

Study: Higher Education engagement in citizen enhanced open science in the area of cultural heritage

The study is part of [CitizenHeritage](#) EU-funded project

Study leader: [Katerina Zourou](#), Ph.D., [Web2Learn](#), Greece

The importance of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in supporting and promoting open science is highlighted in several EU policies. Among them, the 2017 *Report of the Working Group on Education and Skills under Open Science* emphasises the need to shape HE students/next generation researchers as “open science citizens”. More precisely:

“The European Research Area (ERA) should work in closer collaboration with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (...), enabling the next generations of researchers to evolve as Open Science citizens. (...) New generations of scientists and researchers, as the driving force for innovation and economic growth, are of vital importance to Europe's future competitiveness and leadership” (p. 16).

Moreover, the Erasmus+ 2020 programme guide highlights the importance of “knowledge-creating teams of students and academics, possibly together with researchers, businesses, regional actors and civil society actors (that) (...) address together societal and other challenges of their choice in a multi-disciplinary approach through innovative learning and training that equip students and researchers with high-level, entrepreneurial, Open Science and transferable skills”.

Output 1 of the CitizenHeritage project problematises the role of HEIs as incubators of the next generation open science citizens (in terms of HE staff and student skills, curricula and interdisciplinarity) and as institutions situated in a broader social context where citizens advocate a more important role in decision taking in modern societies (active citizenship, civic engagement, bottom-up public intervention).

Although open and citizen science offers opportunities to HEIs to break with a more traditional image of knowledge creation behind walled gardens and to genuinely connect with social groups, there is still untapped potential for HEI involvement in CeOS and also for connecting user engagement generated through civic participation with the open science cycle.

The overall goal of Output 1 is to produce a substantial, evidence-based review of practices of Higher Education engagement in citizen enhanced open science in the area of cultural heritage. It will define best practices regarding HEI organisation, open practice, sustainability, and civic engagement. And it will identify any untapped potential where HEIs can play a more active role and thus connect civic engagement with the open science virtuous circle in the cultural heritage sector.

Output 1 is composed of O1A1 (**desktop research**), O1A2 (**report on findings of the desktop research**) and O1A3 (**infographics**).

O1A1: desktop research

This activity will produce the methodology for the analysis to be conducted under O1A2. Two methodological tools will be used: desktop research and a survey. Desktop research will be based on a review of studies, reports, research publications and policy findings at a national (participating counties) and European level. It will be complemented by a survey, to be filled out by at least 80 individuals. The respondents will be carefully identified and will fit into the following profile: stakeholders belonging to the cultural heritage sector, either within academia or outside it (at cultural heritage institutions) who have been involved in some form of citizen science, crowd-sourcing or co-creation activities. The type of citizen engagement may vary and the survey will also be an opportunity to map the range of Cultural Heritage citizen participation initiatives that took place.

O1A1 will particularly consider cases that contain a minimum open dimension (e.g. open access to the results of a civic engagement activity, or an open access collection of pictures co-created during the engagement activity, or a data set allowing re-use and re-purposing). The study will not include types of citizen engagement that do not comply with a minimum of openness, as for instance crowdsourcing activities where results have been behind paywalls, or activities where civic participation has been neglected to the detriment of a proprietary use of project results by the initiator of the activity.

The study will also include cases in which universities (belonging to CitizenHeritage partnership or otherwise) are involved in citizen engagement activities. These events can either be initiated by an HEI or an HEI can play a role in the public activity organised/hosted by another institution.

O1A2 Study: a report on findings of the desktop research

A report will summarise the results of O1A1 research with the aim of creating a knowledge base of the current trends on HEI participation in citizen science activities in cultural heritage. The report will also document “grey zones” that impede successful implementation, as a means to raise awareness about some of the major obstacles and pitfalls in design, implementation, assessment and sustainability at HEIs and stakeholder groups they collaborate with.

O1A3 Infographics on HEI role in CeOS in the cultural heritage sector

The team will develop a set of visual representations (infographics) of the performance of HEIs in citizen engagement in the cultural heritage sector. The aim being to raise awareness on the current societal role of HEIs among HEI management and staff. The infographics will also highlight practices that have been developed to help cultural heritage public events have an impact on the open science cycle.

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