

An Open and Inclusive Model for Humanist Participatory Management of Cultural Heritage in Rural Areas

Kinga Anna Gajda* and Piotr Michałowski

¹Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland

²M.A., MSci Piotr Michalowski, European Network of Cultural Centres ENCC Brussels, Belgium

ABSTRACT

Effective heritage management in rural contexts demands a comprehensive examination of a monument's architectural features, historical context, and the broader environmental setting. This paper underscores the critical role of cultural heritage in shaping social dynamics and human interactions. It delves into the significance of community engagement in the preservation and commemoration of heritage, highlighting the necessity of voluntary participation to foster connections and unity among local communities. Moreover, the study demonstrates that community engagement serves not only as a preservation tool but also as a means to reconstruct the identity of local society, facilitating a profound sense of belonging to the heritage site.

The authors introduce a participatory, humanistic, and open heritage management model, with a case study centred on the management of La Chartreuse de Neuville. This model places a strong emphasis on the active involvement of community members. Importantly, it highlights that the open, participatory management approach not only enhances operational efficiency but also garners greater approval and respect from the local community.

The research underscores the importance of making heritage sites promptly accessible to the public, transcending narrow interests in tourism or culture. To ensure the sustainability of heritage sites, the authors recommend a pragmatic, self-sustaining economic model that combines elements from the private, public, and civic sectors. They also advocate for the development of a comprehensive program of site activities that seamlessly integrate profitable endeavours with those of public interest, all within a sustainable economic framework.

This study makes a significant contribution to the ongoing discourse on heritage conservation, underscoring the pivotal role of community engagement and hybrid management models in the preservation and revitalization of cultural assets, particularly in rural settings. The insights gained from the experience of managing La Chartreuse de Neuville provide valuable lessons for heritage management in rural areas, promoting a holistic and sustainable approach to heritage preservation and community involvement.

*Corresponding author

Kinga Anna Gajda, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland.

Received: April 07, 2026; **Accepted:** April 13, 2026; **Published:** April 20, 2026

Keywords: Humanistic Management, Participatory, Cultural Heritage, Local Society, Inclusiveness, Open Management Model, Chartreuse de Neuville

Introduction

Heritage Management: Evolving Approaches to Temporal Interpretation

Heritage management has gained recognition as an increasingly intricate field of research. The evolution of heritage management practices over the years mirrors the shifting relationship of society with heritage and changing perspectives on what constitutes heritage [1]. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Jean-Philippe Lecat, the French Minister for Culture and Communication, proposed a comprehensive approach to heritage. He articulated that cultural heritage encompasses all remnants of human endeavours throughout history, positioning the human being as the central figure rather than the object, place, tradition, or language. Heritage management has also evolved in tandem with changes in the temporal interpretation of heritage.

Today, cultural heritage is regarded as a temporal phenomenon, seen through the lens of three temporal dimensions: it makes the past present and is intended to serve the future [2]. Heritage is no longer confined to the past; it acts as a conduit for shaping the future [3]. Consequently, when discussing heritage, one is referring to the values, attitudes, stories, and histories that past generations have celebrated and left behind. These elements bear witness to the authenticity of the past, but they also address contemporary questions: What does heritage mean today? How significant is it? How does it influence the present, and how can it benefit the current generation? What lessons can it impart to them? Furthermore, there is a consideration of the long-term advantages that heritage can offer to the present generation while preserving its potential to fulfil the needs and aspirations of future generations [4].

Therefore, when examining the heritage paradigm or the management of heritage, it is crucial to consider the functions it performs in the present, as well as the role it will play in the future [5,6]. This perspective assesses the extent to which heritage

can serve contemporary society and how it can be harnessed and cultivated for the benefit of future generations. This tri-temporality framework remains a contemporary key to describing and managing heritage. It has evolved beyond being a mere testament to the past and has become a resource that serves the needs of both the present and the future. In essence, when discussing heritage, one can, in the words of Jacek Purchla, speak of the “consumption of the past”.

Heritage, as it is commonly understood, is deeply entwined with temporal considerations, which manifest in two significant dimensions: anthropocentric and naturocentric. Heritage is envisioned to serve both humanity and the natural environment, aiming to safeguard what is vital for both people and nature, ensuring the continuity of these shared values. This standpoint, as eloquently articulated by , underscores that the worth of heritage hinges on its utility [7]. However, this perspective is not unidirectional. Recognizing the value of heritage and nurturing an emotional connection to it (Purchla), kindles an individual’s interest in heritage and an inherent inclination to protect it. Consequently, people begin to take an active interest in the preservation of heritage [8].

By assuming responsibility for the safeguarding of heritage, individuals are essentially safeguarding themselves – preserving their history, identity, values, and attitudes. In this manner, they function as conduits or intergenerational transmitters and become active participants in the process of inheritance [6].

In light of the aforementioned considerations, it is imperative to underscore that heritage management constitutes an immensely significant and, at the same time, weighty responsibility in the cultivation of intergenerational relationships and the sustenance of legacy. Consequently, there is a pressing need for the clarification of its functions and objectives. The sociocultural dimension of heritage management, as elucidated by Highlander, primarily revolves around not just the protection and conservation of heritage, but also the cultivation of a profound sense of attachment to the surrounding environment, fostering a tangible connection with the local and global community.

