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**Catalonia (Spain)**

Authors	Mariona Ferrer-Fons (UPF), Marta Rovira (UPF)		
Editors	Dušan Deák, Anita Stašulāne		
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## 1. Executive Summary

This report explores the engagement of young people with respect to 3 educational experiences that were organised by or took place in two heritage sites in Catalonia (Spain). The reason for selecting these heritage sites was because they both share a focus on the promotion of the historical memory of Spain's recent past, and both organise educational programmes that involve young people and schools. More specifically, the History Museum of Barcelona (MUHBA) —in particular, Shelter 307 and the Turó de la Rovira anti-aircraft battery— in Barcelona, and Can Jonch Centre for the Culture of Peace, in Granollers, were the sites selected for the analysis. The main goals of this report are: first, to investigate young people's access to heritage sites; and second, to analyse the different experiences in young visitor's engagement with these heritage sites.

As to the methodology, the research follows a qualitative approach that combines different techniques: participant observation, focus groups and walking interviews. The fieldwork was carried out during two guided visits to the MUHBA's sites and during the popular walking tour in Granollers, all of them being activities that are addressed to young people. Afterwards, three focus groups and 3 individual walking interviews were conducted with young people who took part in the activities at the heritage sites, with the intention of understanding their appreciation of these experiences and other questions related to cultural heritage and its transmission.

The empirical evidence collected shows, first of all, the importance given to educational programmes at both sites, as well as the relevance of cultural heritage activities aimed at young people. All of the young people in the focus groups valued these experiences, which go beyond learning in formal education settings; the guided tours of the heritage sites, though, had a better reception than the walking activity. Young people particularly enjoyed those experiential activities that focused on the lives of ordinary people during different historical periods: how people lived inside Shelter 307 during the Civil War, and the experience of living in the shantytowns in the city of Barcelona.

Secondly, some young participants in the study voiced a critique against what they consider as an over-ethnocentric view of history. In the case of the MUHBA visits, they valued the importance of making visible the Civil War period, the active and passive defence of the city and the period of the dictatorship; however, they argued that a broader view of history and a less narrowly localist



approach is needed. Some said that they do not identify themselves with the local and national history that prevails in the discourses of the historical sites.

Lastly, there was a general consensus among the young participants in the study that transmitting cultural heritage is important, and that this has not been sufficiently acknowledged at the institutional level. According to them, among the most important agents for promoting cultural heritage, in addition to political institutions, are formal education, the mass media, specialised magazines, the family, and social networks. The young people also said that in their daily lives they become involved in cultural heritage activities through their school, family and, in some cases, out of their own initiative and keen interest in these questions. In the focus groups of the Turó de la Rovira and Shelter 307, the lack of active policies to foster knowledge on the cultural heritage among the young was criticised, especially as regards access to and promotion of the heritage sites.

## 2. Introduction

This report explores the engagement of young people with respect to 3 learning experiences that were organised by or took place in two heritage sites in Catalonia (Spain). The reason for selecting these heritage sites was because they both share a focus on the promotion of the historical memory of Spain's recent past, and both organise educational programmes that involve young people and schools. The main goals of this study are: first, to investigate young people's access to heritage sites through participant observation; and second, to determine and examine the range of objects and experiences that young visitors engage with by conducting individual/focus-group interviews with young people who visit the heritage sites.

The conceptual framework is based in previous work on cultural heritage and transmission of the interpretations of the past done in Catalonia. We also take into account the academic literature on cultural education and cultural heritage (CHIEF project, 2019b). To start with, in the framework of formal education in Catalonia, cultural heritage is treated as one of the core mechanisms of cultural transmission in the curriculum (see 2019a). Culture is understood as a phenomenon, both local and global, that helps to understand the present through an understanding of the past. The relevance of museums as heritage sites, and the need to promote historical memory in order to gain a better knowledge of one's own culture, are mentioned in the Catalan curriculum. The importance of learning culture and its roots appears often in the curriculum. This is stressed by the important role played by museums and heritage sites in furnishing extra-curricular activities for schools. As observed in the CHIEF report based on mapping of cultural heritage (CHIEF project, 2019b), these venues produce more vivid experiences and help to understand the past. An important aspect to



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take into account here is how these cultural sites in Catalonia also reinforce this local/global perspective, even though they provide few explicit references to the European framework. It is through the insistence on universal values (peace, solidarity, and so on) that the move to a global world perspective is achieved.

