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Use of Digital Technology in the Humanities: The REVIVAL Project

Upotreba digitalne tehnologije
u humanističkim znanostima –
Projekt REVIVAL

ABSTRACT

The REVIVAL project is funded through the cross-border cooperation programme INTERREG V-A Italy – Croatia 2014-2020 and will be briefly presented here. It includes eight partners in seven cities in Croatia and Italy (the project leader is the Municipality of Forlì, and the partners are the Municipalities of Campobasso, Cesenatico, and Pesaro, the Cities of Rijeka and Zadar, Public Institution RERA SD for Coordination and Development in the Split-Dalmatia County, and the University of Zadar). The project aims at documenting and revitalizing forgotten architectural heritage from the 20th century. Special focus will be on defining the methodology of research and the use of new technologies in the construction of a digital centre for the REVIVAL project, as well as the use of 360° technology as content for e-learning and documenting forgotten heritage.

Keywords: bunkers, twentieth century, military fortifications, REVIVAL project, forgotten heritage, history of architecture

SAŽETAK

Ukratko će biti predstavljen projekt REVIVAL, koji je financiran iz programa međugranične suradnje INTERREG V-A Italy – Croatia 2014-2020. Riječ je o stručnom projektu koji uključuje osam partnera u sedam gradova u Hrvatskoj i Italiji (nositelj projekta je Općina Forlì, a partneri su Općina Campobasso, Općina Cesenatico, Općina Pesaro, Grad Rijeka, Grad Zadar, Javna ustanova RERA S. D. za koordinaciju i razvoj Splitsko-dalmatinske županije i Sveučilište u Zadru). Projekt se bavi dokumentacijom i revitalizacijom zaboravljene arhitektonske baštine 20. stoljeća. Poseban fokus bit će na pojašnjenju metodologije obrade građe i korištenja novih tehnologija u izgradnji digitalnog centra projekta REVIVAL, kao i na korištenju 360° tehnologije kao sadržaja za e-učenje i dokumentiranje zaboravljene baštine.

Ključne riječi: *bunker, dvadeseto stoljeće, vojne fortifikacije, projekt REVIVAL, zaboravljena baština, povijest arhitekture*

1.
Aerial view of the D-27 bunker in
Zadar (photo: F. Brala)

Pogled iz zraka na bunker D-27 u
Zadru



Project “REVIVAL - Revitalization and Reuse of the Lost Heritage in the Adriatic Landscape,” funded through the cross-border cooperation programme INTERREG V-A Italy – Croatia 2014-2020, gathers eight partners from seven cities in Italy and Croatia: the Municipalities of Campobasso (IT), Cesenatico (IT), and Pesaro (IT), the Cities of Rijeka (CRO) and Zadar, (CRO), Public Institution RERA for Coordination and Development in the Split-Dalmatia County (CRO), and the University of Zadar (CRO).

The University of Zadar, as the only academic project partner, has prepared the Guidelines for establishing a set of criteria for the future digital Documentation Centre of the REVIVAL project. Its aim is to enable the project partners to single out and select the specific buildings, areas, neglected urban areas, disused industrial complexes, barracks, military fortifications, etc. with the related cataloguing cards, and to upload descriptions and images of the selected items (historical and architectural value, state of conservation, location, etc.). Following the Guidelines, each project partner will perform the selection and uploading for their own areas, thus contributing to the construction of the digital Documentation Centre (accessible at <https://www.projectrevival.eu/en>). With the twentieth century as the target period of the REVIVAL project, the typology of the buildings entering in the definition of “Lost Cultural Heritage” can be different from site to site, including sites where a building or a demolished architectural complex once stood, a preserved or upgraded building or architectural complex for which the local community has no recollection of its uses in the past, the history of sites and architecture (e.g. camps, prisons, factories etc.), personal memories (of citizens relocated during the wars) preserved in personal stories and memories, photos, articles, songs, local legends, etc., totally or partially abandoned buildings or architectural complexes, converted buildings such as former schools, prisons, sacral buildings, etc. The Guidelines also set out the criteria for selecting myths, folk legends, fairy tales, stories, and curiosities related to the selected places, to be mapped and evaluated. The digital Documentation Centre will be the basis for evaluating the lost/abandoned heritage linked to the various aspects of history of the 20th century, as a great part of it is suitable (after small improvements) for hosting temporary artistic events and has good cultural and touris-

2.

