

**“Local mapping of old and new
crafts”- Phase C
IISS Alessandro Volta
(Palermo, Italy)**



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CITIZEN-CULTURAL HERITAGE

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This report has been written by students in IISS Alessandro Volta who participated in training sessions and workshops in ouRoute project, in order to investigate old & new crafts from the territory of Palermo (Italy) where IISS A.Volta high school is located.

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1 Introduction to project aims, objectives and ideas

We are a group of students aged **14-15 yo** (lower high school in the Italian school system) who have been trained by our peers from Phase B in ouRoute, together with the help of our teachers.

During our training, we mainly expressed our interest on knowing more about Sicilian traditional crafts and people who keep these crafts alive.

Our training focused on:

- definition of culture and cultural heritage;
- avoiding common mistakes when referring to **“tangible cultural heritage”** and **“intangible cultural heritage”**, by understanding the difference between the two notions;
- definition of “crafts”; including the experience and expertise of the rural/ancient/traditional crafts typical of our territory;
- identify the main stakeholders from the craft sector and craft manufacturing in our city, so to engage them participating in our debates, focus groups and interviews. We elaborated the agenda for the focus group and sent invitations by mail.
- brainstorm on the main questions to be posed to our stakeholders, and start creating a model of questionnaire that we used for both interviews and focus group in our research phases.

All evidences and materials from our training can be found here:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1iTrh_NKIZntSn5OsWASZuqLusAYaZfx



Figure 1. screenshot of the PowerPoint presentation used during our brainstorming on culture. We adopted the Tylor definition of culture (culture includes knowledge, values, habits, but also a series of objects and materials typical of a group of people)

2 The research phase

2.1 Preparatory workshops

Once agreed on a common vision of what culture is, we met in different workshops where we started elaborating our questions for the interviews and focus group with our local stakeholders, and at the same time, we planned our study visit.

Figure 2. Action plan

| | | |
|------------|------------------------------|---|
| 07/02/2020 | in presence | Recruitment new 25 students Phase C |
| 25/06/2020 | online workshop | Students from phase B met Laura and the teachers so check their progress on the writing of Local Mapping of old & new arts report, to be delivered before the end of July 2020. students from phase B wrote their training program for students of phase c, but no workshop yet because of the coronavirus. In september, we organise online workshop for students Phase C, already selected. |
| 29/10/2020 | online workshop peer-to-peer | Students from phase B met the students from Phase C, and start exploring old & new crafts. They used Kahoot and other digital tools to create quizz and animate this session about the discovery of new crafts. They start brainstorm about questions they want to ask to the stakeholders, so to organize 10 interviews + 1 focus group with 10 craftsmen |
| 19/11/2020 | online workshop peer-to-peer | Students start editing their questionnaires for the interviews/focus group for the craftsmen |
| 26/11/2020 | online workshop peer-to-peer | Finalisation of the questionnaires and next steps |
| 2/12/2020 | online workshop peer-to-peer | Update on the interviews (5/10) Phase C |
| 10/12/2020 | online workshop peer-to-peer | Preparation call for craftsmen (focus group expect on January14th, we have actually 5 confirmed participants) |
| 15/12/2020 | online workshop peer-to-peer | updates on the work done so far |
| 22/12/2020 | online workshop peer-to-peer | updates on the work done so far |
| 07/01/2021 | online workshop peer-to-peer | Students exchanges on how to present the results from the Local Mapping of old & new arts during the unconferences expected mi-January 2021. They finalised the agenda for the focus group on January 14th Interviews collected and completed; students are analysing the results |
| 13/01/2021 | online workshop peer-to-peer | Preparation of the unconference (Phase B) together with the focus group Phase C, expected both on January 14th 2021 |
| 14/01/2021 | Focus group | Focus group phase C and unconference phase B |
| 22/01/2021 | Virtual study visit | Virtual study visit |

During the workshops we focused on writing our Research Protocol (brainstorming, working on small groups of five) which included the questions to be used for the interviews and the focus group.