For the aspects mentioned above, the study here presented is particularly relevant as we analyse three case studies of different educational programmes of two heritage sites, and how these are experienced by young participants. In two of the cases, young people who engaged in these activities came in the context of formal education and in the third one, young people referred to their activity in comparison to what and how they learnt in their secondary educational studies in the past.

Moreover, having in mind the current situation with the Catalan-Spanish political conflict, it is very important to study young people's identity formation thorough analysis of how the past and cultural heritage is employed by different actors or institutions such as families, peer groups, schools or heritage sites. As part of that, it is observed an interest in recollecting the migratory past of Catalans from all over Spain by means of some relevant initiatives, such as those by the Museum of Immigration History of Catalonia, located in Sant Adrià del Besòs, a municipality close to Barcelona. We can also observe this process in an exhibit in which the space of the Turó de la Rovira was interpreted as an informal housing neighbourhood populated by migrants from the 1940s-1960s and made up of many shacks. This part of the memory and of the recent past reinforces the idea of Catalan national identity as an identity that comprises different cultural backgrounds.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1. Fieldwork**

As was pointed out (Rovira & Ferrer-Fons, 2019), the criteria for selecting the heritage sites are based on the following: the significance that the two local sites have had in the configuration of a network of cultural centres in Catalonia; the approach that they apply in their work with civil society; the presence within their educational programmes of many activities; and their potential role in the building of a European cultural narrative.



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In terms of locality, the reason we selected a site in Barcelona is that Catalonia's capital stands as a very important point of reference in the cultural landscape. The **History Museum of Barcelona (MUHBA)**<sup>1</sup> is a cultural site of great relevance to the city's life and history, and is visited by schools from all over Catalonia. We will focus the fieldwork specifically on two sites in Barcelona under the care of the MUHBA related to the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) and the post-war period: on the one hand, the air-raid shelter in Poble Sec's city quarter (known as Shelter 307); on the other hand, the anti-aircraft batteries at the Turó de la Rovira, a place where the histories of the Civil War and of immigration merge.

We also selected a site that is both a good example and a faithful representation of many of the cultural centres that can be found in medium-sized cities in Catalonia. **Can Jonch - Centre for the Culture of Peace**<sup>2</sup> is a cultural centre in the city of Granollers (60,000 inhabitants), located 40 km away from Barcelona. In this space, the work that is being carried out for the promotion of local memory is particularly related to the Civil War, and to the bombing of Granollers that took place during the Civil War. They also carry out many activities related to education on peace culture. In connection with this site, one day every year, a themed walking tour is organised by Can Jonch, by the city's secondary schools and by the educational departments of the city council. This popular walking tour takes place during the spring, and is attended by some 400 14-year-old students. The themed walking tour that took place in 2019 was selected for observation. The central topic was the visibility of women in history, and it included a walk around the public spaces of the municipality.<sup>3</sup>

The selected sites had already been explored by us before the guided visits and walking tour (see Rovira & Ferrer-Fons, 2019). For the qualitative research on these heritage sites, we organised the fieldwork into three different stages.

