



RURITAGE 
Heritage for Rural Regeneration

Thinking beyond the COVID-19 crisis: heritage-based opportunities for rural regeneration

UNIBO Simona Tondelli



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Thinking beyond the COVID-19 crisis

08/07/2020

Outline of the presentation

1. Why this webinar? Reasons and final outcomes
2. RURITAGE in a nutshell
3. RURITAGE initiatives linked to COVID-19 pandemic
 - Call for actions
 - Consortium brainstorming
4. Challenges, opportunities and recommendations for each RURITAGE SIA
5. Actions at EU, National/Regional and Local levels



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Why this webinar? Reasons



COVID opened two main issues related with RURITAGE

- At implementation level: delay in day-to-day project activities
- At strategic level:
 - What's the impact of this crisis on the rural communities we are working with?
 - What are rural communities around the world?



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Why this webinar? Expected outcomes

- *Short term: offer a help to rural territories to cope with the pandemic, increasing their social resilience*
- *Longer term: turn this challenge into an opportunity for rural territories, enhancing their sustainable growth*



VISION PAPER

Thinking beyond the COVID-19 crisis: heritage-based opportunities for rural regeneration (public project deliverable)



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RURITAGE in a nutshell

- RURITAGE is a project funded by H2020 programme, call “SC5-21-2016-2017: *cultural heritage as a driver for sustainable growth*” – rural regeneration (2017)
- June 2018-May 2022
- 38 partners from 19 countries around the world
- Unique EU project funded on the topic of *rural regeneration*



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Rural regeneration

REVENUES ECONOMIC GROWTH
LANDSCAPE QUALITY OF LIFE
ENVIRONMENTAL BALANCE ACCESSIBILITY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE
JOBS SOCIAL INCLUSION
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
MENTAL WELL-BEING



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RURITAGE paradigm

Improve the position of rural areas by mobilizing **local resources**, increasing their **resilience**, reinventing **business models and governance framework** and employing **policy tools** able to foster indigenous social and economic development.

Attract and retain young people, develop new business, and increase biodiversity **benefiting from CNH** in myriad ways: from the restoration of historical **buildings**, to the holistic usage of rural **landscapes** and **biodiversity** assets, including the revitalization of ancient **traditions, arts, and crafts**.



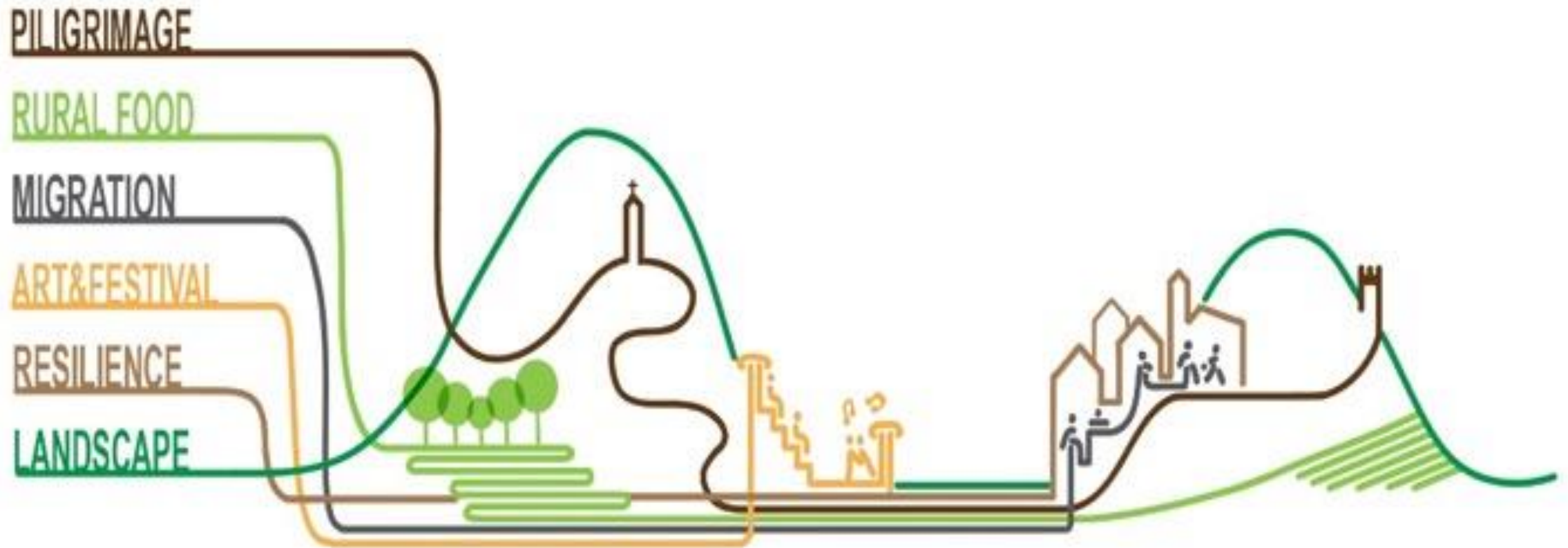
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RURITAGE Systemic Innovation Areas (SIAs)



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What we learned

→ 2 TYPES of SIAs

Challenge driven  MIGRATION  RESILIENCE
Development driven  PILGRIMAGE  LOCAL FOOD
 LANDSCAPE  ART & FESTIVAL