Considering the fact that cultural heritage is fundamentally a social construct, it becomes evident that effective heritage management adopts a humanistic and participatory approach [9]. This approach places individuals at the core of the process, harnessing their actions and creativity [10,11]. It takes into account the needs of those referred to as recipient-stakeholders, denoting any individual interested in the management and transmission of heritage, who resides in and interacts with the locale [12,13]. Such individuals are individuals for whom heritage carries intrinsic value and significance, including both current and former residents [14]. They form part of a community that identifies specific heritage as the source and embodiment of values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions that hold profound importance for that particular community.

Posits that a participatory management style is the most effective approach [15]. In a similar vein, contends that participatory management, involving local communities in development strategy and heritage management, is imperative for sustainable development-based management [4]. This perspective is congruent with the Council of Europe’s document, “The European Strategy for Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century” (Strategy 21), which underscores the social utilization of heritage as a means to enhance the well-being and safety of the population while fostering a

balanced development process, particularly at local and regional levels. The strategy emphasizes three primary components:

- **Social Component:** This pertains to a participatory model of governance and community empowerment in decision-making regarding heritage.
- **Territorial Development:** This component underscores the reinforcement of heritage’s role in sustainable development by leveraging local resources.
- **Knowledge and Education:** It acknowledges the significance of knowledge dissemination and education in heritage management.

The recommendations to Member States, as outlined in the Strategy, advocate for inclusive public participation in the management and approach to both tangible and intangible heritage associated with cultural and natural environments. They stress the community’s responsibility for heritage preservation. The authors of the Strategy maintain that a humanistic approach to the social aspect of heritage will fortify the sense of belonging to both local and global communities, nurture social bonds, safeguard collective memory, and facilitate the conditions for democratic development.

Humanistic participatory management represents a sustainable and anthropocentric approach treated as a dynamic process, aligning with the tri-temporal perspective of heritage. This form of governance is primarily concerned with the intrinsic value of the place itself and the ethical underpinnings of its organization [16,17]. It resembles governance rooted in values, functioning not through objects or institutions but through individuals who unite around common objectives and shared values [17].

Humanistic participatory management, therefore, centres its efforts on individuals, their well-being, empowerment, and development through heritage. It draws upon the rich resources of the humanities, encompassing a wealth of knowledge and cultural context that provides historical, ethical, and cultural insights. It prioritizes the human perspective and exhibits a profound interest in the human condition and human experiences. It operates on a human-centric level, leveraging the inexhaustible wellspring of human activity and imagination [10].

This management approach is founded on principles of cooperation and interdependence, emphasizing learning and embracing responsibility for the preservation of places and heritage [18]. It fosters a supportive environment for the care of the past, creating safe zones where heritage is safeguarded. Furthermore, it adopts a multi-perspectival stance, showing respect for diversity and embracing a dialogical nature that acknowledges the central values of local society and its heritage: the subjectivity and dignity.

Community participation can take on both indirect and direct forms. What is essential is that the local community exerts influence on the site or the organization responsible for its management, while concurrently, the site itself holds the potential to impact the community. Moreover, the primary recipients of transformations within a heritage site are the members of the local community. Consequently, it becomes the prerogative of the local community to delineate the concept of heritage and actively engage in its social rejuvenation and transformation.

Methodology and Preliminary Findings

This article is the result of a project comparing the French and Polish heritage of former hospitals, sanatoriums, abbeys, and schools transformed into cultural and art centers. The project’s primary aim was to analyze the approaches and management

strategies for preserving cultural heritage, focusing on sites in both countries. In France, the study explored several examples, such as the La Chartreuse de Neuville, a former mental health hospital now functioning as a Cultural Centre, and the Former Abbey Ambronay, which has been repurposed into the Ambronay Cultural Centre. Other French sites included La Bon Attrait and Centre d'Art Contemporain de Lacoux, all transformed into cultural institutions responsible for safeguarding heritage.

In Poland, the research examined the transformation of the Dr. Brehmer Sanatorium in Sokolowsko, now managed by the IN SITU Contemporary Art Foundation, and the Tadeusz Kościuszko Male Common School in Krakow, which became the Podgórze Cultural Centre. The Podgórze area, once marginalized due to its proximity to the Jewish quarter, has since seen significant restoration efforts.

A key theme across all sites is the reimagining of these historical structures into cultural institutions that prioritize preserving their heritage. The research included desk research, site observations, and interviews, revealing a humanistic and participatory management approach adopted by many institutions, often influenced by grassroots community engagement. The study found no significant differences in heritage management based on cultural or national factors, but noted that the financial structures of the managing institutions play a key role in shaping management practices. State or municipal institutions tend to focus on fulfilling mission goals, while associations or foundations face the challenge of securing continuous funding.

All sites emphasized a culturally driven management approach, with culture and the arts playing key roles in regeneration efforts. Participatory governance was a hallmark of the Chartreuse de Neuville, which stood out as an exemplary model of community inclusion.

