



D4.1 Guidelines of the Implementation Process

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D.4.1 – Guidelines of the Implementation Process

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Project no. 870939

SO-CLOSE

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1. Executive Summary

This deliverable addresses relevant steps and considerations for the implementation of the three digital sharing tools developed in WP3 of the SO-CLOSE projects in the four locations of the cultural institutions. The implementation process will follow a strategy agreed upon by the consortium that emphasizes the role of curatorship each cultural institution will take on and highlights three specific areas of interest: Firstly, it is highly relevant for curators to make use of storytelling and embed chosen content in engaging narratives that attract audiences and create relevant spaces of meaning-making. The guidelines for storytelling emphasize the use of objects and narratives and how to embed those in digital storytelling.

Secondly, for the SO-CLOSE context, cultural memory and the connection of past and present narratives are a focal point of our cultural heritage-making endeavours. How to create these connections especially in a context addressing sensitive and possibly triggering memories and narratives is also addressed in the form of guidelines.

Thirdly, the SO-CLOSE project aims to create inclusive and accessible spaces, both online and offline. Therefore, the deliverable offers an overview of accessibility features relevant for SO-CLOSE activities and invites all cultural institutions to consider their approaches from an accessible point of view. Further sources for accessibility requirements and features are listed as well.

The deliverable aims at informing the tool implementation process and offering actionable steps as well as theoretically informed considerations relevant for cultural institutions to take on the role of curator throughout the process.





2. Acronyms and abbreviations

CH	Cultural heritage
CI	Cultural institution
CRPD	Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DCH	Digital cultural heritage
DP	Displaced person
IDP	Internally displaced person
MCP	Memory Center Platform
M(xx)	Month(number of month within project duration)
WP	Work package





3. Introduction

The aim of WP4 is to implement and validate the digital sharing tools in the four distinct locations of the Cultural Institutions (CIs). At this point in the project, the tools (WebDoc, Storymap, Virtual Exhibition, Memory Center Platform) have been successfully co-designed and developed as part of WP3 and are ready to be tested and implemented in WP4. The purpose of this deliverable is to offer guidelines for an informed and critical implementation process.

To underline the overlapping steps of the tool implementation process, we will refer to the overall process as curation. Curation requires specific skills and resources for a co-creative approach with diverse stakeholders involved. A curator has to coordinate

- the gathering of relevant past and present content,
- the selection and editing of content,
- the contextualization and connection of both past and present content,
- the embedding of content in thematically relevant stories to fill the sharing tools with, and
- the design of offline and online spaces/events for stakeholders to engage with the content and contribute with their own perspectives and ideas.

The curation steps need to be understood from a holistic perspective in which each element informs the other.

WP4 aims to provide all necessary resources and skills needed for the CIs to take on the roles of curators and provide a sustainable implementation of the tools.

- **T4.1 Pilots Coordination (M15-M36):** Guidelines and training strategy will be defined, general WP4 responsibilities and steps will be coordinated.
- **T4.2 Preparation of the Operational Phase (M21-M23):** CI Activity Plans (Content gathering and Open day events) will be set up; training and guidelines will be presented and implemented.
- **T4.3 Trial Phase (M24-M34):** CI Activity Plans will be implemented.
- **T4.4 Evaluation Phase (M30-M36):** Implementation process will be evaluated.

The deliverable is split into three main parts: First, the features of the three sharing tools developed in WP3 will be shortly presented. These features inform the guideline and training strategy developed at the start of WP4. Second, we describe the implementation strategy. The strategy addresses the relevant steps and skills necessary for a successful implementation. Third and final, we dive more deeply into the three areas that require special consideration throughout the implementation process. These three areas are storytelling, making connections between past and present and improving accessibility. Embedding the content in engaging stories that attracts audiences requires storytelling skills. SO-CLOSE tools and activities are meant to be accessible for diverse audiences, therefore, a special focus will be put on how to create both accessible content for the digital tools as well as accessible activities such as the Open day events. Additionally, the contextualization of past and present cultural memories is a main focus of the SO-CLOSE project and needs to be paid careful attention to when filling the tools with content and implementing the tools in the physical spaces of the cultural institutions (CIs).





4. The functionalities of the content-sharing tools

Within WP3 and informed by previous work in WP1 and WP2, the consortium has developed three digital sharing tools, namely the story map, virtual exhibition, and webdoc.¹ The design and functionalities of these tools were decided upon with input from the multidisciplinary consortium and external stakeholders in the form of focus groups, which collected and analyzed the end-users needs to define the tool requirements. These digital cultural heritage (DCH) storytelling platforms are designed with user-centered features, aiming to serve as an amplifier for the refugees' voices and their reality, in an enriched context, with content related to the forced displacement heritage of the host societies.

The features for storytelling integrated in the tools are focusing on immersivity, strong visual components, customization, and contribution, which allow the CIs to choose the most suitable format for their storytelling endeavours. It is therefore relevant to first define what story will be told and which media types (photography, video, 360 recordings, audio, etc.) are necessary. Depending on the format that best suits the storytelling needs, the CI can choose the most relevant tool.

The **story map** allows storytelling based on maps, with a strong focus on **interactive** visual elements and textual resources. Tracking displacements as the main narrative creates a dialogue between the local societies' memories and the present-day migration experiences. Both, chronological retelling of a travel route and comparisons of spaces across times are possible narratives that allow the users to engage with the content on the map. Institutions that use the platform will be able to design journeys with customizable itineraries, choose between different geographical maps and use modules for image juxtaposition and 360 degrees images and videos display.

The **virtual exhibition** platform is a traditional storytelling concept translated into a digital format and enriched with **participatory** features. The platform aims to offer versatility to the CIs and to promote a collaborative approach through crowdsourcing initiatives by including the function for users to submit their own contributions to specific exhibitions. Its characteristics include modular panels, a 3D viewer, a news feed section, and a self-generated items gallery with faceted search.

The **web documentary** platform allows CIs to embed photography, video and **immersive** recordings in a storytelling concept. Its strong visual component allows CIs to compose strong digital narratives about migration heritage, while offering features such as a video-introduction trailer, video gallery modules for the chapters, customizable chapters sequence and an integrated 360 images and video viewer.

The **Memory Center Platform** (MCP)² is a software platform that aims to **preserve and manage** the contents (video files, images, texts) that will be created during the pilot phase of the project. It provides a basic, web-based interface that allows the users to store different types of contents (doc, pdf, images, video, etc.) and manage the contents with additional information, including external systems interaction and reference to the projects in the three Sharing tools (storymap, webdoc, and virtual exhibition).

While each of the tools offers unique opportunities for storytelling, some features are represented in all three:

¹ More detailed descriptions and user manuals can be found in D3.1 Toolbox prototypes.

² More detailed descriptions and user manual can be found in D3.2 Memory Center Platform prototype.





1. Modular content structure: different authoring modules can be selected, shuffled, and repeated to customize the tool structure.
2. Accessibility features: integrated accessibility components give access to people with functional diversity.
3. Interoperability: connection with external digital ecosystems, the MCP, to share media and grant the content's preservation.
4. Replicability: possibility to replicate the tools multiple times to create diverse independent projects.
5. Open Access: free to use version for any cultural or educational institution, NGO and civil group focused on migration

The following part will elaborate the strategy and process envisioned for the implementation of these tools in each of the CIs unique locations.