- The success of the RM was in many cases the result of a combination of **planned and unexpected circumstances**
- **Key stakeholders** with leadership and influence capacity is necessary to ensure the financial, political and technical **coordination** and support to the regeneration
- governance models with a **high level of community participation**



Co-development of heritage-led strategies

PHASE 2 Evidence building and demonstration

Launch of the Rural Heritage Hub (RHH)



Participatory workshop



RM8-4

Enhance the narrative
of the place and
promote the
discovering of the
territory through
history

RM8-4

Stakeholder name: _____

Why this action: _____

What you can build on? _____

What difficulties can you envisage in the implementation process? _____

My role in the implementation: _____

Who would you involve to get additional support? Specifically, for what? _____



Stakeholder name: _____

Why this action: _____

What you can build on? _____

What difficulties can you envisage in the implementation process? _____

My role in the implementation: _____

Who would you involve to get additional support? Specifically, for what? _____

Serious Game workshop



Business model workshop



Round tables with local stakeholders



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Innovative heritage-led regeneration Plans

PHASE 2 Evidence building and demonstration

6. Karavanken/Karawanken UNESCO Global Geopark (ARGE GK) Heritage-led regeneration plan



D3.4 / RURITAGE heritage-led regeneration plans for Replicators –
Magma UNESCO Global Geopark

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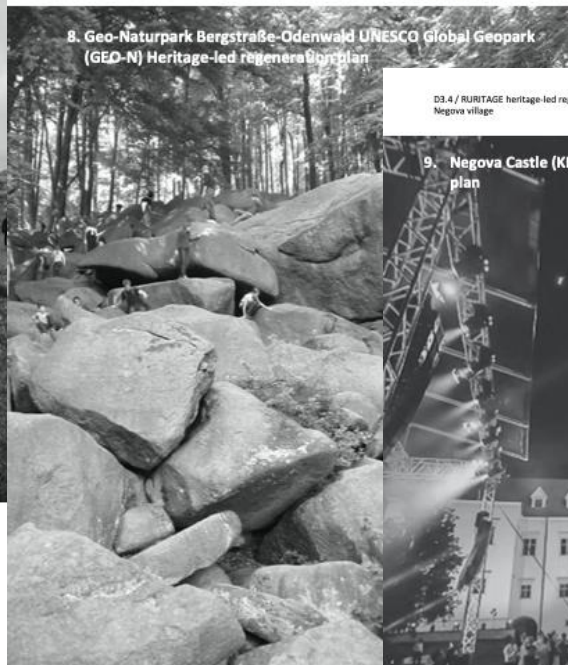
7. Magma UNESCO Global Geopark (Magma UGG) Heritage-led regeneration plan



D3.4 / RURITAGE heritage-led regeneration plans for Replicators –
Geo-Naturpark Bergstraße-Odenwald UNESCO Global Geopark

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8. Geo-Naturpark Bergstraße-Odenwald UNESCO Global Geopark (GEO-N) Heritage-led regeneration plan



D3.4 / RURITAGE heritage-led regeneration plans for Replicators –
Negova village

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9. Negova Castle (KIBLA, KULTPROTIJUR) Heritage-led regeneration plan



D3.4 / RURITAGE heritage-led regeneration plans for Replicators –
Appignano del Tronto

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10. Appignano del Tronto (CoApp) Heritage-led regeneration plan



D3.4 / RURITAGE heritage-led regeneration plans for Replicators –
Izmir in Gediz-Bakircay Basins

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11. Izmir in Gediz-Bakircay Basins (IZM, DEM, IZTECH) Heritage-led regeneration plan



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RMs' Enhancement plans

PHASE 3
*Further replication
and upscaling*

RMs will work within their RHHs to foster local knowledge and ownership of Cultural and Natural Heritage and to enhance their regeneration strategies learning from other SIAS and other RMs



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RURITAGE initiatives linked to COVID-19 pandemic

➤ Open call for action (April-May 2020)



[About](#) [SIAs](#) [Rural Heritage Hubs](#) [Resources](#) [Join Us](#) [Networking](#) [News & Events](#)

Rural Resilience Actions in times of COVID-19

The RURITAGE project invites you to share innovative actions in the midst of the global pandemic crisis to increase and strengthen resilience in rural communities.

In a time like this, not only society, politics and economics as a whole is challenged but thousands of individuals and their communities are disrupted. Within the RURITAGE project, the Coronavirus has not only halted a critical development phase for our rural communities in the Replicators and Role Models territories but also generated a real-life test for human and community resilience.

Arguably, rural areas are as affected as urban areas by the crisis, facing challenges exacerbated by less available resources and greater isolation issues. Rural communities themselves can struggle in finding tailored solutions for their already fragile environments.

At the same time, rural communities all around the world are also enhancing the value of local resources, cultural and natural heritage and human capital through mutual support, reinforced networks, better collaboration, cooperation and solidarity for reinforced resilience, as we claim throughout our project implementation.



