

Partnering Heritage Manifesto

A cooperative strategy of the Una Europa SSC Cultural Heritage and its partners
(formulated November 9, 2024, Windybrow Arts Centre Johannesburg)

1. In terms of identifying academic research questions, cooperation with Una Europa is to deliver by:

- Creating joint research initiatives aimed at so far underexplored in heritage studies, such as Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence.
- Facilitating graduate workshops that help identify research gaps and connect like-minded early-career researchers.
- Developing collaborative research infrastructures: platforms and virtual research networks to support transnational research questions.

2. In terms of academic teaching, cooperation with Una Europa should deliver through:

- Guest lectures by academics and non-academics to offer counter-narratives (e.g., tour guides), and encourage alternative/innovative ways of thinking about history, space, and culture.
- Exchange programs and short courses: Summer and winter schools, sabbaticals, and short courses to facilitate academic exchange and diverse teaching approaches.
- Mentorship and community building: Virtual meetings, online mentorship, and regular informal gatherings to support early-career researchers and foster a collaborative academic community.
- New teaching formats (e.g., blogs, creative ethnography) to provide fresh ways to share knowledge.

3. Una Europa should contribute to sharing knowledge among societal partners by:

- Enabling accessible knowledge transfer: Using virtual platforms to organise reading groups/workshops to decentralise academic knowledge and make it available to wider societal audiences.
- Amplifying community voices: Organize short courses, local outreach, and community workshops to share knowledge with non-academic stakeholders, and locating funding to enable community organizations to develop heritage archives (including digital ones).
- Networking and resource sharing: Facilitating partnerships between academics and societal partners to co-create and share knowledge, addressing local needs.
- Addressing knowledge fragmentation across universities: Overcoming barriers to access, especially in outlying regions, through digitization and open access initiatives (linked to point 2).

4. Una Europa should contribute to sharing knowledge among heritage institutions by:

- Fostering collaborative and interdisciplinary research on urgent issues such as the role of heritage in environmental injustice-related forced displacement, the capacitation of organisations that manage heritage sites, and on archives of stories and practices.
- Collaboration on urgent matters in the field of research methodology on ICH before people who provide crucial cultural knowledge pass away e.g. by publishing books relating to such knowledge.
- Cross-border collaboration, to enable exchanges between heritage institutions in for example Europe and Africa to share best practices and local knowledge.
- Preservation of local knowledge to facilitate writing and digitization of heritage materials in local languages to overcome institutional barriers and preserve cultural narratives. Enabling and encouraging local partners to publish more books on the region themselves (eg. Botswana scholars need to publish more books on Botswana).
- Developing a sustainable mode of online communication across such vast transnational borders.