



CIVIS Alliance – Open Lab Project Impact Assessment Report

01 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Title of the project FARO project: Building community through FARO convention

Project coordinator Irene Baldriga, SUR

Universities involved SUR: proponent university; UAM, AMU, UB: partners universities

Hub theme Society, culture, heritage

Duration of activities June 2025- June 2026

Place of the activities Bucharest, Madrid, Rome, Marseille

02 – PARTNERS/TARGET AUDIENCE

Number of internal and external stakeholders involved in and impacted by the project

INTERNAL (All CIVIS universities)				EXTERNAL (All CIVIS cities/regions)	
Academics	Researchers	Students	Admin personnel	Citizens	Other - please specify
20	15	About 100	10	1000+	14 partners

Non-university associations and organisations that have been involved in the project

ASSOCIATIONS/ORGANISATIONS		
Name	Country	Description
Parco Archeologico del Colosseo	ITA	The Parco Archeologico del Colosseo is one of Europe's most important cultural heritage institutions, responsible for the conservation, research, and public interpretation of the Colosseum, the Roman Forum, and the Palatine Hill. It promotes innovative approaches to heritage management, accessibility, and public engagement.
Associazione EcoMuseo Casilino	ITA	The Ecomuseo Casilino is a community-based cultural initiative that promotes the recognition and enhancement of the tangible and intangible heritage of Rome's eastern neighbourhoods. Through participatory activities, it fosters local identity, social inclusion, and active community involvement.
Associazione Tezeta	ITA	Associazione Tezeta is a non-profit organisation working with afrodescendants and migrant community, promoting intercultural dialogue, and social inclusion through participatory cultural projects. It also promotes critical

		reflection on the legacies of colonialism and their impact on contemporary societies, using cultural heritage as a resource for dialogue, historical awareness, and active citizenship.
Association La Citadelle	FR	Association La Citadelle works to enhance access to and public engagement with Marseille's historic Citadel through participatory cultural initiatives. It promotes the site's social and cultural value by encouraging collaboration between citizens, heritage professionals, and local institutions.
Hotel du Nord	FR	Hôtel du Nord is a cooperative network that promotes the cultural heritage of Marseille's northern districts through community-led tourism, local knowledge, and citizen participation. It supports heritage as a driver of sustainable local development and social cohesion.
Association Traverses	FR	Association Traverses develops participatory cultural projects that connect local communities, artists, and institutions through heritage, storytelling, and urban exploration. Its work encourages civic participation and strengthens community engagement with cultural heritage.
Fundación de Cultura Islámica	ES	MIRCo is an interdisciplinary research centre at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid specialising in multilingualism, discourse, communication, and linguistic diversity. Through collaborative and citizen science approaches, it promotes research and public engagement on language, cultural heritage, migration, social inclusion, and intercultural dialogue, contributing to more inclusive and equitable societies.
Dimitrie Gusti" National Village Museum	RO	National open-air museum of vernacular architecture and cultural heritage; hosted applied, place-based learning.
Armenian Museum of Bucharest	RO	Religious and cultural heritage institutions supporting exploration of Armenian history and its contribution to the city.
Choral Temple of Bucharest	RO	Synagogue and Jewish heritage site; hosted a historical presentation during the Bucharest learning route.
Museum of the Romanian Jewish Community	RO	Museum documenting Jewish life, memory and contributions to Bucharest through artefacts and archival materials.
The Macedo-Romanian Cultural Society (SCMR)	RO	Cultural organisation dedicated to preserving, researching and promoting Aromanian (Macedo-Romanian) history, identity and heritage; Romanian partner supporting the project's linguistic minority-heritage dimension.
The „Constantin Brăiloiu" Institute of Ethnography and Folklore – Romanian Academy	RO	Research institute of the Romanian Academy specialising in ethnography, folklore and intangible cultural heritage; Romanian scientific partner contributing relevant expertise to the FARO framework.
"Mușata Armână" Cultural Association	RO	Representative association for the macedo-romanians from Constanța, with relevant expertise on the history, identity and heritage.