The RURITAGE community gathered in the Resilience Replicator Appignano del Tronto in 2019



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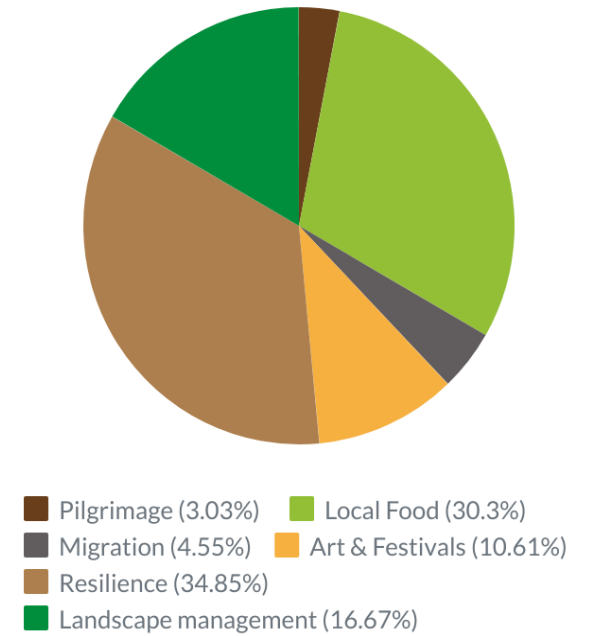
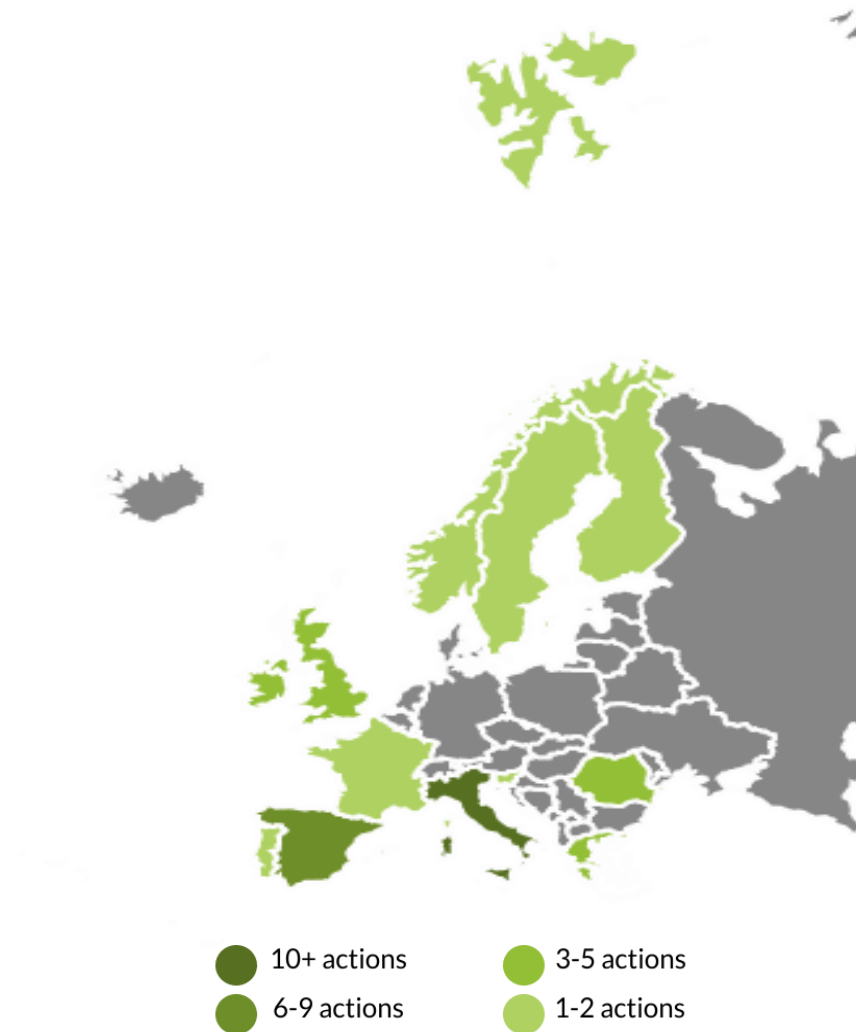
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The Call for Rural Resilience Actions

Actions recieved	Variation of countries	SIAs covered
66 ACTIONS	17 COUNTRIES	6/6 SIAs



