
Preface

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Why publish a Handbook on a COST Action Training School? Hopefully, these pages may serve as springboard for a shared operational pathway for researchers, scholars, and professionals who together with stakeholders and local communities want to develop heritage-led community development. Each player holds a different point of view and the results of various experiences throughout Europe and its surrounding areas, are key contributions to successful actions.

This Handbook covers all lectures and research activities developed and presented in the context of the First Underground4value Training School. The School, a main focal point of the COST Action CA18110 “Underground Built Heritage as catalyser for Community Valorisation” was held in Naples, at the majestic Castel dell’Ovo overlooking the sea. It was a challenging experience that attracted 30 graduate trainees from 12 countries across Europe and Turkey.

The specific focus is on Underground Built Heritage (UBH), an element of value for communities, cities and societies, the fulcrum of transformations and processes of development, rebirth, and resilience.

By integrating multi-disciplinary knowledge with an innovative planning approach, this training experience represented a point where all knowledge, collected through the different activities, could be explicated and shared in training modules, as a first step for building capacity from both an academic and professional perspective on UBH.

Why a Handbook connected with a Training School? Training schools are a qualifying opportunity within a COST Action, an opportunity to compare concrete experiences based on case studies and case histories of different territories and cities.

For five days, the U4V Training School proposed morning multi-disciplinary lectures held by COST Action CA18110 member experts and professors, and afternoon research teamwork tutored by six researchers. On the sixth day, trainees presented their research outcomes in the form of posters that were awarded, and certified in a final ceremony. The School allowed trainees, trainers, tutors, professors, and other professionals to work alongside each other, express their opinions and either share or gain more knowledge relating to UBH, conservation techniques, valorisation strategies, planning and participation tools.

It was a collective learning process, where there was no distinction between professors and students, but rather all students, learning together about those intangible assets for seeding local community engagement in the UBH valorisation process. People from multiple European countries, both eastern and western, showed a vast range of cultural differences, not just on a personal basis but also in their knowledge, opinions, and ways of thinking. Trainers and trainees enthusiastically studied together, through interactive lectures on theories, methodologies and experiences, and research teamwork. For the action members, those lectures became an opportunity to better clarify the overall approach, and to question theoretical and methodological weaknesses. For the trainees, it was a valuable opportunity to behold and appreciate the fascinating and rich heritage of the underground, and learn how empowering local communities can be beneficial to the heritage valorisation process.

The enthusiasm and dedication of our trainees resulted in a number of detailed proposals of real-life case studies collected here, also thanks to the support of the tutors who successively became full members of the research teams and lead them in the very intensive and interactive effort of creating a research idea and explicating it through a poster.

This Handbook attempts to provide a first insight of this collective learning experience. It includes the lectures held during the training school, in relation to the COST Action Underground4value, and its main topic, the UBH, the technologic needs, and the approaches for UBH conservation, valorisation, and decision-making. The second part of the Handbook explores the four case studies investigated during the first year of the Action, from the perspective of local partners and of the researchers who embarked on a short-term scientific mission to each area. They provide an account of the challenges they faced to organise living labs, involve local stakeholders, manage meetings, and achieve results.

The final part of the Handbook presents the posters produced as a result of the school and the ideas behind them.

Thus, this book is a research, project and management tool based on scientific comparison and experiences in real situations.

This Handbook will be implemented every year with the scope of developing new training modules for planners, local community facilitators, promoters, and decision-makers to integrate knowledge on underground space, cultural heritage studies and community-based planning.

In line with COST objectives, it responds to the need for involvement and enhancement of young researchers, organised in research and project groups, who co-authored the results and texts.

It develops shared operational lines in different areas of Europe, taking into account territorial specificities and the different degree of exploitation achieved, thanks to the participation of researchers and professionals from diverse *milieux*.

We can achieve such objectives if we follow a path that begins by clarifying the sense and the cultural and social perspective of valorisation activities.

That is why this Handbook and the accomplishments of the Training School, reflect the basic definitions of heritage valorisation, management, and planning and

define a taxonomy through words, such as *meaning, semantisation, cultural value, historic landscape, community, participation, empowerment, sustainable transitions, or co-creation.*

When dealing with such major issues, UBH plays a particular and decisive role: in cities and landscapes it catalyses deep social dynamics, it becomes the engine of processes that involve the life space of the communities.

The theme of CA18110 Underground4value is validated by the activities and the results of this first Training School, a fulcrum of general and complex processes, transversal to the European challenges of Innovation, Social Cohesion and Sustainability.