First, we went on the themed walking tour 'Women in history and the public space' around Granollers, organised by Can Jonch. This activity took place on 8 May 2019. Two researchers from the team took part in the tour, joining two groups of 20 students. The activity lasted around 5 hours,

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<sup>1</sup> See: <http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/museuhistoria/en/>

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://www.granollers.cat/can-jonch>

<sup>3</sup> The activity basically consisted of following a guided map and stopping at 6 streets named after women who were remarkable in local, national or international history (writers, activists, scientists, etc.). A total of 20 different historical walking tours were organised, throughout the municipality. For each street named after a woman, we were given a short explanation, then a quiz of related questions followed.



comprising an opening event with some 400 third-year compulsory secondary education (ESO) students from various high schools; the city tour itself, involving some 20 groups, which lasted 2-3 hours; and the closing event, where a public screening of student-made videos dealing with gender issues and relevant women in history took place, and which was attended by the local mayor. The researchers took notes and photographs and interacted with the students and teachers. A week later, a discussion group was held with a certain number of students from one of the public secondary schools that participated.

Secondly, in the case of the visit to Shelter 307, we contacted the MUHBA's educational service and asked them to provide a list of the schools that were scheduled to visit the heritage site during the last few months of 2019. We focused on the groups of second-year *Batxillerat* students<sup>4</sup> and we chose a public institute that was located in the second largest city in Catalonia —L'Hospitalet de Llobregat. When we contacted the school, the teacher who had organised the activity for his pupils showed great disposition to collaborate with the research. A researcher joined them in their guided visit to Shelter 307. It lasted around two hours. The visit had as its main topic the plans undertaken for the passive defence of the city during the bombings of the Civil War, and the response from the civil population. A few days later, two researchers went on to conduct a focus group with students on the school premises.

Lastly, in the case of the visit to the Turó de la Rovira's anti-aircraft batteries, we booked a guided tour with the MUHBA educational services on behalf of the UPF CHIEF project. The visit took place on the last Saturday of January 2020. The topic of the visit was the active defence of the city and how the Republican army dealt with the air raids that terrorised the city during the Civil War. The visit also dealt with the construction of informal housing during the 1940s-60s, and the neighbourhood movement that fought for better living conditions and infrastructure.

To select young people who showed an active engagement with youth and/or cultural associations, we adopted a couple of strategies. Firstly we contacted several of the young people who came from the research we conducted in non-formal education settings, and others who engaged in the informal youth practices. Secondly, we contacted a scouting group (*agrupament escolta*)<sup>5</sup> in a

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<sup>4</sup> The 2nd year of *Batxillerat* refers to the 2nd year of non-compulsory secondary education, the final educational stage before going on to university in Spain.

<sup>5</sup> These are groups of voluntary youths who work with children and teenagers during their free time, sharing with them common values of participation, solidarity, acceptance of intercultural diversity and environmentalism, to mention



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coastal city near Barcelona, with 20,000 inhabitants. Several members of the group said they would join the visit. In this case, five CHIEF researchers took part in the guided tour, dividing among them the tasks of conducting participant observation, taking photographs, accompanying young people from outside Barcelona, carrying out walking interviews, and taking care of the organisation and logistics of the focus group. The guided tour lasted about 1 hour and a half. The discussion group was held at a public youth centre. The walk between the heritage site and the youth centre gave us occasion to carry out interviews with 3 of the young participants.

For the focus groups that were held after the walking tour organised by Can Jonch and the guided tour to Shelter 307, we asked the teachers to send us volunteers to participate. The group of young people from the Shelter 307 visit were particularly excited about the visit. As for the visit to the Turó de la Rovira's anti-aircraft batteries, an active and engaged group of young folk was selected by us. In all cases we had variation in gender, social class, family background, and, to some degree, place of origin. Some limitations in the recruitment process included the fact that participation in the focus group was voluntary and that, as one might expect, a certain bias tended to favour young people with a profile of being more interested in history and the recent past. This was clearly the case with the MUHBA's heritage sites. More detailed socio-demographic information on the participants is available in Appendix 1.