Aerial view of the E-20 bunker in Zadar (photo: F. Brala)

Pogled iz zraka na bunker E-20 u Zadru

tic potential. The final result will be the identification and digital cataloguing of the selected buildings and spaces for each of the project partners. Methodology used in gathering data for the future digital Documentation Centre is related to the previous project ATRIUM PLUS (Architecture of the Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th Century in Urban Management PLUS), which also included University of Zadar as partner. The novelty introduced by the REVIVAL project is placing the focus on the regional and local communities, and the potential investors interested in creative and sustainable solutions. Each project partner gets a questionnaire to complete with all necessary information about the selected site or building, which is the basis for building the digital Documentation Centre. As long as the project lasts, the digital Documentation Centre is organizationally and financially sustained by the project partners' activities and budgets. When the project ends (December 31, 2021), it will again be managed by the University of Zadar, which will use it for didactic and research purposes, whilst the property will remain in the hands of the entire partnership, which will use it as support for the Cultural Route of the Lost/Abandoned Heritage of the 20th Century. The digital Documentation Centre, based on the formalized cataloguing Guidelines, will become a model applicable and replicable by any other organization/region/country outside of the current partnership that is dealing with similar issues and opportunities. During the process of setting up the Digital Centre, the University of Zadar decided to use digital Storytelling with 360° photos as a basis for virtual interactive Storytelling production. For this part, it was necessary to detect the SME (Subject Matter Expert) for each of the seven geographical locations and some partners had difficulties in fulfilling this task due to the lockdown caused



by the COVID-19 pandemic. We also used hotspots in order to make the whole 360° photos journey interactive and to use it as an innovative learning part of the Digital Centre. The hotspots include different materials, videos, photos, maps, sounds, etc. and the visitor can move around and press different spots to hear or watch different materials and learn more about the history of the building, such as its architectural and urbanistic value, its former use, to listen to the memories of those who used the buildings or sites in the past, and so on. These stories are not merely chronicles of what has happened, but so much more: they tell about personal experiences and the meaning these sites have for the people. Through storytelling, the past is continually reconstructed and connected to the present. Recognized as an innovative way of eLearning, the REVIVAL storytelling for the City of Rijeka received a Adobe eLearning Design Award for Reviving History through 360° Technology, assigned to the agency that developed our eLearning courses and thus enabled people from all over the world to “walk” through the forgotten sites in the project areas of Italy and Croatia (www.projectrevival.eu/en).

In the Italian and Croatian cities and towns involved in REVIVAL, there are many disused areas, buildings (e.g. summer camps, schools, barracks, military fortifications) and industrial complexes lying in a state of neglect and decay. Many of these have an architectural and historical significance as remarkable examples of industrial archaeology and rationalist or modernist architecture, including various military fortifications and bunkers or abandoned schools built during the Austrian-Hungarian period, along the Croatian coast or on islands. This is an almost totally lost heritage that today must be re-discovered, revitalized, and reused for multiple reasons, including memory building and keeping, making the cities and towns more compact and hence more sustainable instead of pursuing endless territorial/urban development based on urban sprawl, filling in urban/territorial/social voids caused by the presence of abandoned areas and buildings, often situated in central areas, and creating spaces to host temporary cultural/artistic events and hence new poles and community hubs for the attraction of creative people as well as of tourists and social life. As we speak about hundreds of outstanding sites located in Italy and Croatia, approaching them in a smart and sustainable way, as REVIVAL is doing, will allow for a transformation of the lost cultural heritage into a leverage for sustainable and more balanced territorial development (as required by the priority 3.1 of the Italy – Croatia cross-border programme), in which relevant abandoned man-made heritage will play a central role. REVIVAL will tackle these issues through a result-oriented approach consisting of launching small-scale works to clean the buildings/fortifications and make them accessible to the public in an acceptable condition (with appropriate safety standards), organizing artistic and creative events in the dismissed buildings/areas, attracting creative people and tourists, raising the awareness of the local communities, policy-makers, and potential investors, promoting a new tourist offer with a joint cross-border brand and linked to the Cultural Route of the Lost Heritage of the 20th Century in the Adriatic, aimed at cultural tourists, and attracting potential private investors for the future revitalization projects in need of creative and sustainable solutions.