



Europe's Civic University Alliance

## CIVIS Open Labs

VERIS - Voices of Palmyra:  
Engaging (in)tangible memorial heritage in social  
innovation for refugee inclusion.

## How to use this template

This template is designed to help you provide all the essential information about your project for the webpage. Please fill in each section clearly and concisely.

### General tips for filling the form:

- Write for a **broad audience**: avoid technical jargon, use simple, clear language.
- Be **concise**: short sentences and paragraphs are easier to read online.
- Use **active voice** where possible.
- Include **links, photos, logos, or visuals** to make your submission engaging.
- If information is missing, indicate "*planned*" for upcoming events or deliverables.

## Template

### 1. Context & Short Description



The scope of the project is to link the (in)tangible cultural heritage of the Temple of Baalshamin and the Palmyra civilization with the narratives of refugees of Middle East whose countries have been affected by wars, in order to strengthen the social inclusion of such vulnerable extra-European groups across Europe and to raise the awareness on the essential role of culture in bridging and bonding communities with traumatic pasts.

VERIS has at its heart 6 major objectives:

- To fill in the gaps between tangible and intangible cultural heritage
- To explore the motifs that Syrian refugees used on the embroidery
- To collect narratives of refugees
- To host one exhibition of engaging (in)tangible heritage
- To analyse the relationship between tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to traumatic memories
- To develop a toolkit of social inclusion for Syrian refugees

## 2. Partners

Partner Name	Type	Bio	Website/Link	Photo/Logo
<b>Oana Serban-University of Bucarest</b>	Academic	Oana Șerban is a member of YAE, Young Academy of Europe, and she teaches Modern Philosophy, Aesthetics, Biopolitics and Cultural Studies at the University of Bucharest, Romania, as titular professor of the Faculty of Philosophy and the UNESCO Chair in Interculturality, Good Governance and Sustainable Development. She is the Director of CCIF – The Research Center for the History of Philosophical Ideas (UB)	<a href="https://yacadeuro.org/serban/">https://yacadeuro.org/serban/</a> <a href="https://filosofie.unibuc.ro/oana-serban/">https://filosofie.unibuc.ro/oana-serban/</a>	
<b>Brittnee LeysenUniversity of Glasgow</b>	Academic	She is dedicated to exploring how culture, memory, and community shape human experience. As an Associate Tutor at the University of Glasgow, she mentored master's students in language, intercultural education, and sustainable futures. Her work bridges academic research in heritage and place-names with practical initiatives rooted in care, education, and creativity.	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/in/brittneeleysen/?originalSubdomain=uk">https://www.linkedin.com/in/brittneeleysen/?originalSubdomain=uk</a> <a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/education/staff/brittneeleysen/">https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/education/staff/brittneeleysen/</a>	

<p><b>Patrick Michel-University of Lausanne</b></p>	<p>Academic</p>	<p>Senior Lecturer and Researcher in Ancient history. DAS in classical Archaeology and Heritage Law.</p>	<p><a href="https://unil.academia.edu/PatrickMichel">https://unil.academia.edu/PatrickMichel</a>  <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/in/patrick-maxime-michel-907aa018/">https://www.linkedin.com/in/patrick-maxime-michel-907aa018/</a></p>	
<p><b>JRS – Jesuits Refugee Service</b></p>	<p>NGO</p>	<p>JRS Romania helps refugee families integrate through Romanian language classes, educational support for children, and vocational training for adults. Education is the foundation for independence – for dignity, and hope.</p>	<p><a href="https://jrsromania.org/en/home/">https://jrsromania.org/en/home/</a></p>	

### **3. Main Beneficiaries & Social Impact**

#### **A. Main Beneficiaries**

The Project is made for citizens and the collaboration with JRS – Jesuits Refugee Service allows us to reach Syrian Refugees in Bucharest.

#### **B. Social Impact**

The workshop in Bucharest was a learning opportunity as well as as an occasion to share personal history and traumatic experience under the supervision of a psychologist. The output will be published in an album, and the storytelling will be analysed in an scientific article written with all parties.