5. Implementation strategy

As part of task T4.1 Pilot coordination, two coordination meetings have taken place (M15, M18), in which representatives of all WP4 participants have identified the necessary steps for a successful implementation.

The role of the curator has been discussed as a main responsibility for the CIs throughout this implementation process. This requires a careful assessment of skills, needs, and expectations to ensure each CI can successfully take on this role and implement the tools. Curation is understood to cover both the gathering and processing of digital/online content, as well as organizing offline/on-site activities such as the Open day events for the implementation of the tools (see Figure 2).

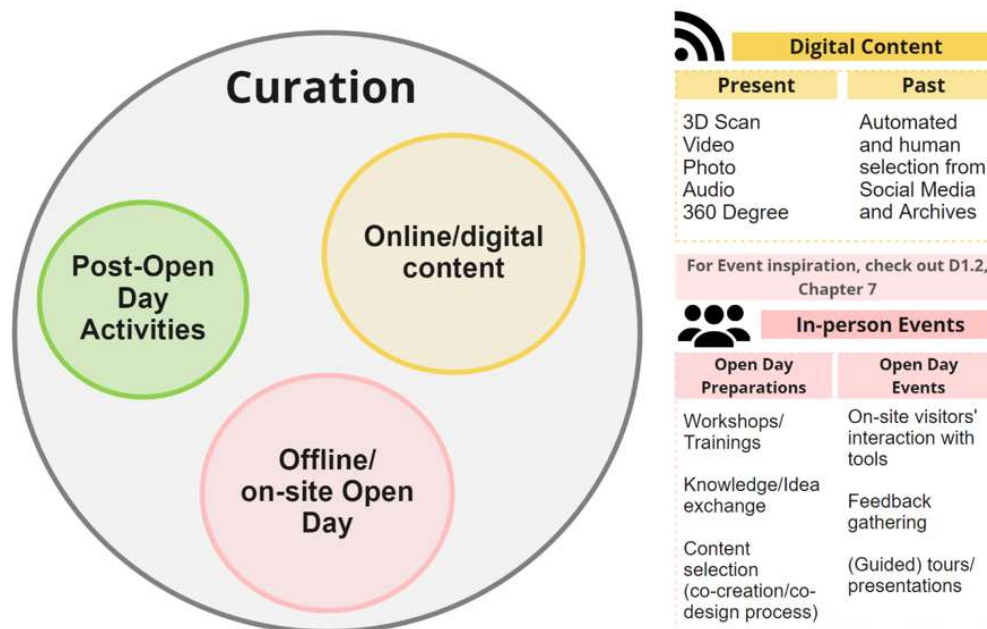


Figure 2 Elements of Curation

Both online and offline curation are equally relevant in the process of cultural heritage-making to ensure a productive, inclusive, and diverse exchange. The process of implementation in the SO-CLOSE context refers to both elements: creating stories and filling the tools with this content, as well as embedding the tools in the physical spaces of the CIs. Therefore, even though the content gathering and the creation of story-filled tools chronologically take place before the Open Day





events, the physical space in itself and the opportunities it presents must be taken into consideration for the curation steps.

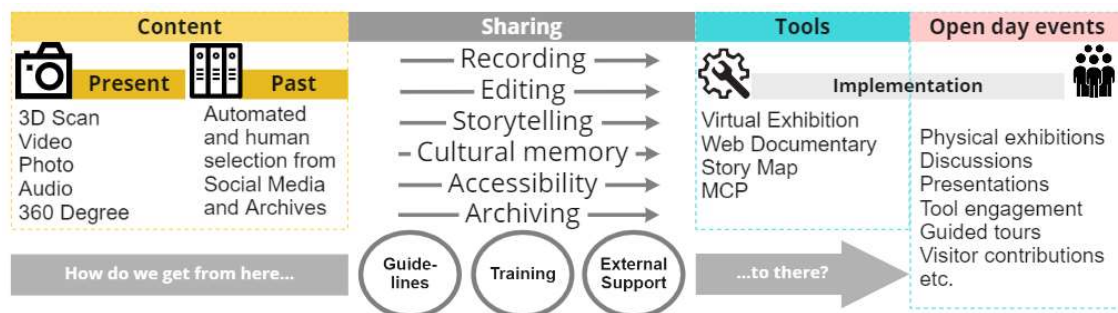


Figure 3 Curation Steps

Figure 3, above, shows the consortium’s assessment of the necessary steps to achieve a successful implementation of the digital tools in the physical spaces. Curation is a task that will continue beyond the project period and involves several different steps. While the gathering of present and past content (recording and crawling) are relevant steps, editing, storytelling, accessibility, as well as historical expertise to create relevant connections between past and present cultural memory should not be dismissed in the curation of the tools. In individual meetings between ULUND (WP4 leader) and the CIs, expectations and available skills have been discussed and needs identified. It has been agreed that the needed expertise relevant for each step requires different approaches, which concluded in the below list of possible guidelines and trainings:

Digital Curation steps	Guidelines & Trainings
Recording	Technical Manuals for each gathering tool (TEMP)
Editing	CI internal expertise, refugees' expertise, or hiring external support
Storytelling	Training + Guidelines (SO-CLOSE experts)
Cultural memory	Training + Guidelines (SO-CLOSE experts)
Accessibility	Training + Guidelines (SO-CLOSE experts)
Archiving	Archival Guidelines (ASKI)
Tool Set-up	Manual + Training for Sharing Tools (TEMP)

While some steps can be easily addressed in technical manuals, the storytelling, history, and accessibility steps will benefit more from active discussions and exchange of ideas. Developed by SO-CLOSE researchers, the three guidelines (accessibility, storytelling, connections between cultural memories) were presented during the training event (Bologna, M23), and enriched by the CIs reviews and feedback to ensure practice-informed guidelines for how to “translate” the gathered content (audios, videos, photography, archived material) into relevant, co-created, and engaging stories to fill the sharing tools with (see chapter 7 *Guidelines for Implementation*).

As part of WP3, the developed tool functions are currently being tested. A seminar on digital storytelling has been held (M22) to support the CIs in filling the tool shells with test content for this purpose. Additional individual sessions between CI representatives and the digital storytelling expert Pere Ortín Andrés ensured direct support of the CIs storytelling approaches. Discussions from this workshop have informed the storytelling guidelines (see Chapter 7.1).





The guidelines not only inform the process of how to fill the digital tools with content, but also consider how to integrate these tools in the physical spaces of the CIs and create engaging spaces of exhibition and heritage-making. In addition to these guidelines, it is recommended that CIs consult the results of previous focus groups (see D2.1) when deciding on which stories to tell and how to create physical events relevant and accessible for refugees, as these give further insight on each CIs contextual specificities.

Following the development of the guidelines, further steps in the implementation process will focus on:

1. **Conceptualizing story ideas:** Each CI will present their story concepts to the partners. These presentations will ensure knowledge exchange as well as the opportunity to gather feedback and address questions and/or issues that might arise during the process.
2. **Defining clear activity plans:** Based on the story concepts, each CI will formulate an activity plan, clearly outlining the timeline, required resources, outreach plans, and necessary steps to the final product. The final product in this case refers to two sharing tools filled with content per CI as well as the Open day event.
3. **Gathering content:** Following the CIs activity plans, both archival as well as new content will be gathered. La Tempesta (TEMP) will support this process and provide the CIs with the relevant technological equipment.
4. **Testing the stories:** The developed stories will be presented within the consortium and tested by participants to gather feedback for the curators prior to the Open day event.
5. **Testing Open day activities:** If relevant, each CI together with ULUND (and TEMP) will have the opportunity to test and adjust any activities planned for the Open day event. Visits to the CIs are foreseen in Spring 2022.