Chartreuse de Neuville as an Exemplar of Governance: A Holistic Perspective on History, Architecture, Values and Community

In the case of Chartreuse de Neuville, the architectural and historical attributes of the site emerged as significant sources of inspiration for the preservation and utilization of its heritage. Founded in 1324 as the Chartreuse de Neuville monastery, its narrative unfolds through a complex historical trajectory. Subsequent to the tumultuous period of the French Revolution, the site experienced a phase of profound transformation, as it was repurposed and considerably depleted, effectively serving as a "quarry" for various purposes.

In the year 1870, the Carthusian Order reacquired the site, initiating the construction of a second monastery on the very grounds, notable for its expanded scale, featuring 24 hermitages encircling it. The monks established a thriving printing enterprise, leading to Chartreuse de Neuville's distinction as the principal printing house of the Carthusian order throughout Europe until the year 1901. This period, however, marked the expulsion of the Carthusians from France, compelling their migration to England, where they sought refuge at the Chartreuse de Parminster near Brighton.

Between 1908 and 1912, a noteworthy chapter in the site's history emerged as the Chartreuse de Neuville was repurposed as a sanatorium. It was during this time that a community of artists coalesced under the guidance of Anatole France, contributing to the site's dynamic transformation. Subsequently, during the First World War, from 1915 to 1919, the Chartreuse de Neuville served

as a refuge for a significant number of displaced individuals and Belgian orphans, accommodating approximately 5,000 people in total over the course of four years.

Post-World War I, the site reverted to its role as a hospital, later evolving into a hospice. This hospice primarily catered to a diverse demographic, including the elderly, individuals with disabilities, orphans, and those with varying degrees of physical, mental, or psychiatric challenges. Of particular note is the initiative taken by the shelter in the absence of dedicated hospice staff, whereby residents were actively engaged in the institution's activities, provided they possessed the capacity to participate. This approach not only fostered a sense of social utility among residents but also afforded them a meaningful sense of belonging within the community.

Nevertheless, it is notable that prior to the initiative, the Chartreuse de Neuville remained largely obscure to the local community, despite its architectural grandeur and substantial physical footprint, encompassing approximately 18,000 square meters of structures nestled within a 12-hectare park enclosed by perimeter walls. This relative anonymity could be attributed to the site's history of housing a psychiatric hospice for a duration of five decades. In a concerted effort to rekindle public awareness and re-establish the site as a cultural landmark, the initial step undertaken was the immediate opening of the monument to the public, coinciding with the Heritage Days event held in September 2008.

The Chartreuse de Neuville is included in the Supplementary Inventory of Historic Monuments of France, and its heritage, replete with its original furnishings, holds the distinction of being designated as a historic monument. As of the year 2008, the monument faced a precarious state of disrepair, with certain sections on the brink of collapse. However, the comprehensive restoration endeavour was not initiated until 2016, primarily owing to the intricate financial and legal intricacies involved in the project's formulation. Additionally, the process necessitated a significant time period so as to galvanize the requisite public partners, who subsequently allied with the association responsible for the site's management.

The architecture and historical legacy of Chartreuse de Neuville, as articulated by Alexia Noyon, General Director at the Association La Chartreuse de Neuville, embody a profound source of inspiration and encapsulate enduring values. These elements not only underscore the historical import of the edifice but, more significantly, signify its pivotal role in shaping civic attitudes and disseminating humanist values. Chartreuse de Neuville brings to the fore the overarching theme of the interplay between the individual and the collective. Its architectural configuration seamlessly marries sequestered spaces with communal areas, thereby alluding to the recognition of individuality within the broader communal contexts, from the communities of the Carthusian fathers to the collective tapestry woven by artists, caregivers, and residents within the hospice-asylum.

Another salient theme that emerges from an analysis of this heritage is that of the interdependence and complementarity of the various actors within a single community, even among its most vulnerable members. Throughout the historical epochs of Chartreuse de Neuville, individuals and groups were necessitated to collaborate and cooperate harmoniously. Initially, the harmonious coexistence of the Fathers and Brothers, followed by the integration of ecclesiastical, civil and military elements that facilitated the establishment of the Belgian hospital, and later

the self-organization of hospice residents, in conjunction with caregivers, bolstered a sense of social utilitarianism and purpose.

A third significant theme lies in entrepreneurial innovation, rooted in an ongoing spirit of experimentation within the Chartreuse de Neuville's historical legacy. The institutional experiment commenced with the founding of the Carthusian Order, a testament to Saint Bruno's pioneering endeavour. Subsequently, the organization of an artist commune fostered communal living and creativity. The hospice, confronted with staff shortages, ventured into unconventional methods, forging a unique and adaptive approach to care.

The symbiosis between materiality and spirituality, between ideation and execution, is a recurrent motif in the legacy of Chartreuse de Neuville. This confluence is perceptible in the coexistence of tangible elements such as wood, stone and church stained glass alongside intangible aspects like spiritual reflection and the passage of time symbolized by the church bell tower and clock.