03 – PROJECT IMPACT

Social dimension

The project engaged three main target groups: young people with a migrant background (15), students (100), and members of the academic community, including researchers and university staff (35). Overall, participants represented a highly diverse audience in terms of nationality, educational background, language proficiency, socio-cultural background, professional experience, and life experience.

The activities brought together participants with diverse educational pathways, ranging from individuals with limited or interrupted formal education and little or no command of the language of the host country to university students, researchers, and participants with advanced language skills.

For example, during the Ripple session in Rome, eight participants had little or no knowledge of Italian, while twenty-five Art History students with different educational backgrounds took part in the same activities. This diversity created an inclusive learning environment in which different experiences, perspectives, and competencies were recognised as valuable contributions, enabling participants to engage on an equal footing.

In addition, three cooperation agreements were established with third-sector organisations in Rome, strengthening collaboration between higher education institutions and civil society actors and creating a sustainable framework for future community-based cultural heritage initiatives. In Marseille, a structured cooperation agreement between the DEPB-Département d 'Études Portugaises et Brésiliennes (AMU) and The Beit Project enabled two LLCER master's students to complete cultural mediation internships, under academic supervision, strengthening the link between language and heritage studies and community-based mediation practice.

A central objective of the project was to promote social inclusion through cultural participation. By adopting participatory and experiential methodologies, the project made cultural heritage more accessible to groups that are often underrepresented in cultural institutions. Shared cultural experiences helped reduce barriers related to language, education, and social background, fostering mutual understanding, social cohesion, and a stronger sense of belonging.

Particular attention was given **to overcoming social isolation** by creating opportunities for meaningful interaction between people from different communities and territories. The activities encouraged dialogue between participants from the historic city centre and peripheral neighbourhoods, facilitating exchanges across different social and geographical contexts and strengthening connections between local communities.

The project also promoted intercultural dialogue by bringing together students, researchers, cultural mediators, institutional partners, community organisations, and participants from different European contexts, particularly through exchanges between Rome, Marseille, Madrid and Bucharest. These collaborations highlighted the plurality of interpretations of cultural heritage and demonstrated how heritage can acquire different meanings depending on local social and cultural contexts.

A key element of the social impact was the co-creation approach.

Participants actively contributed to the development of the exhibition and related activities, becoming co-authors rather than passive audiences. This collaborative methodology strengthened participants' sense of ownership and agency while reinforcing links between cultural institutions, the academic sector, local communities, and international partners.

The project further supported the development of heritage communities by encouraging participants to identify, value, interpret, and transmit cultural heritage collectively. Through this community-oriented approach, heritage became a shared resource for dialogue, participation, and social innovation rather than an exclusively institutional asset. Gender equality and women's participation were actively encouraged too, ensuring balanced representation in both participatory activities and collaborative processes.

The activities also stimulated reflection on the role of cultural heritage as a driver of civic participation and advocacy. They raised important questions about how participatory heritage initiatives can empower communities to exercise and claim rights that are formally recognised, while increasing their capacity to engage in local democratic processes and public life.

Intergenerational dialogue represented another important dimension of the project's social impact. Older adults were actively involved in collecting materials, memories, oral histories, and testimonies, enriching the exhibition while creating meaningful exchanges between generations and reinforcing community ties.

Finally, the project strengthened participants' capacity to engage with complex historical narratives by developing inclusive communication strategies capable of addressing audiences with diverse cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds. Overall, the project enhanced knowledge exchange, promoted equal opportunities for participation, strengthened collaboration between academia, cultural institutions, and local communities, and contributed to more inclusive, resilient, and participatory approaches to cultural heritage.

Cultural dimension

The project strengthened participants' understanding of cultural heritage by promoting critical reflection on contested histories, historical memory, minority cultures, and civic education. Through participatory and place-based activities, participants developed greater historical awareness and enhanced their ability to recognise, analyse, and interpret cultural heritage from multiple and often competing perspectives. To assess the project's educational and cultural impact, a questionnaire was developed, during the Rome session, to gather participants' feedback and evaluate their learning experience, perceptions, and level of engagement with the activities. The results provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of the participatory approach and informed the evaluation of the project's outcomes.

