

Methods and Processes

The AHEAD method takes into account **organizational variability**: the specifics of how these steps are implemented can differ widely from one organization to another. Factors such as the organizational structure, the nature of the audience, the kind of cultural heritage involved, and available resources can influence how these testing phases are conducted. For example, a museum might focus on interactive exhibits as prototypes, whereas a historical archive might develop digital tours or educational programs. Similarly, the scale of feedback sessions and the methods of data collection can vary, tailored to best fit the organization's capabilities and the needs of its audience.

This adaptable framework ensures that each organization can implement the AHEAD methodology in a manner that best suits its specific conditions and goals, fostering innovation in cultural engagement practices that are both effective and relevant to their respective audiences.

Recommended duration

Two intensive, full day workshops, 16 hrs.

Learning Outcomes

- Recall the objectives of the testing phase and identify the tools and methods used for gathering feedback
- Explain how feedback impacts the further development of the solution
- Apply appropriate methods to collect feedback effectively during the testing phase
- Analyze user feedback to identify trends and issues that could affect the success of the solution
- Evaluate the efficacy of the prototype based on user feedback and assess the need for revisions or further testing
- Generate a revised version of the solution based on feedback and testing outcomes.

Bibliography

The "Commit" phase in *ACED Blueprint*:
https://aced.adesteplus.eu/explore/commit

4. AHEAD LABS. IMPLEMENTATION

Following the presentation of the guidelines for the AHEAD Labs, this section of the document focuses on how the Labs were implemented throughout the AHEAD project, from November 2024 to June 2025. Conceived as a core component of the project's practice-based approach, the AHEAD Labs were designed to activate audience development strategies directly within archaeological heritage sites. As they are based on a flexible methodology, the Labs were implemented in different ways across the three national hubs—Italy, Greece, and Spain—allowing each team to tailor the process to the specific needs and characteristics of their local context.

Despite these variations, several key elements remained consistent across all three hubs. The implementation of the Labs followed a three-phase methodology inspired by the ACED Blueprint, which structured the process from initial engagement through to co-creation and testing. The Labs also involved the collaboration of an artist in each of the national hubs, whose role was to creatively mediate between the site, the professionals, and the participants. Moreover, the active involvement of members from the local communities was a defining feature of the Labs, reinforcing the project's commitment to inclusive and participatory cultural practices.

The following pages provide an overview of the dates during which the AHEAD Labs were facilitated in each of the three hubs.

Italian hub

	Lab name	Date	Place	Participants
Step 1.	**LAB 1 – EMPATHISE:** Personas	14/11/2024	P.A. Ostia Antica	MeP, Staff Parco
Step 1.	**LAB 2 – EMPATHISE/DISCOVERY:** Focus Group Seniors	26/11/2024	P.A. Ostia Antica	MeP, Staff Parco, Ass. Isola Sacra
Step 1.	**LAB 2 – EMPATHISE/DISCOVERY:** Focus Group Teens	28/11/2024	P.A. Ostia Antica	MeP, Staff Parco, 2 Classes
Step 1.	**LAB 3 – PROBLEM DEFINITION**	17/12/2024	P.A. Ostia Antica	MeP, Staff Parco, Artist
Step 2	**LAB 4 – TEENS FREE EXPLORATION**	16/01/2025	P.A. Ostia Antica	2 Classes, 4 Teachers, Staff Parco, Artist
Step 2	**LAB 4 – SENIORS FREE EXPLORATION**	21/01/2025	P.A. Ostia Antica	Ass. Isola Sacra, Staff Parco, Artist
Step 2	**LAB 4 –TIME MACHINE**	28/01/2025	P.A. Ostia Antica	Mep, 2 Classes, 4 Teachers, Ass. Isola Sacra, Staff Parco, Artist
Step 2	**LAB 5 – DEFINITION**	11/02/2025	P.A. Ostia Antica	MeP, Staff Parco
Step 2	**LAB 6 – IDEATION**	25/02/2025	P.A. Ostia Antica	Mep, 2 Classes, 4 Teachers, Ass. Isola Sacra, Staff Parco, Artist
Step 2	**LAB 7 – PROTOTYPING**	11/03/2025	P.A. Ostia Antica	MeP, Staff Parco
Step 3	**LAB 8 – TESTING**	25/03/2025	P.A. Ostia Antica	Mep, 2 Classes, 4 Teachers, Ass. Isola Sacra, Staff Parco, Artist

ahead

Co-funded by the European Union

	Lab name	Date	Place	Participants
Step 3	**LAB 9 – TESTING WITH EU PARTNER** DURING THE STUDY VISIT	02-04/04/2025	P.A. Ostia Antica	Mep, Staff Parco, Consortium Partners, Artist