From our preliminary discussions, it emerged our interest to know more about:

1. The **origins of a job** related to a particular artistic expression and expertise: some types of jobs are very old and traditional ones, transferred from generation to generation;
2. How this job/activity contributes to the **promotion of the cultural tangible and/or intangible heritage** in Palermo and its surroundings;
3. Compare past and present: explain **how this job/activity evolved** and which are the positive aspects or criticalities of this evolution through the time;

The questionnaires have been structured on the basis of our interest and we freely selected our stakeholders according to that. For that aim, we tried to elaborate a stakeholder engagement plan as in the table here below. Starting from that we elaborated our questions (find it in the interviews).

| Who do we want to interview? (ancient crafts) | What do we want to ask? |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Semenzaro 2. Pescatore (tonni) 3. Carrettiere 4. Ceramista 5. Ricamatrice/lavoro a tombolo 6. Intrecciatori di sedie e ceste di vimini 7. Puparo (meccanica) 8. Produttore di formaggi locali 9. Bombolaro 10. Conduttori di calessi 11. Carretto siciliano 12. Falegname 13. Fornaio 14. Altare di pane 15. Produttore di cannoli (Cerniglia) (Polizzi) 16. Vini 17. Maniscalco 18. Curatrice 19. Orafo 20. Restauratori 21. Street food: Miriana La Rocca (papà o conoscente) (Clarissa conosce la figlia di Nino u ballerino) | <p>Cosa ti appassiona del tuo lavoro? quanti anni hai iniziato a lavorare?</p> <p>Come hai imparato questo lavoro?</p> <p>Perché il tuo lavoro fa parte della cultura palermitana?</p> <p>Che cos'è per te la cultura palermitana?</p> <p>Qual è il futuro del tuo lavoro?</p> <p>Ti aiuta qualcuno?</p> |

Figure 3: Stakeholder engagement plan (the translated questions in EN can be found in next chapter where we analyse the main findings from the focus group, the interviews and the study visit)

3 The discovery activities

3.1 The focus group

During the focus group, held online on January 14th, 2021 we focused on the promotion of the ancient local crafts and how crafts survive from generation to generation, funding new opportunities in these challenging and very difficult pandemic times.

During the first focus group (Phase B) we focused on the Sicilian dialect and all other popular expressions, including the storytelling technique “*cantastorie*” but also the art of puppets etc.

On the contrary, during this focus group (Phase C) we realized how the ancient **Sicilian crafts are strongly linked to food and local gastronomic culture**, where food represents one of the most widespread forms of intangible culture in Sicily.

During the focus group, different craftsmen have been involved: potters, winegrowers, anthropologists, art historians, restorers. These stakeholders have different expertise and sector of activity, but they have a common dimension linked to the enhancement of local food and its preservation as intangible cultural heritage. For example, one of the restorers was specifically involved in restoring the ancient boats used for the traditional tuna fishing. **The food still witnesses the cultural transmission in Sicily over the time.** Let's think that Sicily was a place of Arab and Norman dominations which attributed different elements and meanings to food.

We analysed how the traditional winemaking technique still be important to enhance and revive ancient traditions, but also to promote new tourist flows linked to food and wine thus allowing the promotion of the territory and the local economy. In Sicily, **wine has also entered symbolism and religion**. It's a real cultural aspect and not just something related to food consumption. The grape cultivation technique in Pantelleria, Sicily has been included in the UNESCO intangible heritage list:

<http://www.unesco.it/it/PatrimonioImmateriale/Detail/382>

From the focus group, we concluded that our culture, with its eno-gastronomic peculiarities, is alive because of its past and present reworkings and cultural influences.

Some evidences and materials from the focus group can be found here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1qCcLhVnP_fL1ZHwYqnFYHNV2sHopn5_R

3.2 The interviews

Here below, the main findings from the interviews we carried out with 9 stakeholders in Palermo. All interviews and evidences can be found here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_2lv3MdGzHggYdzG2w4QhP9T0fhC3T4b

Target group: experts in viticulture, in the food and wine sector, ceramics and its producers, carpenters, paper master, restorer, cooks, tourist guides

1) What “local culture” stands for you?

For most of the interviewees, local culture is the set of social and human traditions, as well as the peculiarities of a specific population. In the context of the ancient crafts, local culture is also referred to the ancient production techniques and the ancient knowledge related to them.

Local culture is not fixed but evolves over time, based on the development of a territory, its characteristics, its people. Local culture is very important but it can also be a limit: knowing who we were is essential to understand who we are and to keep the tradition alive, from all its aspects: artistic, social, political, gastronomic, historical or whatever. It is a strong and unique sign of identity that can also foster a sense of community by bringing people together in a common set of experiences. It is therefore necessary to promote the local culture and revalue the positive traditions in the various fields of art, craftsmanship etc., transferring knowledge to the new generations

Specifically, the local “*cultura palermitana*” of Palermo (Sicily) is a set of: ancient markets, puppet theatre, fairs and popular festivals, typical products, ancient crafts, popular traditions and so on.

2) We consider you as part of our local cultural heritage, do you agree with us?

Many of the interviewees agree, because they carry out a job that is being lost over time. Many of these crafts are historical crafts and have also been used as means of dissemination of culture (for instance, writing on paper but also the decorations of wood and/or ceramics that reflect local values and traditions).