Before diving into the practical guidelines, a closer look at how the theoretical and methodological frameworks inform our approaches will give additional justification to the implementation process.

6. Theoretical justification

SO-CLOSE aims at exposing commonalities of past and present experiences of forced migration, and thereby improving social cohesion and fighting xenophobia. It is believed that the project may give impulse to identity-centered debates, especially those about shared experiences. “In the longer perspective, SO-CLOSE will contribute to the creation of a platform where a new and more inclusive cultural heritage will be negotiated through digital intermediaries” (GA, Part B, p.2). With this aim in mind, the theoretical and methodological frameworks center around a co-creational approach to cultural heritage (CH) making. In previous deliverables, the consortium has already reflected critically about how collaborative CH making can foster social cohesion and create an inclusionary space to reframe canonized historiography in new cultural experiences and narratives. Combining disciplines such as sociology of migration, cultural heritage, and history with a strong focus on intersectionality is a key strength of our approach.

The following section will demonstrate how SO-CLOSE’s co-creational methodological approach and the theoretical concepts of CH making and forced migration inform WP4 implementation.

As the development of the guideline strategy has shown, the most pressing themes in the curatorial process center around engaging and capturing **storytelling**, drawing relevant connections between past and present **cultural memories**, as well as ensuring **accessibility** both on the digital platforms and during physical events. The following section will take a closer look at these themes from a theoretical and methodological perspective to critically inform the guideline development.





6.1 Cultural heritage and storytelling

Cultural heritage is understood in SO-CLOSE as an “act of communication and meaning-making”³ and as such is intimately connected with the activity of storytelling. Cultural institutions and museums have combined information-based and narrative-based approaches for a long time, but the arrival of digital technologies has given new impetus to this combination. Our project finds that a storytelling approach to cultural heritage is particularly suitable for addressing the heritage of refugees and migrants. According to Palombini⁴, the communication of the historical past along an information-based approach works if the target audience is already familiar with the general historical context presented. However, if the audience comes from another context and has no prior information about the historical facts presented and/or has no prior experience with the information-based approach, then the message would fail to reach the people for whom it is presented. Moreover, the narrative-based approach has the advantage of allowing “the suspension of doubt and the immersion into the narrative world,” increasing the possibility of an emotional reaction and an emotional connection between the historical events presented and the contemporary audience⁵.

Digital storytelling adds to the well-established narrative tradition the element of interaction between members of the audience and the (virtual) objects composing the narrative. Interactivity here is defined as the ability of users to influence or even determine the narrative plot⁶. The digital tools produced in the project are designed with this principle in mind. They allow the user of the tool to choose their narrative interaction with the content produced and presented in the tools, to better communicate the historical past and to make it relevant for many types of audiences.

At the same time, the CIs need to balance the need for creativity and originality (inherent in any successful storytelling) with the parallel need for respect to historical accuracy as well as respect to the original “storyteller”, the refugee or migrant who is sharing their experiences, as well as the protagonists of past narratives. Storytelling is an appropriate technique to communicate heritage, since certain poetic license can be granted to heritage, in contrast to history, under the condition that the audience is made aware of the fictionalization⁷. Certainly, we are not trying to impart some ideal “historical truth”, which is an illusion⁸, but we are also aware that heritage communication does not have a “license to lie”. What we are trying to communicate and draw parallels to, is the historical experience of the individuals of the past that appear in videos and photographs, or who are the former owners of the objects included on display.

6.2 Memory and heritage as a bridge between the past and the present

The experiential perspective leads us to talk about the connection between history, memory, and heritage⁹. When introducing narratives about the past and juxtaposing them with the refugees and migrants’ own stories, we are taking a particular view of the past, which can be associated with what Assmann¹⁰ calls cultural memory. According to this paradigm, cultural objects (including

³ Smith, Laurajane. *Uses of heritage*. Routledge, 2006.

⁴ Palombini, Augusto. Storytelling and telling history. Towards a grammar of narratives for Cultural Heritage dissemination in the Digital Era. *Journal of cultural heritage* 24 (2017): 134-139.

⁵ Goodson, Ivor F., Gert Biesta, Michael Tedder, and Norma Adair. *Narrative learning*. Routledge, 2010.

⁶ Miller, Carolyn Handler. *Digital storytelling: A creator's guide to interactive entertainment*. 4th edition. CRC Press, 2019, p 56.

⁷ Howard, Peter. *Heritage: management, interpretation, identity*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2003.

⁸ Foucault, Michel, and Angèle Kremer-Marietti. *L'archéologie du savoir*. Vol. 1. Paris: Gallimard, 1969.

⁹ Wilson, Ross. "History, memory and heritage." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 15, no. 4 (2009): 374-378.

¹⁰ Assmann, Jan. "Communicative and cultural memory." In *Cultural memories*, pp. 15-27. Springer, Dordrecht, 2011.





images and texts) are carriers of memory and communicate past experiences in a way compatible to our storytelling approach.

Cultural memory is not the same as cultural heritage, but cultural objects have the potential to become part of the cultural heritage of a community. Heritage, just like memory, creates a continuity between past, present, and future, and (also like cultural memory) serves to support the notion of community¹¹, whose existence it contributes to legitimize. Because of its strong connection with group identity, heritage can be political. As Törnquist-Plewa and Dutceac Segesten put it, “Heritage changes people since when they recognize something as their common inheritance it gives them sense of belonging together, and a feeling of responsibility. It can motivate them to action, mobilize them and strengthen their communal solidarity. [...] Heritage changes the social order, since, as an instrument of cultural power, it gives rise to new communities, empowers some social groups, and sometimes disempowers others. Hence, it can contribute to the social cohesion or to the opposite, create divisions within society”¹².

Because of heritage’s political load and its potential to affect social change, the cultural institutions will take active steps to account for the social and political context of remembering. This is done to avoid the risk of Eurocentric narratives that exoticize refugees and migrants or that reproduce colonial narratives. The storytelling approach, on the contrary, is in the spirit of an “agonist” memory.¹³

6.3 Accessible SO-CLOSE platforms and spaces

Human rights are a work in progress and many changes have been introduced to those first identified by the United Nations (UN) in 1945¹⁴. Adding the rights for culture and minority languages towards diversity and inclusion are some of the recent additions¹⁵. This chapter is based on a human right gathered in the Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities CRPD¹⁶. All UN conventions demand political action by all 193 states who participate in the UN. The CRPD has a special condition in Europe since it was signed and ratified by the European Council first, and then increasingly by all EU countries. The European Council as signatory of the CRPD has transposed the mandates into three distinct pieces of European legislation which are:

1) **Directive on the Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications.** This directive¹⁷ requests from all EU member states to meet common accessibility standards in public bodies’ websites and mobile apps. It is based on the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 four steps: ‘Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust’, and references EN 301 549 as

¹¹ Harvey, David C. "Heritage pasts and heritage presents: Temporality, meaning and the scope of heritage studies." *International journal of heritage studies* 7, no. 4 (2001): 319-338.

