



Cultural Heritage & Minorities

A Practical Toolkit

Executive Summary



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TRANSITION: Cultural Heritage & Minorities – A Practical Toolkit

Executive summary

The digital toolkit *Cultural Heritage & Minorities: A Practical Toolkit*, developed within the TRANSITION Project, is an educational and professional resource designed to support the understanding, safeguarding, documentation, and communication of cultural heritage, with particular attention to minorities and underrepresented communities. The toolkit combines conceptual knowledge, international frameworks, case studies, and practical methodologies to promote inclusive, participatory, and sustainable approaches to cultural heritage education and practice.

The toolkit responds to contemporary challenges affecting minority cultural heritage, including cultural homogenisation, marginalisation, conflict, displacement, climate change, and the erosion of traditional knowledge systems. Its overall objective is to equip students, educators, researchers, heritage professionals, and community practitioners with theoretical foundations and practical tools to work critically and responsibly with both tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The document is organised into three major parts:

- 1. Key Concepts, Conventions and Institutions;**
- 2. Case Studies and Best Practices;**
- 3. Resources, Tools and Methodological Guidelines.**

Together, these sections create a progressive pedagogical structure that moves from theory and policy to applied examples and practical implementation. This structure is particularly valuable for teaching and learning processes focused on minorities' cultural heritage because it promotes critical understanding, intercultural awareness, participatory methodologies, and community-based heritage practices.

1. Part I – Key concepts, Conventions and Institutions

The first part of the toolkit establishes the conceptual and institutional foundations necessary for understanding cultural heritage and minority-related issues. It introduces a shared vocabulary and essential perspectives that guide research, education, and professional practice.



1.1 Key Concepts and issues

This subsection addresses fundamental concepts that professionals dealing with Culture Heritage need to master, such as cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage (ICH), cultural diversity, minorities, risks to heritage, safeguarding, cultural tourism, and cultural sustainability. The knowledge of these concepts is vital to study, analyse and implement conservation strategies regarding cultural heritage.

The toolkit explains that cultural heritage is not merely inherited material culture, but rather something societies actively choose to preserve, interpret, and transmit. It highlights the evolution of heritage from monument-centred approaches toward participatory, community-based, and inclusive understandings. This perspective is especially important for minority heritage because many minority narratives have historically been excluded from dominant national histories.

Particular emphasis is placed on **Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)**, defined as living practices, expressions, knowledge, rituals, oral traditions, and craftsmanship recognised by communities as part of their heritage. The toolkit stresses that ICH is dynamic and continuously recreated, which reinforces the importance of intergenerational transmission and community participation. It also identifies major threats to ICH, including globalisation, cultural homogenisation, migration, marginalisation of minority communities, and loss of traditional knowledge.

For teaching and learning, this section is highly relevant because it encourages learners to understand heritage as a living social process rather than as static objects. It promotes critical reflection about identity, memory, inclusion, and power relations in heritage representation.

The subsection on **Cultural Diversity** reinforces the importance of linguistic diversity, intercultural dialogue, and education for inclusion. It explains how endangered minority languages represent the loss of cultural knowledge and collective memory. The toolkit further highlights the importance of cultural diversity in education as a means to reduce prejudice, foster intercultural competence, and prepare learners for pluralistic societies.

The section on **Minorities and Cultural Heritage** is particularly significant because it challenges simplistic or stereotypical understandings of minority groups. It emphasises that minorities are not isolated communities, but active participants in social, economic, and urban life. The toolkit encourages heritage practitioners and educators to include multiple voices, question dominant narratives, and address historical silences. This approach is essential for inclusive pedagogy and decolonising heritage education.



Additional subsections discuss risks to heritage, especially in conflict situations, and safeguarding strategies such as documentation, community participation, legal frameworks, education, digital tools, and sustainable tourism. These topics are highly relevant for contemporary heritage education because they connect cultural heritage with resilience, sustainability, and human rights.

Finally, subsection 1.1. links cultural heritage to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasising culture as a cross-cutting dimension of sustainable development and social cohesion. This encourages learners to see heritage work not only as preservation, but also as a contribution to inclusive and sustainable futures.

1.2 Conventions, Charters and Declarations

The second subsection introduces the main international legal and normative frameworks governing heritage protection, diversity, museums, tourism, and minority rights. It analyses key UNESCO conventions, including the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. It also addresses international frameworks related to heritage at risk, museums, community participation, and minority rights.