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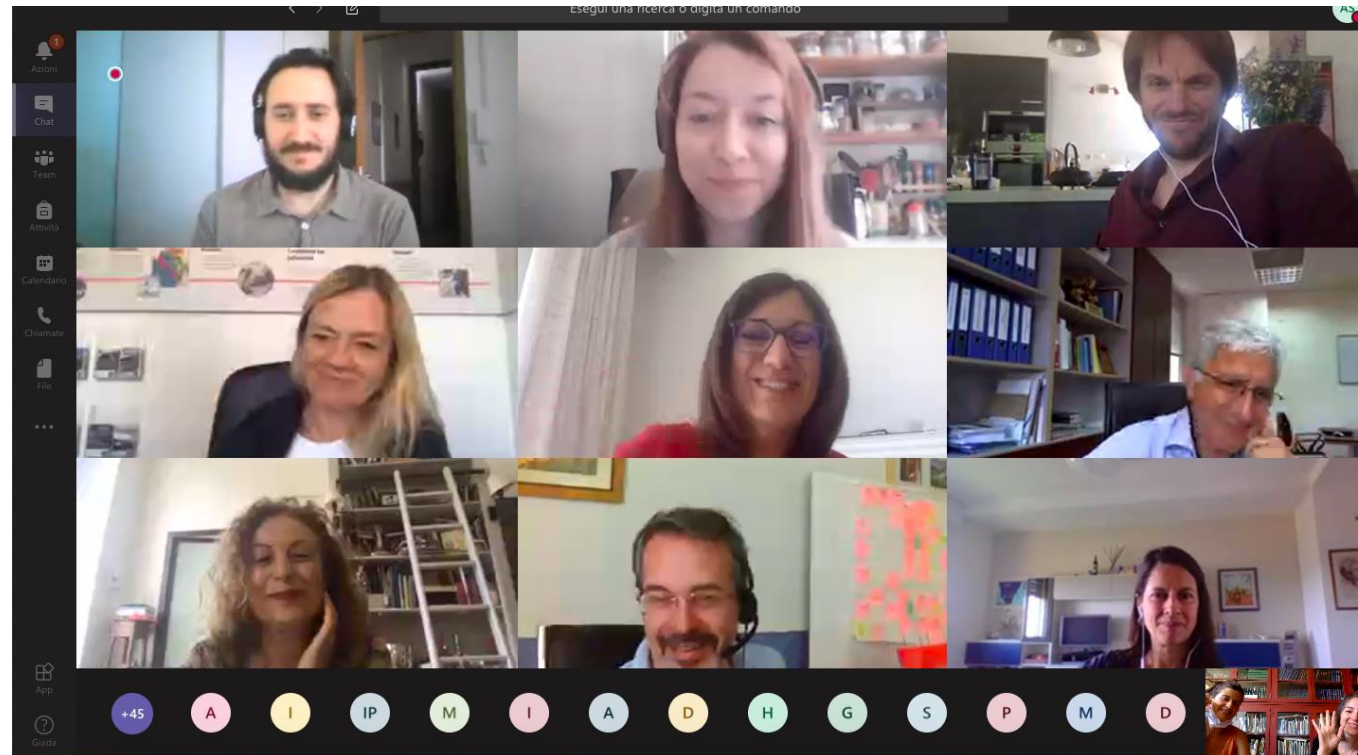
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RURITAGE initiatives linked to COVID-19 pandemic

- Brainstorming workshops among RURITAGE partners (General Assembly, 27 May 2020)



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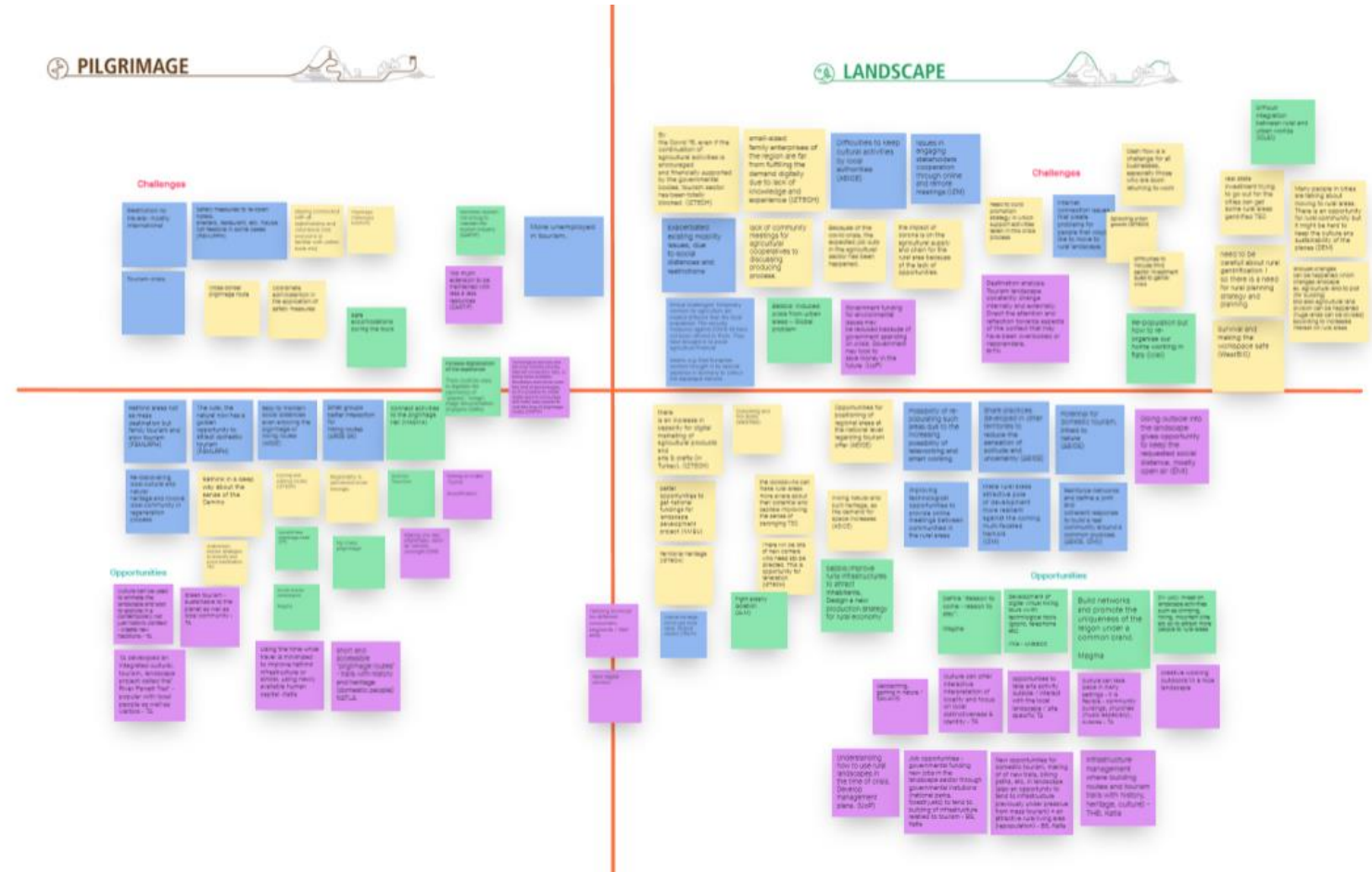
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Brainstorming workshop