¹² Törnquist-Plewa, Barbara and Dutceac Segesten, Anamaria (2017). *Memory Studies in Motion – Reflections on two new research trends in the field.* in Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, Niklas Bernsand, Marco La Rosa (eds.), *In Search of Transcultural Memory in Europe*, Center for European Studies Conference Papers Series No. 8, Lund: Lund University, pp. 135-148.

¹³ Bull, Anna Cento, and Hans Lauge Hansen. "On agonistic memory." *Memory Studies* 9, no. 4 (2016): 390-404.

¹⁴ United Nations Charter. in: United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>

¹⁵ The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity in Cultural Expressions: in: UNESCO, <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/passeport-convention2005-web2.pdf>

¹⁶ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, [online] <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>.

¹⁷ Web Accessibility. In: European Commission, Policies, [online] <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/web-accessibility>





the standard which will enable websites and apps to comply with the law. This directive was transposed¹⁸ into the laws of each EU member state by September 23rd, 2018.

2) **The Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD).** This directive¹⁹ governs EU-wide coordination of national legislation on all audiovisual media, providing rules to shape technological developments, creating a level playing field for emerging audiovisual media, preserving cultural diversity, protecting children and consumers, safeguarding media pluralism, combating racial and religious hatred, and guaranteeing the independence of national media regulators. The directive was approved in 2018 and member states had 21 months to transpose it into national legislation.

3) **The European Accessibility Act, passed in 2019.** This is a law²⁰ that aims at making many products and services in the EU more accessible for persons with disabilities. Some examples include smartphones, tablets and computers, televisions and TV programs, E-books, online shopping websites and mobile applications. It takes the form of a directive, which is legally binding, meaning that the EU Member States have an obligation to apply what the act mentions. It also means each EU country must develop its own legislation. To comply with the new legislation, public and private sector organizations need to monitor the accessibility of their websites, mobile apps, and media content, make information from the monitoring available in an accessibility statement, and report to a central authority identified for each country.

These three pieces of EU legislation demand accessibility services in all cultural venues and events, not only for their websites, ticketing services and spaces, but also for their offered contents and information.

SO-CLOSE aims to be inclusive and reach a wide and diverse audience. Not only will the digital tools and physical events conform with the above-described directives but be accessible for a culturally diverse audience. Many of the SO-CLOSE participants have experienced traumatic moments in their lives²¹, which require additional considerations when holding events and exposing them to possibly triggering content. To create inclusionary and accessible spaces for all, we will pay special attention to the needs and experiences of these participants.

7. Guidelines for implementation

The following section offers step-by-step guidelines for the curatorial steps of 1. Storytelling, 2. Historical connections, and 3. Accessibility.

7.1 Storytelling guidelines: How to embed content in narratives – The ICONO concept

Heritage, both in its practices and theory, in many ways profits from storytelling: while researchers receive (and sometimes co-create) narratives to be analyzed and interpreted,

¹⁸ European Audiovisual Observatory publishes state of the art on European Media Law - Which EU countries have transposed the AVMSD into national legislation? In: European Audiovisual Observatory, [online] https://www.obs.coe.int/en/web/observatoire/home/-/asset_publisher/9iKCxBYgiO6S/content/which-eu-countries-have-transposed-the-avmsd-into-national-legislation-?_101_INSTANCE_9iKCxBYgiO6S_viewMode=view/

¹⁹ Audiovisual and Media Services. In: European Commission, Policies, [online] <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/audiovisual-and-media-services>

²⁰ European Accessibility Act. In: European Commission, Policies and Activities, [online] <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1202>

²¹ Human rights are for all people! In: European Disability Forum, [online] <https://www.edf-feph.org/migration-and-refugees-with-disabilities/>. George, Miriam. "Migration traumatic experiences and refugee distress: Implications for social work practice." *Clinical Social Work Journal* 40, no. 4 (2012): 429-437.





practitioners eagerly use stories as vehicles to convey diverse meanings, often by connecting them with specific localities. Storytelling remains to be one of the most significant semantic activities also for its potential to contextualize biographies of individuals in the perspective of historical contexts and as such enhancing interpretations that may encourage developing some civil skills and competencies. While narrativity may be a natural way of deriving meaning out of unrelated events and objects, one of the most important educational characteristics is allowing users to reflect upon the relation between the individual and the collective, between social structure and agency and between representations of the past and their interpretations.

Therefore, storytelling plays several fundamental roles in the domain of heritage. Firstly, it structures the diversity of available facts, figures, events etc. By applying specific narrative structures to the complexity of the world of both the past and the present, messages (“morals”, “lessons to be learnt”) can be formulated and communicated. Secondly, the situation of storytelling allows for a personal connection between the narrator and the audience, who are symbolically taken on a trip where they can follow the protagonists in their struggles, face their dilemmas or feel their happiness. The linearity of the story, combined with its symbolic density, results, however, in many reductions and simplifications which in turn may lead to generalizations if not stereotyping. Yet, storytelling allows deconstruction and interpretation *after* the completion of the story, which fosters discussions about values, norms, and meanings – as they are presented in and can be interpreted from the stories.

It is important to reveal the narrative structures used in the presentation of heritage, to avoid conveying the feeling that the past is a fully approachable reality. The tangible representations of the past – presented for instance in museums – reflect only fragments of history and heritage; these are given new contexts and interpreted with the use of frameworks different than their original ones.

Museum exhibitions are the good examples of narrating stories illustrated with objects. It is important to make here a distinction between an object and an exhibit, where the latter represents a thing which carries a meaning, so is a meaningful/significant object. When exhibits are gathered in groups, they may be defined as collections – this is when each of them could be regarded as a word in a sentence. Collections also reveal the semantic potential of exhibits, which receive frameworks within the narratives and as such become more than a mere sum of elements.

Exhibits, as well as collections, are among the key concepts of heritage. They also have an important place within the methodology of storytelling when one might see them as “anchoring” stories in a tangible way. But there is much more than this: exhibits stand to testify that the past really happened. The more one understands the meaningful potential of the exhibits the clearer it becomes to see how important it is to reveal narrative and interpretive practices around heritage in the making (especially with the inclusion of objects in the narratives). One must realize that not only any material representation of the past is an object deprived of its original context, but it lacks unbiased interpretation, too. To (re)create the truth with the use of exhibits is, therefore, a very challenging task, often neglected in democratic museology, where it is the process of heritage interpretation that becomes a central topic for the reflection.

There are, however, very many good reasons to gather and exhibit meaningful objects and SO-CLOSE presents a valuable opportunity to collect and present exhibits which, firstly, represent individual experiences of individuals, and secondly, help to weave involving stories. Because one of the main paradigms on non-discrimination-based education is to deconstruct the alleged homogeneity of collectivities, especially personal objects allow to exemplify unique life stories. As a result, defining a group as “migrants” or “refugees” which can be perceived as an attempt to impose shared and seemingly identic identities, may become reinterpreted as a group which consists of various individuals who are indeed diverse and as such should not be seen as





homogenic. Meaningful objects which allow to anchor the individual stories to them have a good potential to diversify the image of any – allegedly homogeneous – group.

For the needs of SO-CLOSE, a small selection of interpretive activities related to personal objects has been made. The main goal of this selection has been to support project participants with the tools to organize and interpret their collections in a narrative way at the same time focusing on the functions that the personal objects can play in the processes of gathering information (for instance during interviews). Below, there is a summary of the tools that were presented during the workshop held in Monte Sole.