### 3.2. Data gathering

Observation took place during all three guided tours. There was no major difficulty in this, since access was provided by the schools or the heritage sites themselves. We kept field diaries on each of the 3 educational experiences at the heritage sites. During the first two experiences, we did not have the opportunity to conduct walking interviews (beyond a certain degree of casual interaction with the young participants) and we were only able to conduct three in the last heritage site (Turó de la Rovira). These interviews were not audio-recorded, however, the conversations were documented through observation notes written by two researchers.

After this, we conducted 3 focus groups with the young participants of the history tours. We quantified the number of times each member of each focus group spoke, and observed that for two

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just a few. This is an important tradition in Catalonia. Although they form part of umbrella organisations, they are very horizontal, assembly-based and locally rooted.



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groups (the themed walking tour and the Turó de la Rovira visit) half of the participants were much more active in their interventions than the other half. In the youngest group, this involved a question of male dominance, and in the Turó de la Rovira, of female dominance. In all focus groups, information about the CHIEF project was given out and consent forms were signed. The focus groups followed an outline that included several topics. In the case of young people aged under 15 years, parental consent was previously sought for.

A selection of pictures of the guided tours is shown in Appendix 2.

### **3.3. Records and Data**

Three focus groups were recorded and transcribed for their subsequent analysis. In the case of the field diaries and walking interviews, notes were taken down by researchers. The total data collected was: three focus groups (172 minutes of audio), three field diaries of the walking tours and three notes of the walking interviews. All of the data transcribed was anonymised in order not to be able to distinguish the schools involved or the participants.

### **3.4. Analysis**

The data collected after the transcription of the focus group, as well as the notes made during the walking interviews and during the observation of the sites, were analysed using Nvivo. All the information was analysed inductively and within the framework of content analysis.

## **4. Findings**

In this section the more relevant findings are presented. The selection of the main topics is influenced by the main research questions of CHIEF's Qualitative Research in Heritage Sites (Working Package 6). We also consider those themes that appeared more consistently in the group discussions and interviews after the interpretative NVIVO analysis. More specifically, the section deals with the representation of the cultural heritage in each heritage site, how young people understand cultural heritage in everyday life, transmission of the cultural heritage, and finally, the





understanding of the concepts of ‘culture’, ‘cultural heritage’ and participation in cultural activities.

#### 4.1. Representation of the cultural heritage at the selected heritage site

The three focus groups all viewed educational experiences outside the formal education environment positively and preferred experiential activities to being in a classroom. However, it is important to differentiate between, on the one hand, the visits to the MUHBA’s heritage sites led by an expert guide and, on the other hand, the city walking tour intended to raise awareness about the invisibility of women in history and in the public space, organised by the local heritage site Can Jonch. The two MUHBA walking tours had many things in common, in particular, they deal with the same period of recent history and share the same educational methodology, whereas the city walking tour was quite different. As far as we can see, the themed walking tour is more participatory, because it involves a more active disposition on the part of the young people during the activity. Moreover, its historical contents were developed by older students during the final year of their secondary education.

However, Can Jonch’s themed city walking tour relies a lot on the subjects and methods thought up for each edition, whereas the two visits to the historical sites clearly have a thematic continuity and a more stable educational approach. Based upon the answers given during the focus groups and walking interviews, the guided tours to Shelter 307 and the anti-aircraft batteries of Turó de la Rovira were the most successful among the interviewed participants, more so than the popular themed walk. Three main reasons for this positive assessment were brought up during both focus groups. These included: their usefulness in expanding historical knowledge; the fact that they look different to what is given in the classroom when studying the Civil War or the Franco dictatorship; and the positive experience afforded by the fact of being physically present at the heritage sites, which is something they valued highly.