Crucially, Chartreuse de Neuville is distinguished by its capacity for resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity. Over challenging periods, the site has adeptly navigated transitions while retaining its intrinsic character. The embodiment of the Carthusian motto, "The world changes, but the cross remains", underscores the institution's enduring spirit of adaptability without compromising its core essence.

As per Noyon's perspective, an association project instituted in a location devoid of the architectural and historical significance akin to that of Chartreuse de Neuville would lack the enduring appeal and influence. The intrinsic beauty and timeless qualities inherent in the monument serve as catalysts for fostering interactions among individuals hailing from diverse backgrounds, interactions that might not transpire as effortlessly in alternative settings. The monument assumes a role of considerable importance, representing a precious wellspring of artistic and cultural inspiration that continually enriches the collective experience.

The Association established to safeguard and promote the heritage of La Chartreuse de Neuville, deeply rooted in the historical and pluralistic ethos of the site, has actively chosen to prioritize the welfare of the community gathered around the site over the site itself. The values and local community have, in turn, become the linchpins of governance. The association aspires to inspire the community associated with La Chartreuse de Neuville to cultivate a profound connection with themselves, others and the world, to foster entrepreneurial initiatives and to actively partake in shaping the future. In doing so, the association underscores two fundamental elements: a focus on the human being as the focal point of activity, with the site serving to inspire and facilitate human development, and an orientation toward the future rather than dwelling in the past. Thus, according to the association, the site is envisaged as a wellspring of inspiration and an incubator of experiences that stimulate experimentation and the implementation of solutions, culminating in lasting transformations within the local milieu. Ultimately, this approach aims to facilitate the seamless integration of all individuals into the world of La Chartreuse de Neuville, affording them a meaningful sense of belonging and participation in the site's evolving narrative.

The central objective of the association revolved around grounding the historical and architectural legacy of the site within the contemporary context, with an emphasis on highlighting its

continued relevance and significance. This focus on the human element was manifested through a comprehensive array of activities directed at diverse audiences, all designed to harmonize with the site's renewed purpose, thereby creating a nexus for intersection and enrichment through diversity. The overarching goal was to facilitate inclusivity, empowerment and active participation for all, including those who may be socially vulnerable or marginalized, in order to contribute in various ways to the revitalization of this heritage.

Furthermore, the diversity of activities conducted by the association alludes to the multifaceted role played by medieval abbeys in the region. In addition to their religious function, these abbeys historically served as centres of local governance, fostering innovation, exerting influence, and garnering international renown. They were instrumental in engendering significant cultural, economic, social, educational and environmental activities, thus underscoring their broader societal significance.

The Hybrid Governance Model: Balancing Public, Private, and Citizen Participation

The Chartreuse de Neuville association's primary objective is the development of innovative management models that are accessible to individuals of all age groups and diverse social and cultural backgrounds. This approach prioritizes active engagement and participation by individuals in the decision-making and planning processes of the activities undertaken within the organization. In this manner, the association places the core mission of the institution at the forefront of its management philosophy, closely aligning with the guiding principles of the Carthusians, as encapsulated by their motto, "The world changes, but the Cross remains". In essence, effective management entails a deep understanding of the contemporary mission of the organization and a willingness to adapt, evolve, and incorporate new ideas and enhancements, as long as they remain consistent with the institution's evolving purpose.

It is imperative to maintain a well-defined vision and direction, ensuring the institution retains its singular identity. However, to actively involve partners, volunteers, and collaborators in the organization's endeavours, there must be room for their creative input and projects. Simultaneously, an organization must exhibit flexibility and adaptability to changes in its operating environment without compromising its fundamental identity and objectives.

From its inception, the association has been committed to inclusivity, making collaboration with the local community a fundamental aspect of its activities. The Chartreuse de Neuville's undertakings are underpinned by a plethora of participatory initiatives. The maintenance and development of its gardens, for instance, involve the cooperative efforts of employees, volunteers, young trainees, groups of elderly individuals from nursing homes, youth with disabilities, and those with interrupted schooling. Furthermore, the association features an amateur theatre group composed of one of its dedicated volunteers. This group, working in conjunction with a team of guides, has crafted a theatricalized tour of the Chartreuse de Neuville, regularly offered to tourists during the summer season.

The institution also hosts artistic residencies, providing a platform for artists to interact with residents, encouraging them to contribute their experiences to artistic projects and participate in the creation of artistic works. A dedicated team of volunteers and staff is actively involved in the restoration of the Carthusian order's printing press, successfully reviving the Manuelle press and offering pedagogical workshops utilizing it.

During the initial outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the association partnered with a textile company to establish a community of volunteer seamstresses and 25 volunteer suppliers in the region. This collaborative effort resulted in the creation and delivery of 150,000 masks to hospitals when they were in dire need. In addition to these activities, the Chartreuse de Neuville engages with young individuals and those facing social exclusion, as well as long-term unemployed individuals. These individuals find a sense of purpose, socialization and a structured work rhythm by contributing to the institution. Their contributions range from graffiti cartography on the walls, archiving, conception and construction, collection of construction site debris, minor adjustments and furniture production for the team, to assisting artists in residence with various exhibitions and installations.