Objects as intermediators

Personal objects may help to relate discussions and interviews to values and experiences, which are often difficult to express. Especially with topics as sensitive as solitude, suffering, abandonment, it helps to ask interviewees to focus rather on objects than on their emotions as an introduction to the conversation/interview.

Linking objects

When the goal is to present similarities between the past and the present it may help to look for objects which were used in the past as well as in the present. In this way it may be easier to connect the past with the present when preparing exhibitions for local audiences.

Tangible metaphors

Sometimes refugees/migrants tend to use language which is full of metaphors and images. It may be useful to gather the images which are present in their testimonies and try to bring the metaphors to material reality (create objects out of metaphors). In this way there is no power of authentic objects, but instead one may gain original collections that would give food for thought just like the collections may do.

Label me!

It can be helpful to ask audiences to label and interpret objects which are left without description. Even though the descriptions may be very different to the ones provided by the owners (and the two can/should be compared) such an interpretive activity may stimulate audiences to reflect upon the meanings and – consequently – the stories embedded in objects.

Exhibits as incentives

When the migrants are asked to select and bring their own meaningful objects representing specific phenomena (such as “pain”) this can be a very good exercise for self-representation with the use of tangible objects. The fact that there is an act of selection enhances the process of interpretation allowing to relate objects to personal stories.

In museology and all GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, museums) sector the profession of curators and the job of curatorship is very well recognized. For the use of SO-CLOSE, it is proposed to **reflect upon the nature of curatorship** as a set of interpretive practices which deal with tangible objects and use the tools of storytelling for the needs of contextualization and making connections between the objects, between the audiences and objects and between other possible subject of interpretive processes. It is important to recognize an aspect of care for objects,





going beyond the conservation centered one, but in a sense of attention given to meanings that are produced during the process of revealing/negotiating meanings.

Practices of curatorship understood as giving access to personal objects should be seen as both strengthening the interpretive context where various perspectives get included and enhancing cognitive processes where no ultimate control over produced interpretations can be reached, so it is specifically crucial to allow for reflection and the exchange of experiences of the visitors. With digitalization of exhibitions, it should always be reflected to what extent external interpretations of the visitors should be combined with the owners' own stories.

The ICONO concept

Curators of SO-CLOSE have been presented a simple methodology designed by SO-CLOSE researcher Łucja Piekarska-Duraj (VDA), guiding the process of curation and exhibit planning during their project work. The overall approach is called ICONO for – respectively – **I**nterpretive **C**uratorship **O**f **N**arrative **O**bjects and has been specifically developed for the use of the project by combining some practices of museology with the ones of theory of heritage. Especially the open, discursive understanding of heritage²² has been articulated when presenting the approach, as this should be seen as a fruitful context for cultural work centered around identity construction.

While ICONO will be presented more precisely in an upcoming article, below one will find a short summary of the approach consisting of the steps to undertake when curating personal objects which can (but do not have to) create a collection. For the sake of easy memorizing the approach uses the acronym PREDATOR. Its elements are:

PRECISION/ FOCUS

This is the stage when you: OBSERVE, TOUCH, SMELL, CONTEMPLATE etc. the object. The main goal for this stage is to gain the experience of being with the object in its materiality/tangibility.

REFLECTION

On this stage you try to see what the possible meanings of the object are, what connotations may be associated with it and in what meaningful contexts it can be present.

EXPRESSION

This is when you formulate questions “to” the object, in other words this is also when the curiosity of the interpreter/curator should be expressed. It is important to note down as many questions as possible.

DRAFT

After the set of questions was formulated, it is the time to prepare the first draft of the description. Combine the direct experience of “being with” the object with the topics and themes which arise from this process. Think about emotions and interests it can stir/stimulate among these who will be – just like you – interpreting it later. Is there any way you could support their interpretation process?

²² Further information on heritage interpretation can be found in: [Manual inheritance by Guy Tilkin - Issuu](#)





ATTITUDE (PERSPECTIVE FROM WHICH THE STORY WILL BE TOLD)

It is important to see what different perspectives will structure the interpretation process: the owner's one? The generalized, probable perception produced by receiving community? This is a stage of reflection – should we provide different ways of seeing the same thing? Or is it better to limit the perspectives to the one of the original owner/user? Why?

TOTAL

Now change the angle to get the wider context for the story woven around the exhibit. Remember that for many visitors the object and especially its owner/user will be perceived as representatives of their communities.

ORAL

This is the moment for formulating keywords and telling the story to others. In museums this is when we “rehearse” before the real guided tours. This is also when the storyteller observes which parts of her/his story work well and which could be improved.

RELEVANCE

If there was one “home take message”, what would it be? Besides the unique and particular story of the object, what important topics/problems/issues can be raised? What kind of knowledge/skills/awareness can be awakened by the way of telling the story of this object? Can there be a “call for action” so can anything be done about the story/topic? Why does it actually matter?

Using the PREDATOR approach to personal objects works best with authentic exhibits-to-be. The main role of curators could be summarized as supporting the interpretive process where the meanings can be revealed and shared. In this way, both precise focus on the object itself as well as careful work with how the object should be presented is crucial.

These steps and reflections allow a critical, considerate, and inclusive engagement with the objects and object owners/creators throughout the process of storytelling.

The following section elaborates additional steps to consider when moving from a general story idea and the connection between objects and concepts, on to the task of filling the digital tools with the final stories.

Digital storytelling

Firstly, throughout the entire process, keep in mind the overall aim of the project:

- to serve as an amplifier for the refugees' voices and their reality, in an enriched context, with content related to the forced displacement heritage of the host societies
- to promote co-creation and collaborative approaches through participatory methodologies and user contribution features

These aims are the underlying motivation behind all steps and need to be considered continuously.





The digital sharing tools each offer a framework for how to tell a specific story (i.e. displacement focus within the story map), however, the tool framework is just a small part of the SO-CLOSE storytelling. Several points can be identified that can guide you through the process of filling the tools with content and, thereby, effectively creating digital stories:

1. Defining your story: What story are you telling?

To answer above question, consider the following:

- Who is involved?
- From what point of view is your story being told?
- How many parts does the story have? How are they connected?
- Is it an interactive open-ended story or does it have a clear beginning and end?

Write down a short, concise, and clear text (no more than 350 words) to describe your story. Break down the narrative into different stages to create a story flow. Once a clear story concept is defined, the question of which media types (photography, video, audio, etc.) are the most suitable to tell your story.

2. Choosing the right media types for your story.

This is a decision to define in close collaboration with the refugees as they are the creators of the media (photographers, filmmakers, etc.) or owners of the objects that will be displayed. What are their technological skills? How do they want to visualize their stories? But also, which recording devices do you have available?

Optimize the media content. Avoid too long videos that use up viewers' data (if they use their mobile phones). Avoid too long texts that do not hold viewers' attention. Be selective about the content included in the final story and focus on those that generate the kind of emotions/reactions in line with your story idea. Do not "waste space" on unnecessary material. Be strict with what makes the cut.

3. Getting viewers to engage with your content and then holding their attention.

The amount of digital content available is constantly growing. Every product is competing with numerous others for audience attention. Start your story with a scene that provokes thoughts or emotions (beginning), hold the viewer's interest with questions to be answered and by creating expectations (middle), resolve expectations at the end, while also leaving the audience with thought-provoking ideas (food-for-thought). Choose carefully which sections shall generate impactful reactions (calls-for-actions). Do not overload the viewers, but instead highlight your main messages for maximum impact.