- 1) Which are the main challenges and opportunities presented by the actual crisis in rural areas with respect to the identified SIAs?
- 2) What are the main challenges and needs of your local stakeholders? How can we support them within RURITAGE?
- 3) Which ideas do you have in mind?



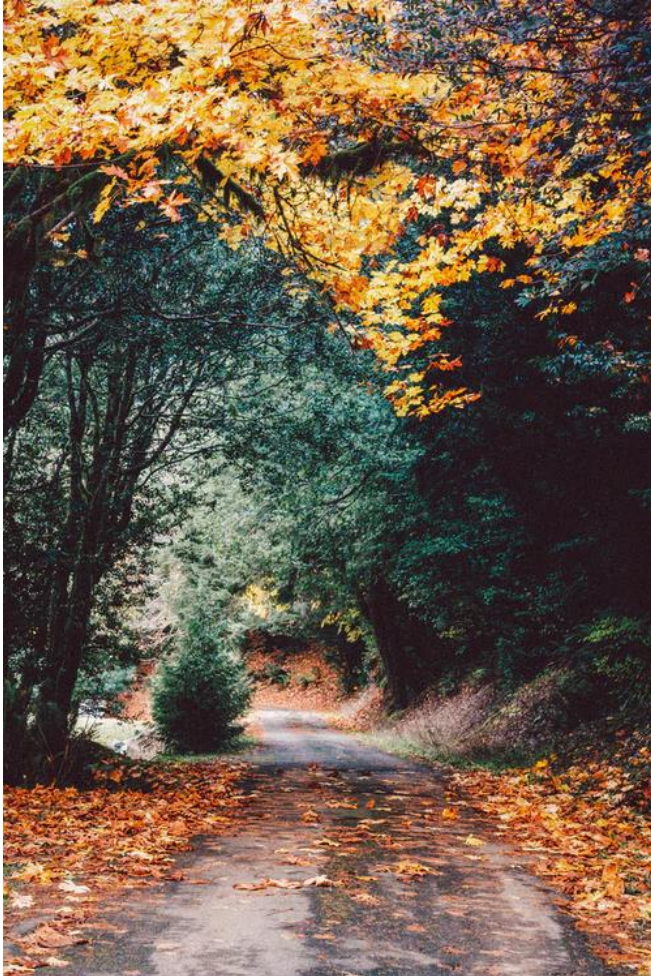
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COVID-19 effects on **pilgrimage**: *challenges*



- travel restrictions
- intrinsic cross-border nature of some religious pilgrimage routes and events
- small hotels, business working in the food and beverage sectors could struggle in adapting to the current safety measures imposed by local governments.
- most of the less known pilgrimage and hiking routes have limited financial resources



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COVID-19 effects on pilgrimage

SIA: Opportunities

Pilgrimage
actions

2

actions

- redirect the targets towards family and domestic tourists (staycation) and claim for the re-discovering of local cultural and natural heritage
- connect to other nature-related activities – i.e. open-air sports, fishing, etc. – that will support market diversification
- Limitations to big mass events and crowded hotspots, are calling for a spread tourist offer that could be boosted organizing small events along the pilgrimage and hiking routes, such as small concert, open air movies, theatre representations.

Remote spiritual guidance



Harghita, Romania

Through providing mother tongue pastoral care services for minorities and online masses, the aim is to promote mental health protection while encouraging awareness of spiritual protection and emotional development in rural areas. One activity is the online pastoral work where people can continue to join the masses without leaving their house. During holidays they provide practical information for home-celebration including infographics, songs, and suggest activities. Another important initiative is spiritual guidance, both via a telephone and online services with volunteers.

An online poster for the spiritual guidance.



Learn more here: https://www.ruritage.eu/resilience-actions/spiritual-guidance_online/



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COVID-19 effects on **pilgrimage**: *Recommendations*

- If properly planned and managed, pilgrimage and hiking routes can be considered amongst the **safest tourism destinations** in the current COVID-19 crisis (social distancing, open-air natural environment)
- To this aim, **a great coordination among all involved and interested stakeholders** is needed, from regional to local authorities to local businesses involved in the activities
- The spread tourist offer could be boosted and **sustainably maintained through time by involving and engaging with the creative sectors' local stakeholders**



COVID-19 effects on **food**: *Challenges*

- shortage in agricultural workers resulting in unharvested and unsold stock
- issues in food transportation and global logistic
- food insecurity among those who regularly struggle
- new economic vulnerabilities due to loss of work and income, or even because people are self-isolating and unable to get the food they need.



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COVID-19 effects on **food**: *opportunities*

- several private solidarity actions, where businesses, public sectors and the civil society have teamed up together to provide services to the local communities
- local food producers and farmers are forced to **rethink and adapt their businesses**, distributing food directly from the producers to the customers' homes
- At the same time, by receiving deliveries to the door, inhabitants are less exposed to risk. This is both an action to strengthen local production and entrepreneurs and a way to **ensure the health of vulnerable inhabitants**.