The foremost challenge encountered by the Chartreuse de Neuville was the imperative task of garnering support and fostering collaboration among public stakeholders for the association's project. Right from its inception, the association confronted a substantial financial quandary in procuring the necessary funding for the renovation of its edifices. The quest for donations and benefactors in a rural locale, characterized by a paucity of large corporations and financial resources, where state subsidies for the project, both for capital investment and operational funding, were conspicuously scarce, yielded no substantial results. In addition, the association sought to engender a sense of co-responsibility among those engaged in the restoration of this heritage site, as well as enabling them to derive tangible benefits from their contributions. Subsequently, it was determined that an innovative, hybrid management strategy based on shared financial involvement should be implemented.

Indeed, the challenge of administering La Chartreuse de Neuville is further compounded by the magnitude of its restoration effort, which ranks as the second-largest historical monument restoration project in France, eclipsed in scale only by the renovation of Notre-Dame in Paris. The renovation project entails the engagement of a multitude of professionals specializing in art and building restoration. Therefore, it was of paramount importance to secure a financial source not only to support the association's activities but also to sustain the extensive restoration of the heritage site itself.

The initial strategy employed involved the sale of 49% of the site to private co-owners, facilitated through the Antiquities Act, while offering a tax incentive for the construction of a hotel on this portion of the property. A distinctive feature of this strategy was the requirement for each private co-owner to commit to a unilateral promise of sale upon acquisition, stipulating their obligation to resell their property to the association, which retained 51% ownership, without any added value, after a 15-year period, with an additional five-year window for implementation. In principle, this approach was advantageous, as it assumed that the project would be successfully completed and the hotel would be operational within three years. Private co-owners would benefit from a 40% tax exemption on construction costs and receive rent from the hotel over a span of 12 years. Subsequently, the association would repurchase their allocated space through a loan arrangement. This arrangement presented a viable solution for deferring half of the project's financial burden for two decades, ensuring eventual reunification of ownership over the monument site.

The experiment has demonstrated the feasibility of constructing a hybrid management system that remains politically impartial and is overseen by an association or foundation, capable of uniting diverse stakeholders, including public and private partners, local

residents and individuals possessing the necessary qualifications for guiding the revitalization and advancement of significant heritage sites. Furthermore, it has exemplified the potential for crafting an economic model tailored to the requirements of heritage preservation in rural areas. This innovative approach aspires to chart a course for management and project execution that actively influences the region, less reliant on traditional public subsidies, which have become increasingly constrained due to resource limitations at both the state and local levels.

The proposed participatory hybrid model of action embodies sustainability, made feasible through a combination of financially viable activities that generate a lasting impact, serve the common good and cater to diverse target audiences. These diverse activities, some of which may be extended to branches of the association or foundation, synergistically contribute to the realization of a contemporary purpose and collectively assist in establishing a balanced framework for heritage management.

Nonetheless, this experiment has also revealed the inherent impracticality of applying this approach to heritage sites situated in rural areas necessitating extensive restoration work. The unprofitability of commercial activities in such cases is not contingent upon the specific market, be it the hotel industry or any other sector, but rather stems from the exorbitant investment requirements, including expenses associated with rents or the revenue potential from economic activities in rural locales. Additionally, the challenge of managing two distinct businesses operated by disparate owners, each driven by distinct objectives, poses significant challenges. On one hand, there are those focused on maximizing the return on investment to enhance individual gains, while, on the other, the overarching objective is the promotion of the common good. The division of property among 42 different individual co-owners, collectively possessing 49% of the site, can give rise to complex issues of co-ownership, even when their activities align in terms of restoration efforts and operational management. The capacity of these co-owners to secure financing and meet their commitments may exhibit constant fluctuations and inconsistencies.

The premise that the ownership of a significant monument can be divided between multiple private owners, primarily driven by financial interests on one side and an association committed to public welfare on the other, has proven to be erroneous. A property of historical and cultural significance cannot be effectively managed by two distinct entities with divergent objectives. It necessitates a single owner with a cohesive vision. When this vision is oriented towards the public good, there should be no hindrance to establishing subsidiary commercial ventures that remain subordinate to the overarching goal of serving the public interest, rather than merely coexisting independently. The simultaneous pursuit of two disparate objectives, with neither taking precedence over the other, inevitably generates conflicts in the short or medium term.

This misjudgement underscores not only the irreconcilability of management grounded in the dual principles of profit and social development, but also the inherent conflict between these contrasting visions. Consequently, a choice must be made between these two paradigms – either the heritage site operates in the service of community development, or it becomes a profit-oriented enterprise. In the latter scenario, the heritage site transforms into a hub of mass tourism, geared towards leisure and entertainment, rather than functioning as a locus for community cohesion and the advancement of human development. For La Chartreuse de

Neuville, the paramount objective remains the establishment of a community centred around the heritage site, prioritizing its role as a focal point for community engagement and human development.

Discussion

Open, humanistic and participatory management practices facilitate the establishment of a dynamic interaction between individuals and their surroundings. This approach capitalizes on the cumulative experiences, knowledge, beliefs and values of visitors, forging a connection between the past and the present, while entrusting the local community with the authority to determine how the past is perceived and interpreted.