4. Coordinating the production process.

As the above points have shown, the process might start with a rough story idea, but then continues with creating a clear concept, gathering, selecting, and editing content, testing the story on various devices, etc. Create a clear timetable, breaking down each step into mini goals. It might help to start at the end with the day you are planning to publish the story and go backwards to outline each step.

Once you have a clear story outline and appropriate material, take your time to experiment with the tools. What features do the tools allow? What effects occur if you switch around the order of different story elements? How is the flow of the story? Can it be improved? Gather feedback from colleagues or stakeholders.





7.2 Guidelines on how to connect past and present cultural memories

The purpose of connecting past and present experiences is to highlight the commonalities of forced mass displacement. These experiences of mass displacement and the heritage they have generated and continue to generate can be used to better understand both the past and the present, and to strengthen the ties between the displaced populations through the historicization and contextualization of their experiences.²³ As one formerly displaced Greek woman stated, when she was watching Syrian refugees coming off packed fishing boats, “it’s like a mirror to the past. The hardest thing is having to witness the arrival of children.”²⁴ This active use of heritage may help societies to remember the past to reinterpret it through the experiences of the present which take place in the context of interactions between local communities and refugees. This can be defined as memorialization process.

In this regard, it is very important to note that we do not compare historical facts (for example the WWII with the Syrian War) but experiences of displaced populations in different historical contexts and/or settings.

Each CI will model the activities and content gathering process depending on its historical and geographical context guided by these pillars. The recommended steps are:

1. CIs are responsible for gathering the archival material regarding the past. Gather experiences of the displaced population in the past (testimonies, photographs etc.) regarding a concrete historical fact, which has been already selected on the basis of the interviews and the FGs (for example WWII in the case of Italy, Greek Civil War in the case of Greece etc.). OR at least know which concrete historical fact you are going to use, what kind of archival material (testimonies, photographs etc.) and where you will find it.

2. Refugees are in charge of gathering and/or creating the material regarding the present. The material could be either material that the refugees have produced in the past and/or new material produced for the purposes of the project. Recruit refugees, possibly those already familiar with your institution, who have shown special interest and have participated in previous activities. If this is not possible, recruit other refugees who are interested in the project and in concrete in the co-creation of the content of the tools.

It can be helpful to **hold (several) meetings and/or workshops** with the refugees responsible for the co-creation of the content for the tools to coordinate the process. Highlight the co-creational approach of the content gathering and identify the necessary steps from idea (story) to product (content-filled tool). Second, provide the refugees with all the relevant information on historical contexts of the past experiences of displacement, as well as the past experiences (testimonies, photographs etc.) you wish to highlight. Third, contextualize and historicize these past experiences and establish connections to the present, identify common patterns with the participants’ own experiences of present displacement. Explain the concrete historical context in which these past experiences took place (for example in Greece, the forced female displacement during the Greek Civil War) and talk about the ways the displaced persons (in the Greek case, the women) reacted to their situation (self-organization, etc.). Then, create the safe conditions for your participant to react and to share similarities and differences. Keep in mind that those who

²³ Gatrell, Peter: *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013; Gatrell, Peter: “Refugees—What’s Wrong with History?”, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 30:2, (2017), pp. 170-189; Peter GATRELL et al.: “Reckoning with Refugeedom: Refugee Voices in Modern History”, *Social History*, 46:1, (2021), pp. 70-95; Marfleet, Philip: “Refugees and History: Why We Must Address the Past”, *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 26:3, (2007), pp. 136-148.

²⁴ Nidale Abou Mrad: *The Greek Refugees Who Fled to the Middle East in WWII*, BBC News, June 20, 2016.





have already experienced displacement can more easily draw parallels between the past and the present through their experiences. The following are some examples taken from the interviews and the focus groups in Greece:

“But if I’m sending a message to the European people to understand refugees, it’s very easy. Just go to World War II, and the war in Syria. Because unfortunately, it’s the worst crisis after World War II. So, it’s the longest war, and it’s the biggest number of people who got displaced and became refugees around the world. If you read about the history of World War II and after, it will be easy for you to go to refugees and understand what that means” (GFR_Refugees_Interviews_46).

“I just saw these photos and I remembered the camp of Moria that we were in, exactly the same but 50-60 years before. And they were, as we are, out of society. They obliged them to live far away. And they want us far away or on an island, the camps to be far from the city. I see these queues that did then and now are exactly the same. [...] But that was 70 years ago, and it may be accepted by some. But now it is not acceptable. That is the difference. Today all this is even worse, these queues for food and water. We do not need to talk only about Moria. Moria is an example. But near Schistos or Malakasa [other installations for refugees], people are waiting in line; for two or three hours we waited for the food in the queue. The women had at least one photo, one memory. We, in Samos, where we were, there was a big sign that photos were forbidden. All the photos that come out of there were illegal” (GFR_Refugees_FG1).

“Indeed, I have experienced the situation shown by these photos, I have seen all this with my own eyes. In the 1990s, when the Kurds left for Iran and Turkey, a series of cars crossed the border. Women who washed their children with a litter of water and may not wash them for two or three days. We have experienced exactly the same situation. And these camps that I see, the same had been made in ‘88, when they threw us from our villages. Indeed, too many men had moved and only women remained in these closed concentration camps. I, in ‘88, I was 16 years old and a student at the time, I experienced this thing very intensely then. That is, everything we see now with these women, we experienced everything and even worse. Whatever I say I cannot describe it. [...] So, we have experienced similar images, conditions, situations four or five times in Kurdistan in recent history. Personally, I was very moved by the photos because I have lived it three of the four times, in ‘88 and ‘91 and ‘96” (GFR_Refugees_FG4).

The refugees involved in this process ideally are encouraged to reach out to you whenever they feel they have doubts, questions or in general they want to talk about the co-creation of the tools.

3. Collectively identify common patterns between the experiences of the displaced population in the past and present. In all cases, the main common pattern is war/conflict and displacement. Mass displacement has a systemic character; displacement has always been part of the global order. So, historically speaking there are many common patterns as cited below:

- The person and their legal status: who from 1943 till 1951, we called a DP (displaced person)²⁵, is nowadays referred to as a refugee or as an internally displaced person

²⁵ From 1943 to 1951 the legal classification of DPs according to the “Allied Expeditionary Force” (SHAEF) included evacuees, refugees, political prisoners, forced or volunteer laborers, the “Todt workers”, and former members of the forces under German command, deportees, intruders and extruders, interned civilians, former prisoners of war, anti-Nazi fighters and stateless persons. In the end, however, the acronym DP was applied exclusively to the victims of Hitler and Stalin, limiting the political entitlement to non-German European refugees of WWII. See Wyman, M.: *DPs: Europe’s Displaced Persons, 1945-1951*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1998, p. 25; Reinisch, Jessica: “Old Wine in New Bottles? UNRRA and the Mid-Century World of Refugees,” in Frank, M., Reinisch, J.(ed.), *Refugees in Europe, 1919-1959. A Forty Years’ Crisis?* New York, Bloomsbury, 2017, p. 154





(IDP)²⁶. What kind of legal status and therefore protection and rights had/have these persons in the past and the present? Were/are they protected and how? And how does this affect their situation?