The Mobile Market

 Izmir, Turkey

The municipality of Izmir buys locally produced food from farmers nearby. The food is then distributed and sold via Mobil Market vehicles that go around the territory of Izmir. The municipality ensures fair prices for costumers and salaries for the producers. With the Mobile Market, inhabitants who cannot go to the market due to the epidemic can do their grocery shopping at an affordable price right in front of their doors.

The Mobile Market delivers directly at the door.



Learn more here: https://www.ruritage.eu/resilience-actions/mobile_market/



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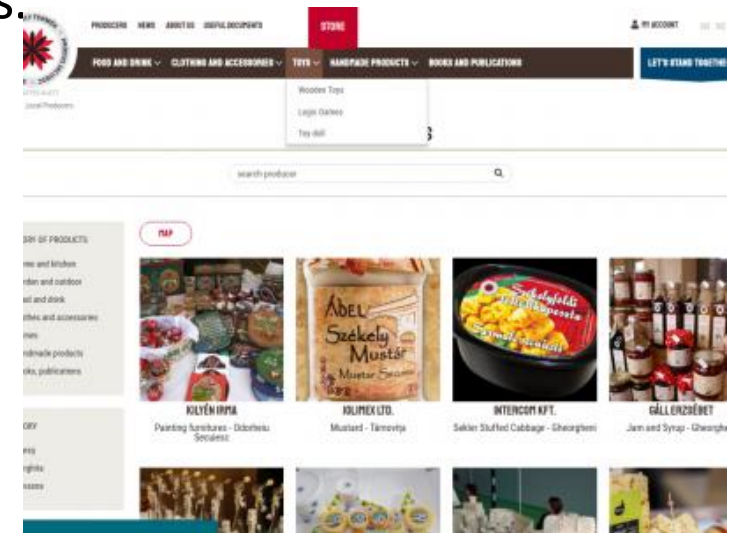
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COVID-19 effects on **food**: *Recommendations*

- work on the sustainability of the new business models based on **sustainable door-to-door food delivery**
- need of further **developing local capacity and skills towards digital tools** for advertisement, logistic and e-products.
- Increase **awareness of food independence in communities** contributing to develop a greater trust-building between local farmers and inhabitants.
- **reinforce the role of local producers and farmers** to boost the recognition of local communities' bond with their territories, thus enhancing the local microeconomy
- work on the importance of the rural world for the sustainability of life **in relation with the closest peri-urban** and urban areas, building and reinforcing existing Short and Slow Food Ecosystems of relevant producers, consumers and other stakeholders.



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COVID-19 effects on migration: *challenges*

- stop of many integration activities (i.e. language courses, work on the field) and government services
- concerns about the living in close, confined spaces and about the conditions of asylum seeker camps on the Greek islands (EC, 2020).
- make sure that all members of society have the information they need to stay healthy and follow quarantine guideline
- Tightening of the borders and entry restrictions have affected some economic sectors, and mainly the agricultural one that strongly relies on seasonal migrant farm workers.
- controversial challenges to migrant domestic workers (workload has increased vs dismissals).



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COVID-19 effects on migration:

Opportunities

- Investments to continue the **courses in a digital format**
- **Entry permits** to temporary migrant workers, that have been deemed essential workers due to the central role they play in supporting farmers and the food supply
- **agreements with farmers organizations**, through which refugees are employed in the agriculture sector through regular working agreements, therefore counteracting illegal exploitative activities.
- the **imposed sanitation measures** forced all reception centres to adopt adequate sanitation measures. In this sense, the pandemic could boost the finding of a permanent solution to overcrowded asylum camps and low living conditions.

Integration of migrants in fields and vineyards



Asti, Italy

Migrants, through integrated reception paths with the territory is an important aid of local development. For increased integration and boost rural development, the province of Asti encourages newly arrived migrants to work together with local farmers. COVID-19 is challenging the workforce within agriculture, with farmers finding it difficult to hire workers. Examples such as this can help to improve integration and aid local farmers by employing migrants in the agricultural sector where labour force is scarce.

An image from a vineyard in Asti.



Learn more here: <https://www.ruritage.eu/resilience-actions/migrants-in-the-fields/>



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COVID-19 effects on migration:

Recommendations

- The pandemic has emphasized that migrant workers (farm workers, but also workers in health sector and migrant caregivers, etc.), are **essential to the local economy** due to their expertise and skills.
- Identifying and disseminating **good practices**, strengthening **dialogue and coordination** between recruiters and employers, and stimulating business action in global supply chains to **effectively protect migrant worker health, well-being and rights**, could definitely enhance the commitment and capacity of employers and labour recruiters to **protect migrant workers**, including seasonal workers, not only during the pandemic but also after the end of the emergency



COVID-19 effects on **Art&Festival:** *Challenges*

- performances and concerts have been cancelled
- theatres, museums, and cinemas have been closed.
- Cultural sector SMEs are largely affected by the COVID-19
- The fear of disease transmission can pose for more vulnerable groups both physical and psychological problems that that could exacerbate vulnerability and exclusion.