Within this governance framework, the past becomes an active catalyst in the present. For local communities, it serves as a vantage point, a performative element, a metaphor, a vision, or a narrative that informs strategic decision-making in broader societal contexts. Consequently, the memory of the past becomes a foundational element for constructive action. Community engagement transcends passive contemplation of heritage, giving way to proactive involvement, setting in motion the intricate machinery of time. Heritage transforms into a subject of discourse within local communication networks, thereby acquiring novel connotations and significance.

Community participation necessitates a dialogical exchange, as opposed to unidirectional communication. Active community involvement in heritage preservation endeavours fosters a collective narrative about the past, affirms individual and collective identities, accentuates the values inherent in history and permits the integration of diverse perspectives into the overarching narrative. This engagement fosters a profound sense of belonging to heritage, the past, and the local environment, reinforcing the interconnectedness between people and their historical and cultural context [19].

Heritage management, as conceived in this manner, is not without its share of challenges and complexities. Chief among these challenges is the centrality of the local community within the framework of participatory management. On certain occasions, the local community may not exhibit a positive disposition towards heritage or may exhibit a lack of interest, and local or municipal authorities may not be actively engaged in preserving the heritage site. This was precisely the scenario confronted by La Chartreuse de Neuville.

The historical role of La Chartreuse de Neuville as a psychiatric hospice, which it served for five decades, presented an initial challenge: rekindling the local community's awareness and interest in the site. Surprisingly, many residents residing within a radius exceeding 15 minutes from the Chartreuse were not cognizant of its existence, and those in close proximity often harboured aversions towards the place. It was recounted that residents of the psychiatric hospice, when venturing outside on a weekly basis to spend their modest earnings in support of the facility, may have evoked apprehension among some, leading parents to caution their children with phrases like, "Behave, or you might end up in the Chartreuse with the lunatics".

Consequently, this prevailing local obliviousness persisted for nearly a decade, with the majority of visitors to La Chartreuse de Neuville hailing from distances greater than a quarter of a mile, while only a sparse representation came from the immediate vicinity, excluding the newly settled inhabitants. The primary mission, therefore, was to, in the words of Noyon, "reconcile"

the Chartreuse with its immediate environs, transforming it into a central hub, a meeting place and a source of local pride. The local community stands as the primary beneficiary of La Chartreuse; over the course of a year, while tourists may be more numerous, their visits are typically sporadic, whereas the local community consistently participates in various activities beyond sightseeing, inclusive of an annual schedule of events that extends throughout the off-season.

Occasionally, the effective presentation of a site management plan to the local community, or adequate dialogue on the challenges related to site development, is delayed or omitted by site organizers or the media. Consequently, conflicts often arise among stakeholders involved in heritage conservation efforts. Moreover, there are instances when the promotion of cultural heritage for sustainable tourism development is lacking. Furthermore, community activities, such as agricultural practices or construction projects like roads and buildings in close proximity to the heritage site, can either obstruct or fail to align harmoniously with the site's management objectives.

It is crucial for heritage site managers to maintain a commitment to sustainable management principles, incorporating a green policy into their framework. La Chartreuse de Neuville exemplifies this approach by giving due consideration to the ecological and natural heritage of the site. The incorporation of gardens, vegetable patches and pesticide-free green spaces as integral components of the heritage site underscores their commitment to ecological preservation.

In collaboration with the Vavilov Institute in St. Petersburg, renowned as the oldest food seed bank globally, of which 80% of its varieties are exclusive, and the French Vavilov collective, La Chartreuse de Neuville has established a conservation vegetable garden. This initiative serves an educational purpose, raising awareness about the significance of preserving biodiversity in agricultural crops, the role of seed multiplication and the importance of monitoring scientific data, such as meteorological conditions and soil analysis. Additionally, the site features dedicated areas for insects and bird of prey, along with two designated spaces to accommodate bats and protected species, further reinforcing the site's dedication to ecological sustainability.

An additional challenge associated with the management of heritage sites located in rural areas pertains to the scarcity of qualified personnel capable of overseeing restoration efforts or functioning within these sites. Beyond human factors, biological aspects, encompassing the representatives of local flora and fauna, can also introduce potential threats. While it is noteworthy, we will not delve further into the matter, the most common and pressing issue encountered involves inadequate budgets or unfavourable allocation of funding for the operation and conservation of heritage sites. Furthermore, funding agencies often exhibit reluctance in providing financial assistance or loans for heritage preservation efforts.

Nevertheless, research suggests that the most significant impediment hindering the effective management of heritage sites is the dearth of stakeholder engagement and settlement of local populations around these sites [20]. A pivotal facet of participatory management is collaboration between key stakeholders. However, the intricate dynamics and conflicts that can become apparent within such groups can lead to stagnation and inactivity, thereby presenting another challenge faced by heritage site organizers. It is paramount to recognize that the primary and most formidable

challenge remains the active involvement of the public in decision-making processes.