- How was/is the international/national protection recognized and executed? What are/were the agreements between countries/EU (for example the illegal mass returns have a long history)?
- What are the reasons and/or motivations behind the forced displacement? The reasons usually fall within these categories: occupation by foreign forces, famine, bombings, violence, persecution, political, gender/sexual and/or religious reasons etc.
- How was the experience of the trip and its difficulties: crossing borders, the sea, the money needed, the boats, the traffickers, the shipwrecks and drownings, separation of families, the behavior of the authorities, bribes, sexual harassment, any kind of help etc.
- How was the experience of the camps, hot spots and/or spaces constructed especially for refugees: deprivation of human rights, living conditions, hygiene and diseases, food and water, education, violence, segregation, gender, overcrowded spaces, trapped for months or years, the role of private charities/NGOs, the stances of the local population, self-organization and empowerment, personal skills, and knowledge background etc.
- How was the experience of the return and/or the integration into the host country: temporary or permanent displacement, repatriation, political, religious, or gender reasons impeding repatriation, assessment of the human rights situation in the place of origin, prolongation of war, impossibility of return, integration process, challenges, sources of support, access to cultural heritage etc.

4. The next step is to **write the script**. It is very important to have a script or at least an idea of what you want to narrate before starting to produce new material. The refugees will write the script with constant help, guidance and feedback from the cultural institution. Make sure that all stories connect the past and present. Once the first draft is finished, hold as many meetings as needed to work out the details of how to realize the script. The CIs role in the script-writing process is to assist the refugees in whatever they need, ensure respectful inclusion of different narratives that might coexist in relation to particular historical episodes, as well as that they attach to academically verified narratives. Give emphasis on the re-creation of narratives and identities, while avoiding victimhood, and prevent inflammatory comments or points of view that could be characterized as racist, nationalist, sexist, or xenophobic. For more details on the script-writing process, please see Chapter 7.1 Storytelling guidelines (specifically: Digital storytelling).

5. Lastly, facilitate the gathering and editing of the material in any way possible (for example, by providing the technology like cameras and recording tools, organizing permissions for entering into the camps, finding local people to interview, etc.). Make clear that they have to obtain consent forms for everyone who appears in a video/image etc. Explain how to register the material to upload it to the tools and the MCP. Once they have gathered the items, ask them to send them in so as to ensure that they have the know-how to upload the material in the right way.

²⁶ From 1950-1951, with the creation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which is still in force, an international humanitarian law was developed that guarantees the protection of displaced persons both across borders, the refugees, and also within their own countries, the internally displaced persons (IDPs). The 1951 Convention, however, was applicable only to those who had become refugees in Europe as a result of events occurring before January 1, 1951, while excluding thousands of displaced persons who were outside its geographical and chronological boundaries. From 1967, however, the Convention became the universal international instrument for the protection of refugees, eliminating the chronological and geographical limitations. See Marfleet, P.: *Refugees and History: Why We Must Address the Past*, Refugee Survey Quarterly, 26:3, (2007), p. 139; Zimmermann, A. (eds.): *The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol: A Commentary*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011; Gatrell, P. et al.: *Reckoning with Refugeeedom: Refugee Voices in Modern History*, Social History, 46:1, (2021), p. 78.





7.3 Accessibility: How to create accessible content and Open Day events

Accessibility features need to be part of every step of the implementation process²⁷. This starts with the accessible tool features already developed in WP3, continues with the content gathering and editing, and then culminates in the Open Day Event on which the tools get presented to the public²⁸. Rodríguez-Zulaica and Fernández-Villarán Ara²⁹ stress the relevance of including sensitivity training for venue staff to accompany event attendees with a broad range of potential disabilities, as not all are visible or physical. In case CI's members do not already have such training, they (and all future curators) should receive training on accessibility.

Accessible media production

Accessible media production has to be taken into consideration already at the time of content gathering, during editing and finally when embedding the content in the tools. Several online sources are available for in-depth approaches to accessible media production³⁰, i.e. W3C offers free guidelines in English, but a lot of time needs to be invested to go through all the documents. ISO guidelines are also available online in English, but only for a downloading charge. To ease the CIs media production phase, the following section addresses the most relevant steps.

Accessibility services

Firstly, always consider alternative forms of communicating your information:

1. Give a spoken output as alternative to visual information³¹
2. Give a signed output as alternative to oral information
3. Give a written output as alternative to oral information³²

These services work as alternative or enhancing communication. Alternative ways to provide audio visual content are the objective of these services which go from audio description to translation. All these services offer many possibilities when being created and delivered, as the technical requirements for each situation:

- Audio Description
- Subtitles (translation)
- Subtitling for the Deaf and the Hard-of-hearing (same language subtitles)
- Sign language interpreting
- Surtitling
- Audio subtitling
- Audio introduction
- Easy to read

²⁷ See Fresco, Pablo Romero. "Accessible filmmaking in documentaries." Intralinea (2017).

²⁸ Montagud, Matamala, and Orero. *Culture 4 all: accessibility-enabled cultural experiences through immersive VR360 content*. Pers Ubiquit Comput 24, 887–905 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00779-019-01357-3>

²⁹ Rodríguez-Zulaica, Ainara, and Asunción Fernández-Villarán Ara. "Measuring accessibility in MICE venues: 209The case of the Euskalduna Conference Centre (Bilbao, Spain)." In *Accessibility, inclusion, and diversity in critical event studies*, pp. 209-217. Routledge, 2018.

³⁰ For subtitling see ILSA: *Media and live events accessibility*, for audio description see ADLAB <http://www.adlabproject.eu/Docs/adlab%20book/index.html> and ADLAB PRO <https://www.adlabpro.eu/coursematerials/>

³¹ See Fryer: *An introduction to audio description*. (2016) London: Routledge

³² Matamala and Orero (eds). *Listening to subtitles. Subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing*. (2010) Peter Lang, Berna





- Translation
- Braille
- Induction loop
- Touch tour
- Secondary screens
- Companion assistant

Audiovisual accessibility

Audiovisual media content has two channels: audio and video. In both cases, special attention should be given to the production process. In the two sections below, we have highlighted the most relevant aspects of the W3C guidelines on how to think of accessibility for webpages. For audio and video when designing, producing and post-producing content require also different treatment.

Accessibility for audio recordings

- **Use clear language:** Avoid or explain jargon, acronyms, and idioms. For example, expressions such as “raising the bar” can be interpreted literally by some people and can be confusing³³.
- **Be user-friendly:** Make your information work for people who cannot see and/or cannot hear. For example, instead of saying ‘Attach this to the green end’, say ‘Attach the small ring to the green end, which is the larger end’. Be descriptive.
- **Speak clearly and slowly:** This is important for people wanting to understand the content, also for captioners/subtitlers. It will enable listeners to understand better, and make the timing better for captions/subtitles, sign language interpreters, and automatic subtitles/captions.
- **Pause between topics** to give people time to process information. Avoid speakers talking at the same time.
- **Use high-quality microphone(s) and recording software:** When feasible, record in a room that is isolated from all external sounds. Avoid rooms with hard surfaces, such as tile or wood floors. Specifically, make the background sounds at least 20 decibels lower than the foreground speech content (with the exception of occasional sounds that last for only one or two seconds). Avoid sounds that can be distracting or irritating, such as some high pitches and repeating patterns. Close your window to avoid external sounds like: traffic, sirens, building work, lorries or motorbikes passing etc.
- **Use low background audio:** When the main audio is a person speaking and you have background music, set the levels so people can easily distinguish the speaking from the background.