A particular focus was placed on the cultural diversity of European societies and on the contribution of minority communities to local heritage. In Bucharest, participants explored the historical presence and cultural legacy of different minority groups, including Armenian, Aromanian, Bulgarian, and Jewish communities, examining how their histories have shaped the city's urban landscape and cultural identity. Similarly, activities in Madrid addressed the linguistic diversity of Spain by exploring the history of minority and regional languages, including periods of repression during the Franco regime, fostering discussion on language rights, cultural identity, and democratic values.

The project promoted interdisciplinary learning by connecting cultural heritage with history, migration studies, education, urban studies, and civic engagement. Participants were encouraged not only to acquire knowledge but also to actively contribute to the interpretation, documentation, and communication of heritage through collaborative and experiential learning methodologies.

Co-creation represented a central methodological approach throughout the project.

Two exhibitions took place in Rome as part of the project's dissemination and public engagement activities. The first exhibition was co-created by participants, who collaboratively transformed their research, fieldwork, and reflections into a publicly accessible exhibition, fostering shared ownership of the project's outcomes. The second exhibition, *Building Peace. Ancient Stories, Present Urgencies*, involved around 20 academics and 12 contemporary artists and attracted significant public participation and media coverage, demonstrating the project's ability to engage audiences beyond academia. The exhibition was inaugurated in the presence of the Rector, highlighting its institutional relevance, and was developed in close collaboration with the University Museum System, whose contribution was instrumental throughout the planning and implementation process. The exhibition also resulted in the publication of a booklet that further disseminates the project's reflections on cultural heritage, peace, and civic engagement. Both the exhibition materials and the publication will continue to serve as educational and dissemination resources beyond the project's duration, ensuring that the knowledge generated remains accessible to a wide range of audiences.

The dissemination strategy also included collaborative public events, community storytelling initiatives, and multimedia communication activities. The project coordinator was interviewed by the Italian national public broadcaster, contributing to the visibility of the project's objectives and results at the national level. In addition, the project was presented in international academic contexts beyond the CIVIS Alliance, further extending its outreach, including at the international conference held at the *École du Louvre* (Paris)

in June 2026, where its results and contribution to the implementation of the Faro Convention were presented. This participation was made possible through internal funding provided by Sapienza University of Rome, representing a co-financing contribution that enabled the project to broaden its dissemination and maximise its international impact.

In Marseille, the DEPB–Beit Project collaboration was documented through two press dossiers published by the Chaire Eduardo Lourenço (May 2026), authored by Mónica Esteves Reis (DEPB & coordinator of the collaboration with The Beit Project) together with Valérie Caraguel (OpenLab coordinator) and Prosper Wanner (Professor in Master Degree Cultural Mediation & Founder of Hotel du Nord association), disseminating the students' testimonies and the results of the public restitution events held on 1 and 30 April 2026 in the presence of Marseille municipal representatives. Also our project gave visibility to its activities and enabled the association The Beit Project to sign a partnership with the Sorbonne University in Paris as well.

The final event in Marseille created a shared space where participants, community organisations, and institutional partners collectively reflected on the project's outcomes and exchanged experiences across different local contexts. In parallel, digital dissemination was strengthened through the **FARO App**, which supports the documentation and visibility of the contributions of minority communities to society, encouraging broader public engagement with cultural heritage.