Summary

Cultural heritage represents a critically important element in the dynamics of social groups and human interactions. As noted by, culture serves as the binding force that forges connections among individuals and unifies members of a community [21]. However, for this unity to materialize, it is imperative that the community actively fosters a relationship with the heritage site, encouraging voluntary participation in heritage preservation and commemoration endeavours. The primary goal of community engagement is to shape and reshape the interpretations and narratives ascribed to heritage, and to unearth the social values intertwined within these cultural assets.

Moreover, engagement in heritage conservation endeavours serves as a vehicle for the reconstruction of identity, enabling individuals and groups to situate themselves within the global context. This process of engagement carries far-reaching implications for an individual's and collective group's sense of belonging, self-esteem and overall well-being. The participatory, humanistic, open heritage management model hinges on the voluntary involvement of community members in the management process. It is crucial that this participatory management model adheres to several fundamental conditions, as elucidated by [22]:

- **Consensualist Conditions:** This entails the willingness of the community to actively engage in commemoration and heritage-related efforts.
- **Utilitarian Conditions:** It necessitates that heritage conservation activities offer practical benefits to the community.
- **Axiological Conditions:** This condition emphasizes the importance of equity in community and heritage management.
- **Axiological-Anthropological Conditions:** It is grounded in respect for human dignity, ensuring that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

This egalitarian heritage management system serves as the foundation for the fulfilment of these conditions. The stewardship model commences with the establishment of a hierarchical stewardship structure. The ideal governance structure, as proposed by Alexia Noyon, embodies a hybrid board encompassing representatives from private, public and civic sectors. This structure is characterized by openness and accountability. It comprises a board of directors collaborating with entities focused on creativity and direction, which are open to all. Simultaneously, it features a decision and implementation body comprised of selected, responsible individuals who are held accountable for achieving predetermined objectives. This approach aims to ensure the viability and sustainability of projects and the preservation of heritage.

In this model, the locus of improvement shifts from the institution to the facilitator, the local community and the visitors, who are once again regarded as active participants in the heritage management process.

Developing a hybrid model for the management and administration of a heritage site aligns with the principles outlined in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention [23]. This approach, which involves heritage management and monitoring, is grounded in collaborative partnerships between government sectors, private organizations, property owners, and local communities. It plays a pivotal role in advancing the preservation of global heritage assets. Consequently,

institutions and local stakeholders are tasked with establishing partnerships and fostering cooperation to safeguard the interests of all involved parties within the conservation process.

By fostering mutual understanding and collaboration, pivotal stakeholders have the opportunity to cultivate shared interests in cultural assets, working in tandem with local communities who serve as the ultimate custodians of humanity's cultural heritage. The consciousness and methodology of stakeholders concerning the preservation of cultural heritage assume paramount importance, as they are instrumental in harmonizing the vested interests in cultural heritage and its growth. This alignment is essential for sustaining effective conservation management and fostering cultural tourism.

Furthermore, the open, humanistic, participatory management model operates as a catalyst for efficiency, given that decisions formulated in collaboration with local communities tend to garner greater approval, be more effectively implemented and engender heightened respect from the community members themselves. The practical usability of the case provided, may be organized on various levels. Firstly, it gives hints on how the community-led development and co-creation could be programmed and implemented into successful strategy. Secondly, the case reminds about the necessity to undertake in a continuous form – the mapping of local community, including (constantly changing) needs, ambitions, potentials, awareness etc. Thirdly, the research dimension is highly useful for any other alike venue, which may wish to become the visible case study on its own. Therefore, the presented example leads the way on how to well describe the ongoing practices, which elements are especially useful for the learning process of others, and how to build the transferability effect.

The experience gained from the endeavour to establish La Chartreuse de Neuville's innovative hybrid participatory management model also offers some valuable insights and specific recommendations regarding heritage management in rural contexts. As noted by Noyon, managing heritage in rural areas necessitates a distinctive approach. It involves a meticulous examination of the monument's architecture, its historical context and the surrounding environment. These aspects should serve as sources of inspiration for defining its new purpose, ensuring that this purpose is deeply rooted in its historical and architectural attributes.

Importantly, even before the heritage site is fully restored, it should be promptly accessible to the public, catering to diverse audiences. This access should transcend a narrow focus on tourism, culture or the arts. In terms of the economic model and the form of management for the monument, it is prudent to construct a pragmatic, self-sustaining and hybrid model that fuses private, public, and civic elements. A single owner, functioning as the guardian of the entirety of the estate and property and the collective interest, in the form of an association or foundation, is advisable. This owner should have the flexibility to establish profitable subsidiaries at a later stage, the revenues from which can exclusively finance activities serving the public interest, mirroring the principles employed by joint-stock foundations.

Furthermore, it is advisable to devise a comprehensive program of site activities and initiatives that seamlessly integrate profitable activities, endeavours with sustainable impacts, as well as those of public interest, all within a holistic and sustainable economic framework.

Regarding the renovation of the facility, it should occur in two

distinct phases. The first phase involves facility maintenance to prevent escalating costs associated with structural deterioration. Urgent priorities include the restoration of the external elements such as roofs, their structural components, facades, wooden exterior features and stained-glass windows. Additionally, critical elements like rainwater drainage systems and the mitigation of fungal damage must be addressed. Given the absence of a viable economic model for this initial phase, funding via state subsidies and philanthropic contributions remains indispensable.