Accessibility for video recording

- **Plan for audio description of visual information:** Audio description provides content to people who are blind and others who cannot see the video. It describes the visual information needed to understand the content, including text displayed in the video³⁴.
Plan to either:
 - o Integrate audio description into the main audio content:
For some videos, such as presentations and instructional videos, the best way to handle audio description is not to need it at all — that is, all the visual information that users

³³ See Vercauteren. *Towards a European guideline for audio description*. (2007) In: Media for all Vol. 30. Brill.

³⁴ See Maszerowska, Matamala, and Oreo (Eds) *Audio Description. New perspectives illustrated*. (2014) Amsterdam: Benjamins.





need to understand the content is integrated in the main audio. When planned in advance, see Audio recording: Use clear language.

Example: Before a video with a talking head, you can introduce the speaker, even better, the speaker can do the introduction: Hello, I am Jane Smith, I am a tall dark woman wearing glasses. I am sitting in my study with two plants and a bookshelf, and you may hear my dog who is in the other room.

or

- o Record the audio and video with timing to accommodate separate description:
For some types of videos, such as dramas, the description of the visual information cannot be smoothly handled by the speakers in the main video. For those videos, the description will be separate.
Where the description is fairly short, plan space in the audio to add the description.
Where the description is longer than you want to leave space in the main audio, you can record extra time in the scene to accommodate the description without having to pause the scene.
- **Consider speaker visibility:** Some people use mouth movement (lip reading) to help understand spoken language. When feasible, ensure that the speaker's face is visible and in good light. Frame the speaker to allow space below for subtitles/captions, and make sure captions/subtitles are never overlaid on the speaker's face.
- **Avoid the risk of causing seizures:** Do not use any visual elements that flash more than three times in any one second period. Example: lights in a police car or ambulance.
- **Make overlay text readable:** For any text, consider a sans serif font family, size, and contrast between the text and background. Make sure overlay text does not obstruct the face of the speaker or the subtitles. Make sure any text on the screen is read aloud. Examples: Jane Smith, scuba diving instructor. Tokyo, 2018. The night before.

The three SO-CLOSE sharing tools (Webdoc, Story Map, Virtual Exhibition) offer easy opportunities to allow A or AA accessibility requirements. As explained earlier, before you generate audiovisual content you will need to add subtitles, audio description, or sign language - amongst many other accessibility services. How do you create subtitles or audio description? You will need an editor. These tools allow for the time text generation of subtitles, audio description or sign language. There are many open-source editors such as Subtitle workshop or Aegisub³⁵.

³⁵ If you would like to learn how to make your own subtitles or audio description there are some free courses: **Audio description:** <https://www.coursera.org/lecture/accessibility-scenic-arts/audio-description-Agqpo>. **Subtitling:** <https://www.stagetext.org/news/complete-our-free-digital-subtitling-training/>





Accessible Open Day Events

Design the accessibility of the Open Day as you start to organize the event, with usability for the widest number of users in mind³⁶. Walters³⁷ introduces the idea of the tripartite approach to a) improve accessibility in events and b) to decrease the risk of focusing on mainstream stigmatized groups. To avoid stigmatization and to promote equal accessibility, the researcher proposes to focus on what she calls “three types of accessibility”: physical accessibility, financial accessibility, and cognitive accessibility (i.e., mental and emotional wellbeing). She suggests curators take into account these three interconnected aspects when planning an event.

Cultural institutions should take into consideration both indoor and outdoor spaces, recorded and live interactions, and other basic services which fall outside physical accessibility but deem indispensable by user requirements. A CI may for example have accessible toilets and a ramp to access, still the end user may not be able to attend because there is a lack of parking for an adapted vehicle, or a guide dog may be refused entrance. In broad terms you will need to plan:

- Access to the premises, the building, and its facilities: wide doors, ramps, parking, lifts, etc.
- Accessible ticket purchases (if necessary): online or on-site
- Accessible advertisement of the event: for example, you may want to use easy-to-read information, both for texts and the layout of the information. Consider the languages your target groups are most likely to speak.
- Ask participants about their needs: One option could be to include an explicit question in the invitation that enquires about specific needs to be accommodated.

Many websites offer checklists to make your event accessible. You can find recommended examples here:

- <https://accessibility.cornell.edu/event-planning/accessible-meeting-and-event-checklist/>
- <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/equality-areas/disability-equality/tips-checklist-making-events-accessible>
- <https://www.socialtables.com/blog/event-planning/accessibility-guidelines/>

You may also want to do a free course on media accessibility for events:
<https://es.coursera.org/learn/accessibility-scenic-arts>

Accessibility toolkit – before you prepare an event check the following items:

1. Understand the accessibility and audiences in your context

- Know the basic concepts of inclusion and accessibility in your event
- Critical understanding of the concept of accessibility for everyone

³⁶ These guidelines can be useful additional sources:

Saks and Orero: FSTP.ACC-RemPart **Guidelines for supporting remote participation in meetings for all**. Geneva: ITU (2015), [FSTP.ACC-RemPart - Guidelines for supporting remote participation in meetings for all \(itu.int\)](#)

Saks and Orero: FSTP-AM **Guidelines for accessible meetings**. Geneva: ITU (2015), [Technical Paper \(itu.int\)](#)

³⁷ Walters, Trudie. "A tripartite approach to accessibility, diversity, and inclusion in academic conferences." In *Accessibility, inclusion, and diversity in critical event studies*, pp. 230-241. Routledge, (2018).





- Be aware of the requirements for an accessible event (national, international, and other requirements relevant for your context)
- Understand the audience requirements

2. Accessibility-prove the venue

Current accessibility conditions of the venue and the areas requiring improvement.

- Accessible public transport and parking
- Accessibility requirements for toilets, rooms, and seating
- Accessibility requirements for rain/wind/sun shelters
- Accessibility requirements for service animals
- Accessibility requirements for signs/maps/information
- Architectural risks of the venue
- Accessibility requirements for lighting, furniture, and space

3. Get ready for the event

Familiarize yourself with:

- How to present the needs and benefits for accessibility
- How to develop and implement an accessibility policy within the venue
- How to estimate the costs implication of accessibility solutions
- How to involve relevant stakeholders: identification and involvement
- How to collaborate with relevant organisations: internally and externally
- How to choose the right channels of communication used by accessibility service users
- How to promote the event through online and social media in an accessible way

8. Conclusions

The present guidelines are based on the existing theories and build on the previous deliverables of the project.

They aim to be useful tools in the hands of the CIs that face the task of implementing the tools in their local context and preparing the Open Day events during the spring and summer of 2022. The guidelines are sufficiently specific so as to talk to the needs of SO-CLOSE and of its partners, and to respond to our project's general objectives. They discuss the concrete approaches in which the cultural heritage of refugees and migrants can be told with the help of the digital tools developed by our technical partners in WP3. They also instruct the CIs on how to think about bringing the past in dialogue with the present and how to do so in a way that is accessible for the widest variety of public.

At the same time, these guidelines are general enough so as to remain transferrable to different contexts. In other words, we do not tell the CIs what to do, we invite them to consider the instructions presented above. Each CI will adapt the guidelines to their own context. In this way, we also ensure the long-term usability of our tools, their transferability to other contexts than the ones in SO-CLOSE and the sustainability of our project.