A citizen science app for cellphones, FARO-CIVIS has been developed by the Multilingualism, Discourse and Communication (**MIRCo**) interdisciplinary research center at the UAM. The app was developed in a co-design process between the FARO teams. The outcome was a tool, available for free download at Google and Apple markets, to gather, locate and share testimonies about the expressions of cultural minorities and diversity in tangible and intangible cultural heritage at the cities of the participant universities. The app was applied during the Madrid and Rome project meetings, where the FARO teams gathered information on the neighborhoods of Lavapiés (Madrid) and Tor Pignattara (Rome). The upload data was analyzed and presented at the Marseille final meeting, showing the multicultural and multilingual character, the thick network of citizen initiatives and participatory spaces, and outstanding projects promoting intercultural dialogue in both neighborhoods. In this regard, the FARO-CIVIS app proved to be a suitable tool both to carry out fieldwork on cultural heritage and diversity, and to promote public participation and civic engagement within the FARO project and beyond.

Student engagement extended beyond participation in project activities through internships and student-led initiatives. These experiences enabled students to develop a deeper understanding of local territories, the social and political dimensions of cultural heritage, and the challenges associated with heritage interpretation and management. Working alongside local communities, associations, researchers, and peers encouraged dialogue, interdisciplinary collaboration, and reflection on heritage as a tool for inclusion, democratic participation, and social transformation rather than solely for the transmission of the past. At Sapienza University of Rome, the themes and values promoted by the Faro Open Lab were also integrated into teaching activities, ensuring a lasting educational impact beyond the project's duration. Furthermore, the involvement of the PhD Programme in Peace Studies, coordinated by Sapienza and actively engaged in the CIVIS Museum University Forum, further strengthened the project's visibility and fostered the dissemination of its outcomes within both the CIVIS Alliance and the wider academic community. Students also developed proposals for the reinterpretation of contested heritage sites, demonstrating how cultural heritage can stimulate critical thinking and support new narratives that reflect the diversity and complexity of contemporary societies.

Similarly, at Aix-Marseille Université, two LLCER master's students from the Département d'Études Portugaises et Brésiliennes completed internships in cultural mediation with The Beit Project, under the supervision of Mónica Esteves Reis, connecting language and cultural studies training to heritage mediation practice and producing reflective testimonies published through the Chaire Eduardo Lourenço. The project's civic engagement was also reflected through the participation of six school classes, involving approximately 160 pupils. By conducting street interviews with local citizens, students actively engaged with the local community, contributing to the project's cultural analysis while fostering active citizenship, intergenerational dialogue and stronger links between schools and the local territory. For the Master in Cultural Mediation, the students organised multiple meetings with local communities and associations to gather information, historical knowledge and to co-create with them the

documentation they shared during their final resitution April 1er at the Museum of History of Marseille (<https://medarts.toile-libre.org/2026/04/09/restitutions-finale/>).

The project strengthened collaboration between higher education institutions and local associations, creating sustainable relationships based on the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and practices. This collaboration enabled participants to engage simultaneously with academic and community environments, reinforcing the role of universities as active cultural actors within their local territories.

For many participants, particularly young people with migrant backgrounds, the activities represented an opportunity to discover significant places within the city and connect them with both their personal histories and their present lives. Visiting the university, engaging with students and researchers, and becoming familiar with the San Lorenzo district contributed to a stronger sense of belonging and increased awareness of local cultural resources. At the same time, university students gained first-hand experience of working with local communities and associations, enriching their understanding of the social and cultural contexts surrounding cultural heritage.

The project also highlighted the importance of developing additional opportunities for long-term engagement by both students and local communities, with particular attention to inclusivity, accessibility, and active participation. These experiences demonstrated the value of sustaining participatory approaches beyond individual project activities in order to reinforce community ownership of cultural heritage.

Overall, the project expanded access to cultural knowledge through inclusive, participatory, and place-based learning experiences. By combining critical inquiry, co-creation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and dialogue between academic institutions, cultural organisations, and local communities, it generated innovative approaches to heritage interpretation while strengthening participants' engagement with the cultural landscape and democratic values.

Economic dimension

Although the project was not primarily designed to generate direct financial revenues, it produced significant economic value by investing in participants' skills, reducing barriers to access, and creating opportunities for future educational and professional development.

The project offered **free training opportunities** to young participants, ensuring that access to cultural heritage and educational activities was not limited by economic constraints. Through workshops, guided visits, and hands-on learning experiences, participants were able to engage with local cultural resources without financial barriers.

