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Adopt a Monument

Inclusive cultural heritage for and with the people!



Participatory governance of cultural heritage



TAMPERE



238,000



Challenge

Rapid urbanisation and construction, dwindling resources of public administration, and a growing sense of discomfort amongst the public from feeling disempowered and excluded raise concerns about preservation of cultural heritage.

Adopt a Monument promotes mental wellbeing through enhanced awareness of the local environment and social collaboration.

It enables citizens to become more closely involved in the management, research and ownership of cultural heritage.



Solution

The Adopt a Monument programme consists of maintenance and preservation of archaeological sites and historical buildings by groups of volunteers (adopters).

Adopters can be a community, an association, a company or a public entity, such as a school. No earlier experience is required, nor special skills or knowledge. Adopters oversee the management of the appointed heritage site: they monitor its condition, study its history and organise events.



How ?

- Adopt a Monument started in Tampere in 2008-2010, developing adoption methods for archaeological heritage. In 2013-2016 it was adapted to historical buildings and will soon include public art monuments and natural heritage sites.
- The programme is supported by professionals in the Pirkanmaa Regional Museum: archaeologists, researchers and a master builder specialised in restoration. They provide advice on management of sites and to develop participatory methods.
- Sites range from Iron Age hill forts to cairns, stone walls, cellars, houses and music pavilions. Preferred sites are usually prominent and symbolic structures.
- Maintenance agreed between owners, volunteer groups and the Regional Museum. A management plan considers the condition of the site and the adopter's resources. It guides volunteers on suitable uses of the site and safety issues.
- Volunteers collect information about their site and disseminate it throughout their own networks. Information signs, financed by the state and prepared together with the museum, efficiently publicise management efforts and convey information at the site.

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Budget/Financing

- Total budget
 - for 2008-2010: approx. €30,000
 - for 2013-2016 approx. €109,000
 - for 2020 (permanent activities): €55,000 (one full time person per year staff costs and a €5,000 operating budget for organising camps, community work events and social gatherings for volunteers)
- Source:
 - Municipality: 33% during 2013-2016 / 15% from 2020 onwards
 - State: 65% during 2013-2016 / 85% from 2020 onwards
 - 2% during 2013-2016: Admission fees to camps, product sales



Management

- The Finnish Heritage Agency, the City of Tampere and some municipalities in the region, the State Forest Agency and volunteers are involved. Many volunteers commit to long-term management of a single site; others prefer to work for shorter periods of time to contribute, for example, to the restoration of a building in a pop-up workshop.
- Adopt a Monument is now a permanent activity in the Pirkanmaa Regional Museum. Responsibilities are overseen by the Finnish Heritage Agency and the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, since part of the museum's funding comes from government grants.



Impact

- Adopt a Monument is a small project producing spill-over effects for well-being and heritage management well worth the resources put into it. It promotes modern flexible maintenance of cultural heritage.
- 23 adopted sites (archaeological sites or historical buildings) in Tampere Region and 48 in Finland, and growing.
- More than 3,000 volunteers involved in Finland.
- Adopt a Monument activities are in progress in at least two other European countries



Transferability

- The idea of Adopt a Monument comes from Scotland. Since 2018 it has been expanding to other areas in Finland and abroad.
- Find volunteer groups first. Suitable cultural heritage sites are everywhere – look for one that is meaningful for them.
- Facilitate, support and educate, avoiding top-down methods, and let people do concrete work with their hands. However, the maintenance work at the sites should be done systematically with proper plans and instructions.
- Allow volunteers to have freedom, trust them. Keep listening to your audience and evolve accordingly.



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Links

Website: <https://bit.ly/313gTQZ>

Best practices booklet: <https://bit.ly/3h6KQVV>

Short movie: <https://bit.ly/324IQIC>



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