The second phase encompasses the development of interior spaces, which may be implemented incrementally based on the progression of activities. However, return on investment during this phase may be relatively low. Consequently, there arises a need to establish an investment fund for significant rural heritage sites across Europe. This fund should enable contributions over a 30-year period with a nominal return of 2%. A prerequisite for such support should be the ability of these sites to demonstrate a multifaceted and widespread impact, functioning as genuine catalysts for developmental activities within their regions, spanning cultural, social, economic, educational and environmental domains [24-27].

Acknowledgments

The research has been supported by a grant from the Faculty of International and Political Studies under the Strategic Programme Excellence Initiative at Jagiellonian University.

The authors wish to express their sincere gratitude to Alexia Noyon, Directrice générale at the Association La Chartreuse de Neuville, for providing them with the opportunity to undertake a research study at La Chartreuse de Neuville and to conduct an interview.

References

- Hall CM, Mc Arthur S (1998) Integrated heritage management: principles and practice. London: Stationery Office https://ucl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay/alma990006325420204761/44UCL_INST:UCL_VU2.
- Smolarkiewicz E (2012) Revitalization as a Form of Evoking the Past. In *The Declension of Urban Renewal: From the Discussion on Revitalization in Poland*, edited by K. Derejski 65-80.
- Herzfeld M (1991) *A place in history: social and monumental time in a Cretan town*. Princeton New Jersey, UK: Princeton University Press https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691028552/a-place-in-history?srltid=AfmBOopXrRCyUawjMLhuW1qIakCL4UBXUpkHS8XsPcHmyPe_MMk8xEY4.
- Kobyliński Z (2011) What is cultural heritage, who needs it, and who owns it? *Mazovia. Regional Studies* 7: 21-47.
- Jagielska-Burduk A, Szafranski W, Gaweł Ł (2016) Cultural heritage management. In *Legal mechanisms for cultural heritage management* 9-30.
- Ashworth G (2015) *Heritage Planning*. Krakow: International Cultural Centre.
- Murzyn-Kupisz M (2012) *Cultural Heritage and Local Development*. Krakow: Krakow University of Economics Publishing House, Krakow.
- Simon T (2005) *Into the Future. Our Strategy for 2005–2010*. Conservation Bulletin 49: 26-27.
- Gilmour T (2006) *Sustaining heritage: Giving the past a future*. Sydney: Sydney University Press.
- Kostera M (2015) Reflections on Humanistic Management. In: *Humanistic Management*, edited by R. Batko, B. Nierenberg and Ł. Sułkowski. Kraków: Jagiellonian University Publishing House 53-61.
- Barańska K (2013) *The Museum in the Web of Meanings. Management from the Perspective of the Humanities*. Krakow: Wydawnictwo Attyka, Krakow.
- Purchla J (2005) *Heritage and Transformation*. Krakow: International Cultural Centre.
- Szmygin B (2008) Is it possible to protect a world that has ceased to exist? The Jewish Quarter in Lublin. In *Restoring Memory. Revitalization of Historic Jewish Quarters in Cities of Central Europe*, edited by M. Murzyn-Kupisz, and J. Purchla. Krakow: International Cultural Centre, Krakow 101-121.
- Oevermann H (2015) *Industrial Heritage Management in the Context of Urban Planning*. Big Stuff <https://bigstuff.omeka.net/items/show/17>.
- Rensis L (1967) *The Human Organization: Its Management and Value*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book.
- Herman A, Oleksyn T, Stańczyk I (2015) *Management Respecting and Promoting Values*. Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press.
- Blanchard K, O'Connor M (1998) *Management through values*. Warsaw: StudioEmka Publishing House.
- Obłój K (2010) *The passion and discipline of strategy*. Warsaw: Poltext.
- Lowenthal D (1997) *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mekonnen H, Bires Z, Berhanu K (2022) Practices and challenges of cultural heritage conservation in historical and religious heritage sites: evidence from North Shoa Zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia. *Heritage Science* 10: 1-22.
- Benedict R (1999) *Patterns of Culture*. Warsaw: Aletheia.
- Jacko JF (2010) Ethical Contexts of Justifying the Demand for Social Participation. *Contemporary Management* 2: 36-44.
- Kurin R (2004) Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the 2003 UNESCO convention: a critical appraisal. *Mus Int* 56: 66-77.
- Chabiera A, Koziół A, Skaldawski B (2016) *Heritage Next to Me – A Guide to Heritage Management in Municipalities*. Warsaw: National Heritage Institute.
- Evans G, Shaw Ph (2004) *The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK: a Review of Evidence*. London Metropolitan University <https://inventory.inventculture.eu/new-evans-shaw-the-contribution-of-culture-to-regeneration-in-the-uk>.
- Góral A (2017) *Heritage Ecology. A Contribution to the Theme*. Public Management 2: 119-130.
- Sinamai A (2018) African cultural heritage conservation and management: theory and practice from southern Africa. *Conserv Manag Archaeol Sites* 20: 52-54.

Copyright: ©2026 Kinga Anna Gajda. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.