COVID-19 effects on **Art&Festival:** *opportunities*

- Under the **Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative**, MS will be able to use Structural Funds money to support small businesses and employment schemes. Verheyen asserted that **businesses and individuals in the cultural and creative sector should receive access to this financial support** (European Parliament, 2020).
- **virtual access** to approach culture
 - libraries have made their collections available online and some have even provided videos of librarians reading out loud directly to children.
 - Some rural-based festivals will manifest themselves virtually.
 - smaller art groups, study circles or networks continue meeting virtually while performing and executing their art.
- **small events** in presence, such as small concert, open air movies, theatre representations.

Storytelling with children



Castelvetro di Modena, Italy

Every day, the library in Castelvetro publishes videos of librarians and volunteers reading books on their Facebook page. The initial aim of the action is to encourage children to read more. In the time the pandemic, the service provides a great opportunity for children to leave worries about their new daily life for the splendour of books.

[A part of the librarians and volunteers.



Learn more here: https://www.ruritage.eu/resilience-actions/storytelling_with_children/



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COVID-19 effects on **Art&Festival**: *Recommendations*

- Limitations of digitalization in rural areas where there is a lower access to internet connection and a lower usability among an older population, who often constitute a noticeable part of rural inhabitants. In this case, accessibility may turn into unapproachability, depending on technological access and skills.
- online activities should be addressed as mainly **complimentary means**.
- Support other types of events and gatherings: spread offer of **open- air events with smaller audiences**
- more **frequent opportunities** for artists to perform and for locals to take part in performances.
- develop more flexible “menus” of art and festivals for communities, **adapting to local needs, conditions and practices**

Vattenmålarna: connecting creativity

Gotland, Sweden

Vattenmålarna is a group of seniors that meet and paint every week. Due to the COVID-19 emergence, Vattenmålarna have initiated weekly online meetings where they paint together. The aim is to maintain a sense of community and continue to creatively express themselves in a difficult time. Most of them paint pictures interpreting their current situation, for example, 'missing my grandchildren or 'imagining being outside again'. The group aims to make an exhibition, in what format is not clear yet but hopefully virtually.



Figure x. A painting of some of the group members.

Learn more here: <https://www.ruritage.eu/resilience-actions/vattenmalarna/>



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COVID-19 effects on **landscape management**: *challenges*

- shared fear that **funds** dedicated to rural development and environmental protection may be reduced in the following years and reallocated to more urgent public sectors (i.e health, education, etc.).
- This would further exacerbate existing **unemployment**, forcing even more rural inhabitant to move to urban areas.



Digital tours in Psiloritis Geopark

 Crete, Greece

In Psiloritis Geopark, digital visiting has become available. By providing the opportunity to tour the geopark from a distance, locals, as well as non-locals, are now able to visit even the most distant parts of the geopark, directly from their home. Local food and craft producers have also gained promotion through this initiative. The geopark has developed an interactive map presenting all the natural and cultural features of the geopark together with local products and activities. The online tools include also a storytelling map that offers stories and information of the geopark through videos and traditional songs.

Figure x. A part of the interactive map.

Learn more here: https://www.ruritage.eu/resilience-actions/digital_tours/



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COVID-19 effects on **landscape management**: *opportunities*

- the **values of the natural and cultural capitals** of rural territory have not been altered, and this offers good opportunity to offer safe and beautiful tourist and work destination.
- **rethink tourism in a more sustainable way** and to work on the peculiar characteristics on their areas.
- Working on an integrated management of the landscape and heritage to support regions and rural territories to find their **local distinctiveness and identity**
- **create or reinforced existing networks** to build a community response around a common purpose.



TeachOut : Bringing people outdoor

 **Magma, Norway**

TeachOut is an outdoor science game that aims to get young inhabitants outside and enjoy and learn about their surrounding landscape. TeachOut is a mobile app based on analysis of national school curricula and then adapted by teachers to be used by their students. TeachOut allows nature to be the classroom where students are given questionnaires, treasure hunts, experiments, drawing tasks and competitions.



A student using Teachout.

Learn more here: https://www.ruritage.eu/resilience-actions/digital_tours/



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COVID-19 effects on **landscape management**: *Recommendations*

- In line with the **EU Green New Deal** (European Commission, 2019), local authorities and stakeholders could use this moment to focus on shaping a more sustainable future rethinking how **‘to protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of citizens from environment-related risks and impacts’**.
- as mentioned in the recently released **EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030** (European Commission, 2020b) ‘the recent COVID- 19 pandemic makes the need to protect and restore nature all the more urgent. The pandemic is raising awareness of the **links between our own health and the health of ecosystems**’. Investing in green infrastructure, wellness corridor, and slow mobility infrastructure can on the one side improve and restore natural ecosystem, but at the same time creating options for sustainable tourism.



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COVID-19 effects on **resilience**: challenges

- The lack of fast internet connection could be one of the main barriers to allow smooth and fast communication, creating trouble in distance learning for pupils and smart-working for adults and contribute to make rural inhabitants even more isolated
- severe mobility issues, due to social distances and private cars' use restrictions.
- great loss of revenue of business and local activities
- give children the possibility to attend educational and social activities
- High costs to implement the safety measures that small businesses are not able to sustain preferring to remain closed.

Providing E-Learning services

 Tetriskaro, Georgia

Access to technology and internet is an issue for many families in the villages of Tetriskaro. As a long-term solution introduced by the organisation RDFG is Distance Services Including E-Learning tools for rural school students, young entrepreneurs/farmers, and vocational training/skills development sessions. This assure children's rights to education and strengthen the community through the support of socially vulnerable families by providing basic technology.