*I also liked it a lot. I find it hard to study history because it's so dense. It's not that I don't like it but it doesn't excite me either. And the truth that I found very interesting and above all I thought that really there were people like now we are here. Yes, it made me think. (FG Shelter 307, Ana)*

*I liked that the guide explained the political side of [the] context at the time because I had come here on an excursion, about four or five years ago with the school and he*



*only explained to us the parts of the shantytown and of the cannons and the Civil War but did not explain things about the Civil War, the context of fascism in Europe and all that. And I realise that we know very few things, that we have not gone beyond what I have been told in high school. (FG Turó de la Rovira, Bernat)*

We will first concentrate on the popular city walk intended to raise awareness on the invisibility of women in history. Most of the young people from the focus groups argued that this activity was fine in terms of conceptualisation. During the fieldwork, we observed that students were quite attentive to the activities, and yet during the focus group they stated that they had found it a bit boring and unattractive. They said it would have been better to include more incentives in the activity, such as challenges and competitions between groups, rather than just following a map, listening to an explanation and answering an oral test.

Despite this, they valued the fact that the activity had been developed by students, and that it let them meet young people from other schools positively. But what they found particularly worthwhile was the closing event, which took place at a public youth centre located in an old remodelled textile factory, because they enjoyed the session of short videos made by students from the various participating schools that dealt with subjects related to women and history. As the videos were screened, even though there were close to 400 young people present, we could observe that all was silent and attention was paid. At the end of every video piece, there was a burst of applause from the students of each of the schools, as if they were competing to see who cheered the most.

A different approach was taken for the activities related to the active and passive defence of the city, which, in the case of the Turó de la Rovira, included a historical overview of informal housing. Both guided tours took place in stable heritage sites that form part of the heritage sites network in the city of Barcelona (kept by the MUHBA). It was in those very places that the related historical events took place, and the visits are hosted by professional guides who are historians used to working with young people (we can confirm this for both instances). Both of the discussion groups gave a positive assessment of the activities.

*When I was told we were going on a history visit I liked it because I really like history, like my mother does. Then entering to the shelter I really enjoyed and the experience was also very enriching. I had never entered a shelter or anything like that. (FG Shelter 307, Silvia)*



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*It has been helpful to know where we are and where we come from and to understand where we are at a time when it is crucial to know why we got there (in reference to far right growth) and I think it is these things that give rise to talk about where we come from, our historical origin and understand many things that are happening today (FG Turó de la Rovira, Victoria)*

In this sense, and in line with the knowledge that young people prefer experiential activities and lived experiences (Bisquerra Alzina, 2010), visiting a shelter that was built to defend against the bombing of the city had a very significant emotional impact and was highly regarded by the majority of the participants in this focus group. It was actually what they liked the most about the experience.

*David: You walk into the shelter and you get the feeling of hundreds of people crowding through, running away from the bombs, and your skin shivers... And then as you walk through the different rooms you get to see a bit of what life was like in the basements. And I really liked how the topics crop up, the shelters as they were truly experienced, how the people felt, what they did to hang out, the movies, the nursing work (...) I found the dynamics were excellent. (FG Shelter 307, David)*

Entering the shelter — narrow, dimly lit, scarcely ventilated, giving a certain feeling of claustrophobia — attracted the attention of the young people. The experiential explanations of the guide helped the young people empathise even more with the situation, as they learnt where the infirmary and the surgery room were located, the destruction of the children's area under the bombs that left an aftermath of dead children and babies, etc. The young people engaged in the visit quietly and respectfully. They only suggested one improvement: more period clothing and items.

Very active and dynamic, the guide combined detailed historical facts and explanations with references to writers such as George Orwell and Almudena Grandes, or to films like *The suffragettes* when mentioning how women gained the right to vote during the 2nd Spanish Republic. He did the same when he explained the historical context before entering the shelter, adding many references to the causes and effects of the historical past (the Civil War and World War II, in particular) and the present (recent wars involving bombardments, like the wars in the Balkans and Syria). The young people said they liked the guide very much, for both the content of



his talk and the dynamism shown throughout the visit. The guide was very pro-active, he kept posing questions to the students to get them involved. He brought in topics related to other disciplines, including architecture and geology. He talked a lot about the organisational capacity of civil society and the common people in the defence of the city. He also expressed some criticism over the tardiness of the Spanish Historical Memory Law (2007). The way the guide interacted with young people was very informal and bidirectional, adapting his discourse to young people's questions or answers to questions he made. The approach attracted the attention of the young people through the construction of common knowledge.

