



Museum in the village

Fighting elderly loneliness and solitude through cultural heritage



(PT)

LEIRIA



286,792 (county)



Recovery and resilience



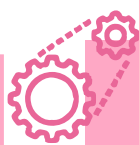
Challenge

According to data collected by the Rede Cultura task force in 26 counties from the Portuguese regions of Leiria, Médio Tejo and Oeste, loneliness and solitude affecting elderly people living in areas of lower population density represents a social challenge for the territory. This is compounded by a low number of activities and cultural and artistic entities available in these regions that are distant from metropolitan areas.



Solution

The Museum in the Village project wants to reduce loneliness and social isolation among elderly communities - aged 65 and over, living in rural secluded areas, with lower population density and with reduced access to a diverse cultural offer. By taking art and culture to seniors, through exhibitions and artistic performances in unexpected places, approaching people's emotional, social and artistic spheres, the project has promoted creativity among the elderly, using music and artistic collective practices. Arts and culture have created a unique bond valuing and fostering the connections among institutions, people, neighbours and families, as well as a sense of belonging, reducing the distance from cultural institutions.



How ?

- 1 Project partners gather cultural organisations and 13 local communities made of politicians, museum professionals, artists and locals from Leiria, Médio Tejo and Oeste. To ensure a more accurate implementation, they ran a survey on the museums, their assets, the logistics and the resources needed.
- 2 "Museum goes to the Village" was the first stage of the project, during which a set of pieces from 13 selected museum collections were presented to the communities. These were selected according to historical and artistic relevance, as well as significance for both the museum and the community. Maintenance conditions and the creative potential for the elderly were also considered in the selection process.
- 3 These objects were temporarily exhibited in unexpected places in the villages, e.g. inactive primary schools, a fish market, etc. In addition, each community was invited to look after the exhibition in their village.
- 4 Several workshops took place, where participants were invited to discuss, reflect and reinterpret the pieces, unleashing new artistic creations. Seniors learned about contemporary resources and different art forms, and their link to memories, traditions and heritage.
- 5 The created artworks were presented with artistic performances, in which communities and museum professionals actively participated, and inaugurating and displaying them at the museums.

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Transferability

- Networks reaching beyond the project activities were developed throughout its implementation: working in a network unveils new resources and opportunities to learn, create and share good practices.
- Considering time as a dimension of solitude: everyone has the right to enjoy and learn more about contemporary resources and art forms, and engaging with stories and heritage can become a trigger for new memories and meanings.
- Building a multidisciplinary team: professionals with experience tailored to the nature of social interventions projects are essential for its success.



Impact

The project:

- reached 26 counties in 3 regions;
- engaged 780 people;
- involved 253 participants and 30 artists;
- 26 museum objects were lent by 13 museums;
- 13 collective artworks were created;
- 130 events were hosted in 13 villages, 27 of which were open exhibitions and performances;
- 1,500 to 2,000 people reached by social media post.

The cognitive stimulation associated with cultural participation improved the quality of life and self esteem of seniors, as they engaged in emotional, artistic and social activities, promoting a more active and healthy ageing process.

The project model allowed for easier access to culture through democratisation of museological artefacts, artistic mobility within a network of communities and museums, and territorial cohesion.

The project connects past heritage and local traditions, and contemporary art forms, by introducing new tools and artistic collective practices.



Budget/Financing

€ 570,506

- The total budget of the initiative is € 570,506, for the September 2020 to June 2023 period.
- The funding was raised by applying for public financial support. The main financial contributor is the Portugal Social Innovation initiative PO ISE and the Portuguese Government Budget, whose investment covered 70% of the total project costs (€399,354). The city of Leiria covers the remaining 30% (€171,152).



Management

- The project Museum in the Village is promoted by SAMP - Sociedade Artística Musical dos Pousos and relies on the supervision and guidance of a working group that gathers ten museum professionals, as well as Rede Cultura's support, as a partner that connects museums, city councils, parish councils, several associations and institutions from the 26 counties. The project also counts on the support of Politécnico de Leiria (a higher education school) and União de Freguesias de Leiria, Pousos, Barreira e Cortes (a Parish Council).
- The project is built on a wide network of external partners that include agents from counties and local authorities, museum professionals, libraries and galleries, local associations and organizations, digital technology and prototype workshops, and community representatives.



Links

- [SAMP](#) - Sociedade Artística Musical dos Pousos
- [Museum in the Village project information](#) on the SAMP website
- [Teaser SAMP](#) | Museum in The Village:
- [Teaser Museum in The Village - Public choice Award](#) | European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards
- [Press Conference Project Launch](#)



Contact

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