From the interviewee: “*Certainly, we are our history, we are what we do, even in small gestures we perpetuate and preserve our cultural heritage. Unfortunately, in this era we often interface with a world that asks to be universal and generic...*”

3) Could you tell us something about the history of your job? Do you think it has changed over time?

The internationalization of the markets, the technology, the bureaucratization of production processes, the new goods and the differentiation of raw materials have strongly impacted many of these crafts. Many of these crafts, however, have been preserved thanks to the family tradition and heritage.

Socio-cultural factors but also economic factors etc. contribute to the evolution of the professions over time. Last but not least, environmental factors, as some of these ancient crafts, for example viticulture, are also linked to the cycle of the seasons, the time of harvest etc. but also to the techniques of conservation of the raw material, and of processing it which obviously change over time. Surely, the industrialization of production processes and new technologies brought many changes, replacing part of the manual skills typical of these crafts (nowadays there is also a lack of workforce, many workers don’t want to work in ancient crafts).

4) When and how did you learn this job?

Many of the interviewees say they have undertaken this profession because their family and family tradition. Sometimes also thanks to the possibility of traveling and exchanging with other stakeholders in this sector of activity. In some cases, the grandparents encouraged their grandchildren to undertake a profession, a family tradition etc. Many of the interviewees have

specific professional training in their field of activity, and they often come from specialized academies and institutes. A large part of their training is based on laboratories and experiential learning, undertaken even at a young age and by observing their ancestors. Observation then turned into passion; a passion transferred from generation to generation.

5) Why do you love your job?

Some interviewees share an interest in ancient traditions, creative processes and techniques. Surely, behind every profession there are in-depth and specialized studies. Many of these have manual skills and love the touch and the smell of their products (the smell of the wood, a paper and/or a printed book...).

6) How much time do you spend on your job (per week)?

Most of these jobs usually take about 40 hours a week, but it depends a lot on the seasons and the historical-social period (for instance during the pandemic).

7) What is the impact of the pandemic on your job?

The market has experienced significant economic losses. Many businesses have closed, there were problems both with the procurement of materials and with employment and sales opportunities. Many of these crafts are also linked to tourist flows which have decreased significantly this last year 2020. Some sectors were impacted more than others, for instance the sale of ceramics (often in the form of souvenirs for tourists), the sale of typical dishes and food etc.

8) Do you usually use social media in your job?

Generally, the ancient professions are not very publicized on social networks, even if many of the interviewees declare that they have opened an Instagram and/or Facebook profile. In other cases, for example paper, the products are semi-finished products which will then be sold to others and therefore advertising occurs once the finished product is obtained.

9) What advice would you give to young people?

Surely many of these crafts require a strong passion but several manual skills (practical skills rather than theoretical knowledge), which in any case can be also acquired over time and with daily practical experience. Ancient professions require study and dedication, but also expressive-artistic abilities and talent.

10) What would you like to change in your job (now and/or in your past experience)?

Respondents are quite satisfied of their professional experiences. However, two possible needs and desires emerge:

- Carrying on the family tradition over time;
- Transforming passion into a stronger entrepreneurial reality;

- Transmit the profession as much as possible to the new generations, why not teaching crafts to pupils at school.

3.3 The virtual study visit

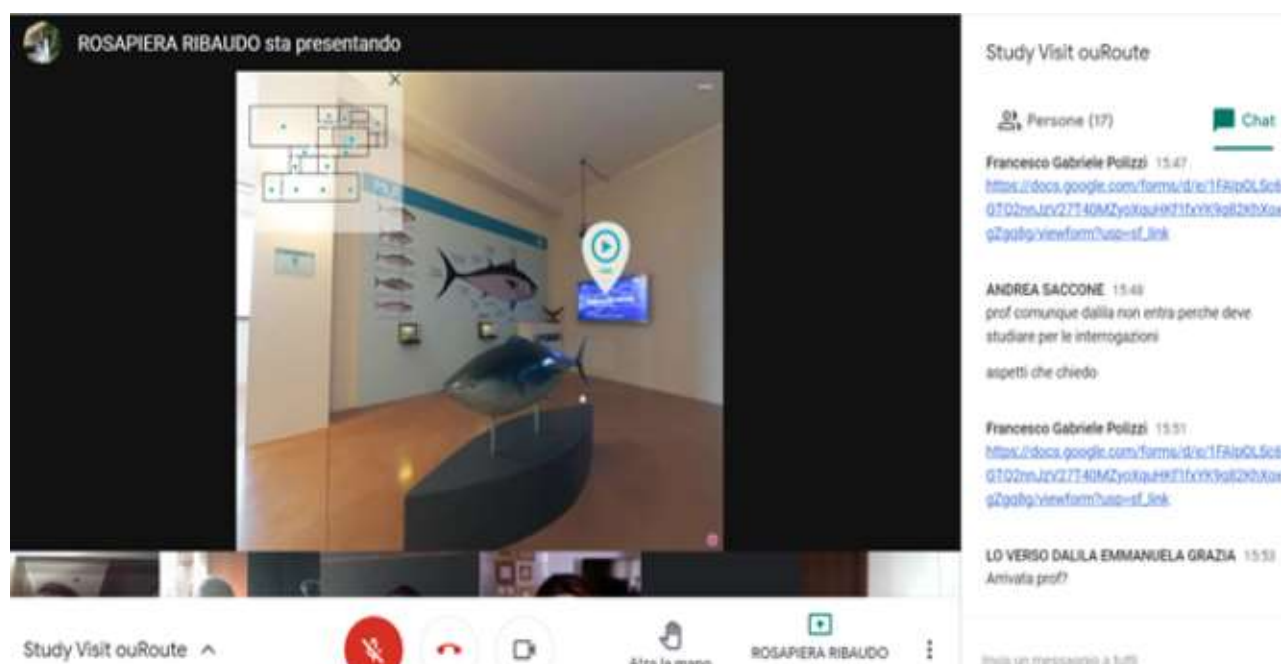
On January 22th, 2021 because of the impossibility to meet in presence, we organised our study visit online.