### **4. Core Methodology**

Combining the tangible and intangible heritage by producing personal objects that tell a story. This is a way we followed to preserve memories; through embroidery workshops, we were able to revive the memory of the lost monument

## 5. Events in the Project

Event Name	Date(s)	Location	Description (purpose, audience)
<b>VERIS - VOICES OF PALMYRA: ENGAGING (IN)TANGIBLE MEMORIAL HERITAGE IN SOCIAL INNOVATION FOR REFUGEE INCLUSION</b>	17 September 2025	University of Bucharest	NGO
<b>Toolkit workshop</b>	April	Glasgow	<p>Community Organizations and NGOs Working with Refugees Non-profits and grassroots groups that support refugee inclusion, cultural exchange, or women's empowerment can use the toolkit to design and implement heritage-based activities rooted in embroidery and storytelling.</p> <p>Social Workers and Integration Practitioners Professionals involved in refugee reception and integration programs can apply the toolkit to promote cultural participation, psychosocial well-being, and community-building through accessible creative practices.</p> <p>Cultural and Creative Sector Institutions Museums, cultural centers, art galleries, and craft organizations can integrate the toolkit into their participatory programs to highlight refugee heritage and foster intercultural dialogue.</p> <p>Educators and Trainers in Adult and Informal Education Those offering language, vocational, or civic integration courses can</p>

		<p>incorporate embroidery as a medium for cultural expression, confidence-building, and social connection.</p> <p><b>Artists, Designers, and Art Therapists</b> Practitioners in the visual and textile arts—as well as those involved in art therapy—can draw on the toolkit to co-create inclusive spaces that value refugee women’s cultural knowledge and artistic skills.</p> <p><b>Local Authorities and Municipal Integration Departments</b> City councils and public institutions can use the toolkit to support community cohesion strategies that recognize and incorporate refugees’ intangible cultural heritage.</p> <p><b>Diaspora and Refugee Communities Themselves</b> Refugee-led groups and cultural associations can adapt and use the toolkit for self-organized cultural initiatives, peer support, and intergenerational transmission of heritage practices.</p> <p><b>Academic Researchers and Students</b> Scholars and students in cultural studies, social work, migration studies, or participatory arts can use the toolkit as a case study in heritage-based integration methodologies.</p> <p><b>Policy Makers and International Organizations</b> Institutions like UNESCO, UNHCR, and the European Commission may view the toolkit as a model of good practice in culturally grounded, gender-sensitive integration approaches.</p> <p><b>General Public and Civil Society Actors</b> Citizens, volunteers, and cultural mediators engaged in solidarity actions</p>
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			may find inspiration in the toolkit to initiate community-led or intercultural initiatives.
<b>Conference on Heritage and local communities</b>	18-19 May	Lausanne	Academics InZone Geneva, and NGO's

## 6. Deliverables & Resources

Type (report, video, toolkit...)	Link / File	Caption / Description
<b>Album</b>	Forthcoming	The album will be published by Bucharest University Press with copyright hold by University of Lausanne, the album will be promoted on webplatforms, by university libraries and bookshops and by the networks of UNESCO Chairs
<b>Article</b>	Forthcoming	One article on UPROOTEDNESS AND SYRIAN IDENTITY PATTERNS: THE ROLE OF (IN)TANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AS SOFT POWER IN BIOPOLITICAL FRAMEWORKS OF DISPLACEMENT, one article on Biopolitical insights on competitive narratives of uprootedness
<b>Toolkit</b>	Forthcoming	Toolkit for the social integration of Middle-East refugees in Europe
<b>Report</b>	Forthcoming	A UNESCO report on the role of (in)tangible cultural heritage in supporting the social inclusion of Middle East refugees in Europe and the therapeutic healing of traumatic pasts

## 7. Testimonials & Highlights

### Beneficiary Impressions / Quotes

The CIVIS – Open Lab “Veris – Voices of Palmyra engaging in(tangible) memorial heritage in social innovation for refugee inclusion” project is aligned with our core academic mission of research, education, and societal engagement, while fostering inclusivity and intercultural dialogue. This project allowed us to expand our scholarly research beyond geography into multiple disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, and history. This knowledge contributes to both theoretical advancements and practical applications, such as the design of inclusive urban environments and the development of culturally sensitive policies. Additionally, the project supports our teaching by incorporating refugees’ narratives and cultural expressions into our educational subjects, thereby promoting critical thinking and empathy among students. This project has allowed us to challenge stereotypes and encourage a nuanced understanding of displacement, diversity, and global interconnectedness. As faculty members, we can use these insights to create experiential learning opportunities, such as workshops or collaborative projects, that engage students in real-world issues. Another important aspect that the “Veris – Voices of Palmyra engaging in(tangible) memorial heritage in social innovation for refugee inclusion” project has achieved is the creation of a platform for participating in interdisciplinary research and community-based projects. As such, we have continued our partnership with Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Romania and opened a dialogue with our colleagues from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Bucharest. We hope these strengthened bonds and freshly opened avenues will serve as fertile ground for numerous international partnerships.

Lecturer Alina Mareci, Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest

## 8. Contact Point

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Institution / Role: University of Lausanne, Senior Lecturer