

WG 9 – Archaeology and School & Archaeology for Long-Life Learning

A reflexive recapitulation

WG9 discussed a number of intertwined issues related to strategies and means of communicating archaeology and archaeological heritage to different stakeholders including children, the lay public, and heritage professionals. A need of designing and implementing efficient strategies of content delivery to these groups is a must considering a dynamically changing role and perception of material heritage of the humankind, eminent danger to its substance as well as emerging modes of its integration with policies and economic regimes. The strategy of communicating archaeological heritage can also effectively contribute to the development of society based on knowledge and contribute to the development of socially valued competences and transferable skills such as critical thinking, decision making and creativity, all leading to an active citizenship.

It is argued that education is a form of public engagement which is too often perceived as an independent domain largely detached from other forms of public outreach. Its social potential and significance remains largely unexplored. It needs to be stress that educational activities pertaining to long-life learning have different forms and formats such as dedicated in-class courses, distance learning courses, open access online materials, blended learning and the like. They need to tailored to meet the needs and expectations of diverse groups of trainees representing a wide range of stakeholders.

Out of many means of public engagement, education remains its most formal and standardized form. It needs to be stressed that long-learning solutions and methods of education are well developed in educational studies. However, they are largely unknown and unexplored among those who happen to develop some form of vocational trainings. Hence, it is recommended these bodies get acquainted with existing solutions in the domain of education and fully grasp available methods and adopt different approaches. In particular, the following elements needs to be considered before developing any didactic materials and means of their communicating: (i) expectations and needs of different target groups, (ii) different formats of teaching and learning formats, (iii) methods of schooling, and (iv) life-long learning methodologies. While preparing any educational program it is also required to explicitly and systematically design its curriculum, specify forms of didactic process, defining means of controlling the didactic process and forms of assessment as well as recognizing impact of the delivered training. Any didactic process intrinsically involves a hierarchy and imbalance between the teacher and trainee. As this may prove to be counterproductive from the standpoint of effective delivery the content, it is recommended to develop an efficient mitigation strategies so the distance between these two participants in the education process is shortened and more balanced.

An efficiency of any training activity firstly and foremost depends upon effective accommodation of the needs, expectations and interests of different target groups. Hence, the designing of any training activities needs to be preceded by an in-depth understanding of the context of operation any of the potential target groups, explicitly specifying its character

and needs. It is recommended to implement an efficient methodology of recognizing these needs, which include a systematic analysis of good practices or analysis of comprehensive questionnaires and reviews collected among a representative number of potential trainees. These means needs to well-tailored to the character of the targeted group. It is expected that the efficiency of training depends upon coherence and consistency of the training groups. A production of satisfactory training materials for the groups of professionals is then easier than specifying needs and expectations of groups defining according to other criteria such as place of living, income level or age.

An impact of any training upon better understanding, genuine appreciation, effective use and protection of material heritage is directly caused by an appropriate focus of didactic materials. The participants in the WG agreed that there are three major issues to be covered by the training materials. Firstly, a complex nature of the archaeological process is to be revealed so there is comprehensive understanding of the ways in which archaeological knowledge is constructed along with associated pitfalls and shortcomings. Secondly, it is required to reveal and thoroughly discuss a multidisciplinary character of archaeological endeavor to stress diverse competences and skills of the practitioners. Thirdly, it is required to present a multiscalar character and role of archaeological heritage in contemporary world. It involves a critical discussion of the rationale behind preservation and protection of material heritage of the humankind, complex character of heritage policies, intertwined relations between heritage and social values as well as the role heritage policies in sustainable models of development at local and supra-local level. Any training activity should also involve creating transferable skills and social competences of the trainees. These include critical thinking, responsibility and self-awareness, sense of belonging and identity, historical consciousness, comprehension of a constructive nature of the built space, understanding of the rural and urban landscape, and the like.