The activities contributed to the development of practical and transferable skills, including **journalistic writing, photo-reportage, cultural mediation, and guided tour design and delivery**. These competencies strengthen participants' employability and provide valuable experience that can be applied in educational, cultural, and creative sectors.

By providing free educational pathways centred on cultural heritage, the project expanded access to knowledge and promoted equal opportunities, particularly for young people who might otherwise have limited access to similar learning experiences. The combination of theoretical and practical training enabled participants to acquire competencies that may support their future academic and professional trajectories.

The project also contributed to the long-term development of local cultural infrastructure by supporting the creation and consolidation of the **Malatesta Hub** as a space for collaboration, community engagement, and cultural initiatives. This process has the potential to generate future partnerships, attract additional funding opportunities, and strengthen the local cultural ecosystem.

Overall, the project's economic impact lies in its investment in human capital, the provision of free and accessible training, and the creation of conditions that may foster future educational, professional, and community development.

Added value for the beneficiaries

The project generated significant added value for participants by combining cultural learning, practical skills development, and active civic engagement. Rather than acting as passive audiences, beneficiaries became active contributors to the research, interpretation, and dissemination of cultural heritage through collaborative and participatory activities.

Participants developed new knowledge of local history, cultural heritage, and the concept of difficult heritage, strengthening their critical thinking skills and their awareness of historical memory and civic responsibility. At the same time, they acquired practical competencies in areas such as historical research, journalistic writing, photo-reportage, exhibition co-design, public speaking, and guided tours, increasing both their personal and professional capacities.

The project promoted inclusion by creating opportunities for people with diverse cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds to learn and work together on equal terms. The free training activities reduced economic barriers to participation and ensured broad access to cultural and educational opportunities.

Beneficiaries also strengthened their connections with the local community through direct engagement with universities, cultural organisations, and neighbourhood associations. These experiences contributed to a greater sense of belonging, encouraged active citizenship, and increased awareness of the cultural resources available within the city.

The co-creation of the exhibition in Rome enabled participants to see their ideas and experiences reflected in tangible public outputs, reinforcing their confidence, sense of ownership, and motivation to engage in future cultural and community initiatives.

In Marseille, this training was further reinforced by the DESU (guide-interpreter and heritage conference-guide) framework coordinated by the DEPB, which provided the professional and pedagogical reference for assessing mediation quality and guide competencies during the Ocean phase activities.

Overall, the project created lasting value by combining knowledge acquisition, transferable skills, social inclusion, and community participation, providing beneficiaries with experiences and competencies that extend beyond the duration of the project.

Relevance to the context

The project responded to the needs of both the local community and the university by creating meaningful connections between cultural heritage, civic participation, and inclusive education. It addressed the specific characteristics of the local context by engaging participants from different neighbourhoods, cultural backgrounds, and educational experiences, while promoting equal access to cultural and learning opportunities.

At the local level, the project strengthened relationships between the university, community organisations, and local residents through collaborative activities centred on the cultural heritage of the San Lorenzo, Malatesta, and Casilino areas. These urban contexts provided an ideal setting for exploring historical memory, migration, social inclusion, and urban identity while fostering dialogue between academic and non-academic communities. By engaging with diverse neighbourhoods and local stakeholders across the city, the project contributed to strengthening the university's civic role and promoting cultural heritage as a resource for participatory urban development and community engagement.

The project was also relevant to broader European debates on **difficult heritage**, historical memory, migration, and social inclusion. International exchanges and collaboration with partners at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and Aix-Marseille Université (Master Cultural Mediation of Arts and Département d'Études Portugaises et Brésiliennes, in cooperation with The Beit Project) enabled participants to compare experiences across different urban contexts, demonstrating the wider relevance of the project's themes beyond the local dimension.

Within the university, the project contributed to the institution's public engagement and third mission objectives by strengthening collaboration with local associations, opening university spaces to the wider community, and promoting experiential learning. Students participated actively in research and co-creation activities, applying academic knowledge to real community contexts while developing civic and professional competences.