Greek hub

	Lab name	Date	Place	Participants
Step 1.	**LAB 1- Empathise** : Empathy Map - Personas.	20/12/2024	Archaeological Museum of Messara	Staff of the Museum / CH Proff. / HERITAGE Team
Step 1.	**LAB 2 – Empathise** : Empathetic interviews (knowing how).	21/12/2024	Archaeological Museum of Messara	Staff of the Museum / CH Proff. / HERITAGE Team / 2 Students, 4 Parents
Step 1.	**LAB 2 – Empathise** : Empathetic Interviews with local community and students (total of 16 interviews).	9/2/2025	Messara Region	CH Professionals (Calliopi, Alexandra, Despoina)
Step 1.	**LAB 3 – Define** : User need statement (Part I) needed more data.	13/2/2025	Archaeological Museum of Messara	Staff of the Museum / CH Proff. / HERITAGE Team / artist
Step 2.	**LAB 4 – Ideate** : Pilot phase to see how it works between team - members.	14/2/2025	Archaeological Museum of Messara	Staff of the Museum / CH Proff. / HERITAGE Team / artist

Step 1.	LAB 2 – Empathise : Step 1 again with questionnaires shared with students to increase the available data.	27/03/2025	Community and Schools of Messara region	CH Proff. / 2 primary schools engaged 120 students – 6 teachers
Step 1.	LAB 3 – Define : User need statement + How might we? (Part II) Rephrase user need statement including new data.	20/4/2025	Online	CH Professionals / HERITAGE Team / artist
Step 2.	**LAB 5 – Ideate** : Let's ideate together … local community –1st group adults : excavation workers/ parents/ teachers – 2nd group students.	24/4/2025	Archaeological Museum of Messara	Staff of the Museum / CH Proff. / HERITAGE Team / 16 students – 6 teachers and 35 adults / artist
Step 2.	**LAB 6 – Prototype** : 2 Prototypes produced. 1 for students and 1 for the local community.	25/4/2025	Archaeological Museum of Messara	Staff of the Museum / CH Proff. / HERITAGE Team / artist
Step 2.	**LAB 6 – Prototype** : Fine tuning of the prototypes produced.	28/4/2025	Online 2 hours	CH Professionals / HERITAGE Team / artist
Step 3.	**LAB 7** - **Test the Prototype** : Together with the prototype for students Questionnaires were shared to their parents to evaluate the second prototype for adults.	9/5/2025	Archaeological Museum of Messara	Staff of the Museum / CH Proff. / HERITAGE Team / Primary School of Agioi Deka 34 students – 4 teachers
Step 3.	**LAB 8 – Test the Prototype:** Together with the prototype for students	15/5/2025	Archaeological gical	Staff of the Museum / CH Proff. / HERITAGE

				Museum of Messara	Team / Primary school of Asimi 56 students – 5 teachers
	Questionnaires were shared to their parents to evaluate the second prototype for adults.				
Step 3.	**LAB 9 – Test the Prototype** with partners during the study visit.	22/5/2025	Archaeological Museum of Messara	Staff of the Museum / CH Proff. / HERITAGE Team / partners / artist	

Spanish hub

	Lab name	Date	Place	Participants
Step 1.	**LAB 1 – EMPATHISE:A**udience map & Persona	16/01/2025	Museum of Altamira	UD, Staff museum, comm. members, artist
Step 1.	**LAB 2 – DEFINE:**User need statement	31/01/2025	Museum of Altamira	UD, Staff museum, comm. members, artist
Step 2.	**LAB 3 – IDEATE:** How might we… Brainwalking & prioritization matrix	07/02/2025	Museum of Altamira	UD, Staff museum, comm. members, artist
Step 2.	**LAB 4 – PROTOTYPE:** Checking the prioritized ideas & Minimum Viable Experience	14/02/2025	Museum of Altamira	UD, Staff museum, comm. members, artist
Step 3.	**LAB 5 – TESTING:** Evaluation of the prototype of 28th March	11/04/2025	Museum of Altamira	UD, Staff museum, comm. members, artist
Step 3.	**LAB 6 – TESTING:** Evaluation of the prototype of 30th May & Sustainability	13/06/2025	Museum of Altamira	UD, Staff museum, comm. members, artist

ahead

Co-funded by the European Union

Step 3.	**LAB 7 –Evaluation of the prototype** with project partners during the study visit	25-27/06/ 2025	Museum of Altamira	UD, Staff museum, comm. members, artist, project partners

Co-funded by the European Union