This section is pedagogically important because it familiarises learners with the ethical and legal foundations of heritage work. Understanding these frameworks helps educators and practitioners align projects with international standards and human-rights-based approaches. The Faro Convention, for example, is presented as a transformative document that places communities at the centre of heritage processes and recognises citizens' rights to engage with cultural heritage. Such frameworks reinforce participatory and democratic approaches to heritage education.

Similarly, the sections on minority rights explain the progressive recognition of linguistic, cultural, and identity-based rights within international law. This is highly relevant for educational settings because it frames cultural heritage as a matter of cultural justice, equality, and representation.

1.3 Cultural Heritage Institutions and Networks

The third subsection introduces major international institutions and professional networks involved in heritage governance, including UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOM, ICOMOS, and IFLA. The toolkit explains the missions, initiatives, and resources of these organisations, highlighting their role in training, safeguarding, research, digital documentation, museum ethics, and community engagement.



This subsection is especially useful because it connects theoretical knowledge with professional practice. Students and practitioners gain awareness of international cooperation mechanisms, funding opportunities, professional standards, and educational resources that can support heritage initiatives involving minority communities.

2. Part II – Case Studies: Inspirational Work and Best Practices

The second part of the toolkit presents real-world examples of heritage initiatives and projects related to cultural diversity, minority communities, documentation, tourism, memory, and safeguarding. The selected case studies include projects such as the KCAC Archive, Shared Sacred Sites, the Soqotra Heritage Project, and community-based tourism networks. All of them are directly linked to cultural heritage of minorities or subaltern communities which are not part of dominant national memorial narratives. These examples demonstrate how heritage initiatives can be developed collaboratively with communities, using participatory, interdisciplinary, and inclusive methodologies.

This section is extremely valuable for teaching because it translates abstract concepts into practical experiences. Through these examples, learners can observe how theoretical principles such as participation, safeguarding, sustainability, and cultural rights are implemented in real contexts. The case studies also expose learners to different geographical, social, and political realities, encouraging intercultural understanding and comparative analysis. They demonstrate that heritage work with minorities requires sensitivity to local contexts, power relations, and historical experiences.

3. Part III – Resources, Tools and Methodological Guidelines

The final part of the toolkit provides practical resources, digital tools, and methodological guidance for implementing heritage projects.

3.1 Resources and Digital Tools

This subsection introduces educational resources and digital platforms related to world heritage management, intangible cultural heritage, language diversity, oral history, audiovisual archives, digital collections, museums, and endangered heritage. The toolkit highlights the growing role of digital technologies in safeguarding and communicating heritage, including 3D digitisation, digital archives, podcasts, audiovisual storytelling, and online exhibitions. These tools are



particularly important for minority heritage because they can increase visibility, accessibility, and preservation of vulnerable cultural expressions.

For educational purposes, these resources support active, project-based, and digitally engaged learning. They encourage students to document, interpret, and communicate heritage using contemporary digital methods while remaining critically aware of ethical considerations and community participation.

3.2 Tools and Methodological Guidelines

The final subsection offers step-by-step methodological guidance for heritage practice, including archival digitisation, heritage mapping, oral history, storytelling, inventories of intangible heritage, community engagement, museum tours, and podcast production. This section is particularly significant because it transforms the toolkit into a practical pedagogical instrument. Rather than remaining at the theoretical level, it equips users with concrete methods for conducting participatory and community-centred heritage projects.

The guidelines on community engagement and co-creation are especially relevant for work with minorities because they promote ethical collaboration, inclusivity, and shared authority in heritage processes. Likewise, oral history and storytelling methodologies support the documentation of memories and voices that are often absent from official narratives. This section supports experiential education by enabling students and practitioners to apply concepts directly in research, documentation, and community projects.

Conclusion

Overall, the *TRANSITION Cultural Heritage & Minorities Toolkit* constitutes a comprehensive educational and professional resource that bridges theory, policy, and practice. Its interdisciplinary and participatory approach makes it especially valuable for teaching and learning about minorities' cultural heritage.

The toolkit promotes a critical understanding of heritage as dynamic, community-based, and linked to human rights, sustainability, and cultural diversity. Through its three complementary parts — conceptual foundations, case studies, and practical methodologies — it supports inclusive education, intercultural dialogue, and socially engaged heritage practices.

Most importantly, the toolkit encourages learners and practitioners to recognise minority communities not merely as subjects of preservation, but as active agents in defining, safeguarding, and transmitting their own cultural heritage.





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