Figure x. Two young children in Tetriskaro.



Learn more here: <https://www.ruritage.eu/resilience-actions/providing-e-learning-services/>



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COVID-19 effects on **resilience**: opportunities

- social distancing, the lack of adequate open public green areas and the possibility of smart-working or working from home could drive people living in densely populated settlements to look for **moving to more natural environments**.
- This process represents a **huge opportunity** but could also lead to an unplanned gentrification issue.
- On the other hand, new economic activities linked to the crisis have born and could **become permanent**.

Connecting hearts



Aguilar de Campoo, Spain

Ensure mental wellbeing and strengthen the community by maintaining a social connection for all age groups. The aim is to provide a virtual exchange experience between high school freshmen at a local high school and elderly people at a nursing home. The purpose is to strengthen the links between youth and the elderly, to spread awareness of local challenges, to stay connected and to learn from the shared experience. The elderly has shown to truly enjoy the company of the students as the connections are like windows to the world.

Figure x. A senior speaking to a freshman via digital tools.



Learn more here: https://www.ruritage.eu/resilience-actions/connecting_hearts



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COVID-19 effects on **resilience**: *Recommendations*

- Need to **carefully plan and manage the process** by local administration to avoid gentrification.
- **Improve services and infrastructures** – both for mobility and internet connections - for rural inhabitants to create long-lasting communities of people that decide to stay, live and work in rural territories.
- COVID-19 emergency showed, even more clearly than before, that to **boost digital skills** in the local community is a real priority.

The Rossie Way



Roscommon, Ireland

The Rossie Way community radio aims to reach people in higher-risk groups, especially in rural areas who tend to be isolated due to the severe restrictions placed on them. They provide daily radio programming by volunteer producers and DJs to build resilience in the local community. through a mix of music, chat, local celebrity interviews, local guests, quizzes, special requests, and online religious ceremonies. The common theme is a positive message to keep its audience company.



Figure x. Radios were distributed to elderly.

Learn more here: <https://www.ruritage.eu/resilience-actions/community-radio/>



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 776465.

Are we in front of a Rural renaissance?

- Partial social restrictions or total lockdown could have reverted citizens' priorities leaving space for 'rural renaissance'
- Social distancing, the lack of adequate open public green areas in cities and the possibility of smart working could persuade urban inhabitants to move to more natural environments.



Intervista **Coronavirus**

Coronavirus, Boeri: "Via dalle città, nei vecchi borghi c'è il nostro futuro"

20 APRILE 2020

The Day After secondo l'architetto del Bosco Verticale, professore ordinario di Urbanistica al Politecnico di Milano

DI BRUNELLA GIOVARA

◀ BACK TO EXHIBITIONS

NEW YORK • SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Countryside, The Future



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The Guardian

THEGUARDIAN.COM

Italy's remote villages now make an ideal escape

With Italians holidaying at home post-lockdown but wary of busy hotspots, the...

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08/07/2020

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Levels of actions - EU

- EU can go further in this aiming for effective rural regeneration and transition beyond sustainable food production through a better **integration** of other sectors:
- **Agriculture and natural services and capital** enhancement and protection (CAP, New green Deal and biodiversity strategy) is crucial for rural areas (Landscape and Food SIAs)
- **Culture** - better funding through spread initiatives and through cohesion fund and S3 priorities identification (Art&Festival, Migration, Pilgrimage)
- **Education and training** – better knowledge to overcome the digital and entrepreneurial knowledge divide, to raise awareness on existing opportunities for business support and better funding to support local SME in rural areas (all SIAs)
- **Accessibility** – both digital and physical, better funding for transport, mobility and internet infrastructures (Resilience)



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Levels of actions – National/regional

- Need to guarantee **access to basic services in rural areas** (health, education, accessibility)
- **Funds for infrastructures** – both digital and mobility networks need to be enforced in rural areas – in synergy with EU funds
- **Inclusive process - leave no one behind:** digital transition allowing people to get the basic digital literacy to access information and activities available online
- Regional priorities linked to EU funds could work in the direction of the **six SIAs** – **enhancing cultural and natural heritage, local traditions, local arts, artefacts and festivals, social inclusion and community's resilience**



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Levels of actions – Local

- In line with the LEADER approach, that already highlighted the role of the communities in the development of sustainable regeneration strategies, **promote local resources that includes, but are not limited to, local food production** – as our Replicators are doing (diversification)
- The role of local administration is crucial in the rural regeneration process to **properly plan** future development of the areas, to repopulate ageing and uninhabited rural areas **avoiding unplanned gentrification issues** – **tourism, second home, and staycations can contribute to rural regeneration but should be properly planned**
- Include participatory processes to **integrate local stakeholders' insights** in the strategies and to take into account the **inhabitants' needs and expectations**.



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Useful resources

- RURITAGE deliverables
<https://www.ruritage.eu/resources/publications/>
- RURITAGE call for actions «Resilience in practice»
https://www.ruritage.eu/resources/resilience_actions/
- Paper: De Luca, Tondelli, Åberg (2020) *The Covid-19 pandemic effects in rural areas. Turning challenges into opportunities for rural regeneration*. Tema Special Issue Covid-19 vs City-20
<https://doi.org/10.6092/1970-9870/6844>



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Thank you for the attention!





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