We opted for a virtual study visit by visiting an ancient building for tuna fishing *"la tonnara"*, in order to learn more about tuna fishing (in particular the Mediterranean bluefin tuna) and the fisherman, the *"tonnarotto"* in Sicily. The art of catching tuna dates back to the Phoenician era, but then consolidated with the Greeks and Romans. Which are the main techniques for tuna fishing and how does it work? We usually use a typical boat *"paranza"* and all boats create a sort of quadrilateral surrounding tunas. The tuna enters and shrinks into this "death chamber" where the actual slaughter takes places and tuna is captured. Prayers and songs were said at the beginning of each slaughter. However, this technique was really bloody and cruel, that's because several painters took inspiration by this event. For instance, the typical painting *"La Vucciria"* representing a market and tunas.

We also talked about how to package and sell tuna. In Sicily, the production and sell of tuna have been carried out by the "Florio" family. Most of the traps and boats belonged to the Florio family.

Tuna fishing still be part of Sicilian tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and it also represent an important link between two main cities in ouRoute, Palermo and Ceuti who is also famous for tuna fishing in the Mediterranean Sea.

Some evidences from the virtual study visit can be found here below and here: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1M_ujO2mwF1QgrgpAIAXT3clUfPFD4Rlc





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Alza la mano

Presenta ora

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Persone (15)

Chat

Francesco Gabriele Polizzi 15:36
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PUMA DINO 15:41
basta che non ci segnalano per copyright prof

Francesco Gabriele Polizzi 15:47
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ANDREA SACCONNE 15:48
prof comunque dalla non entra perche deve studiare per le interrogazioni
aspetti che chiedo

Invia un messaggio a tutti

Francesco Gabriele Polizzi sta presentando

La tradizione della mattanza: la pesca del tonno pilastro della cultura siciliana

4 Settembre 2018

Non è raro individuare grande entusiasmo nelle parole di chi ha avuto, almeno una volta nella vita, la fortuna di assistere alla mattanza. È effettivamente la pesca del tonno a una pratica antica, intrisa di molteplici significati.

Con Claudio Brancato, campione di grande sport, sempre in

PRIMOPIANO

Non presentarlo a tutti

Per chi non fosse alle debbono quando si presenta a interpretare la presentazione

Study Visit ouRoute

Persone (16)

Chat

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PUMA DINO 15:41
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Francesco Gabriele Polizzi 15:47
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ANDREA SACCONNE 15:48
prof comunque dalla non entra perche deve studiare per le interrogazioni
aspetti che chiedo

Francesco Gabriele Polizzi 15:51

Invia un messaggio a tutti

4 Evaluation and impact

Through our participation in ouRoute, we had the change to discover the ancient crafts, tools and typical traditions related to a specific job.

Many of these crafts are **part of the social, cultural and economic fields from the Sicilian peasant civilization**. We analysed the uses, customs, everyday objects linked to old traditions and how to spread memory among young people.

Technology has had a strong impact on the evolution of these professions; thus, the social networks allowed their knowledge among young people too.

Today, many of these ancient crafts are revived and revalued, there are emerging sectors of the economy linked to ancient crafts, especially in agriculture and rural tourism in Palermo and its surroundings.

As we are part of a technical institute/high school in Palermo, many of these professions are also interesting for our studies and for our future professional career too.



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