The project also responded to the needs of disadvantaged groups by involving young people with migrant backgrounds, international students, and participants with different levels of education and Italian language proficiency. By removing barriers to participation and creating inclusive learning environments, it fostered equal opportunities and strengthened participants' sense of belonging both to the local community and to the university.

Overall, the project demonstrated the value of collaboration between higher education institutions and local stakeholders, contributing to stronger community engagement, increased awareness of cultural heritage, and the development of lasting relationships between the university and the city.

As a result of the discussions and exchanges among project partners, the project will also develop a dedicated **pathway involving schools and pupils** from peripheral areas of Rome and Marseille. The project facilitated a meaningful connection between the city centre and peripheral neighbourhoods: in Rome, for example, this was specifically between the Colosseum Archaeological Park and the Ecomuseo Casilino Ad Duas Lauros, which jointly designed a programme of educational workshops to be implemented during the next school year.

Through this initiative, students and teachers will have the opportunity to strengthen their relationship with the territory and develop a broader and more articulated understanding of Rome's cultural heritage. By connecting different urban contexts, the pathway aims to foster a stronger sense of belonging, encourage dialogue between communities, and highlight the value of diverse local heritage as part of a shared city-wide cultural landscape. The project's impact was further enhanced through synergies with other initiatives developed and financed within the Faro Open Lab framework, such as *All Year Long Open Lab CIVIS Music Ensembles*, *STORM – Stories of Migrants*, and *Eurotales*. Addressing interconnected themes related to cultural heritage, mobility, migration, artistic expression, and civic participation, these projects contributed to a broader ecosystem of activities inspired by the Faro principles, mutually reinforcing each other's outcomes and extending the reach and sustainability of the initiative.

Explain how the project has fulfilled the goals and objectives of the European project CIVIS2 (Erasmus+, 2022-2026).

The project successfully fulfilled the CIVIS2 Stream 1 objectives by promoting civic engagement, challenge-based education, and collaboration between universities, civil society organisations, and local communities through the shared exploration of cultural heritage.

Building on the diversity of the participating cities—Madrid, Rome, Marseille, and Bucharest—the project created an international framework for exchanging knowledge, methodologies, and good practices. Although each local context addressed specific historical and social realities, all activities were connected by a common objective: fostering a more inclusive understanding of cultural heritage and strengthening the participation of communities that are often underrepresented in cultural and democratic processes. Through this transnational cooperation, the project also contributed to promoting a shared European perspective on heritage as a space for dialogue, mutual understanding, and active citizenship. By connecting local experiences across different European contexts, FARO fostered a sense of belonging to

a common European cultural landscape and highlighted the role of cultural heritage as a driver for democratic participation and European identity.

The project promoted **challenge-based and experiential learning** by involving students and community members in collaborative research, urban walks, participatory workshops, and the co-creation of public cultural outputs, including exhibitions and educational materials. Participants were encouraged to critically reflect on *difficult heritage*, historical memory, migration, and cultural diversity while developing practical, research, and communication skills.

A key achievement was the strengthening of cooperation between higher education institutions and local stakeholders. Universities worked closely with cultural associations, community organisations, and local residents, creating opportunities for reciprocal learning and ensuring that academic knowledge was enriched by community perspectives and lived experiences.

The project also contributed to the CIVIS objective of promoting inclusion and equal participation by actively engaging participants with diverse cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds. Through accessible and participatory methodologies, it reduced barriers to cultural participation and created spaces in which different voices could contribute equally to the interpretation and dissemination of cultural heritage.

Finally, the international collaboration among the CIVIS partner universities enabled the exchange of innovative practices for addressing common European challenges, including discrimination, social exclusion, and the underrepresentation of minority communities. By connecting local experiences across different cities, the project reinforced the European dimension of cultural heritage and contributed to the development of a shared, inclusive understanding of European identity based on dialogue, diversity, and active citizenship.

Views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither can be held responsible for them.

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