The last activity was a visit to the anti-aircraft batteries at the Turó de la Rovira. As mentioned earlier, the profile of the participants was different here. The young people were older, 18 to 25 years old. Most of them were university students, and some were already working. All were involved in some kind of associational or cultural youth activities. The tour began outside, and then we were led inside two underground spaces: the command room and the guard room. The latter has been reconverted into an exhibition room, with many videos, pictures, maps, posters and a few historical artefacts. The young people enjoyed the visit and were attentive all along. Many of them already knew the place, since it is a meeting point where young people go to enjoy panoramic views of Barcelona. In addition, some of the young people who belong to the scout group had already taken their children to visit the place on their own. There was a general consensus that the guided explanation had helped them to gain more knowledge about the cultural and historical context of the time. In terms of feelings, they found the experience less touching than the visit to Shelter 307, but they still enjoyed it very much.

*Bernat: I liked that he explained the political context of the time. Because when I came here on a school trip about four or five years ago, there wasn't such a detailed explanation... This time he explained things about the Civil War, the context of fascism in Europe and all that. And I realised that I didn't know much beyond what I had been taught in high school, very little apart from high school. Realising that I don't know anything makes me angry. I'd like to know more. Why don't they teach us more about things that have happened recently? (FG Turó de la Rovira, Bernat)*

Another thing that they liked about the exhibition — even though some found the guide's explanations to be too short — was the part about the shantytowns and the citizen's protest actions seeking to improve the neighbourhood's conditions during the post-Franco period and the period of democratic transition. In this regard, two of the girls who did not belong to the scout group were



not happy about the excessive weight given to the history of the Civil War in the tour, as they found that the aspects of daily life and the subject of the shantytowns were more relevant. One of the girls also found fault with the excessive subjectivity of the guide's explanations, which she said reflected his political inclinations. According to her, when explaining history one has to focus on facts, not on ideological interpretation. Some debate was stirred over this issue, but the focus group's participants admitted that there was a certain degree of subjectivity in the way of explaining things on the part of the guide.

#### 4. 2. Cultural heritage in everyday life

When we asked whether they talked with friends or family about the question of cultural heritage, a series of concerns came into view. On the one hand, in all focus groups there was recognition of the importance of the family and the different generations in arousing their interest in cultural heritage. On the other hand, it was also recognised that they have many friends and colleagues in their social milieu who are not interested in cultural heritage and do not talk with them about such topics.

The participants of the three focus groups were also quite diverse from each other. The two focus groups in which more emphasis was placed on the importance of cultural heritage sites were the focus groups with older young people (those who went on the visits to the MUHBA sites). This might be due to the fact that, as age expands historical knowledge, awareness on the relevance of heritage sites increases. Or it could be due to the fact that these participants selected themselves by volunteering. The young people who visited Shelter 307 felt that their interest in these topics set them a bit apart from other friends and young people.

*Marta: I think that people don't feel the importance of knowing what history is. For us, or for certain people, we do know the importance of history, we know what it means to know history. And yet there are certain people who instead of fiddling with their mobiles prefer reading a book or going to a museum to enrich themselves culturally, they'd rather do without their mobiles, do without today's technologies.*

*David: I think this technology thing is an excuse, because you can always use your mobile to browse for history information on the Wikipedia.*

*Marta: But people prefer spending their time playing games. (FG Shelter 307, Marta, David)*



A concern that was brought up in all of the focus groups was the fact that so many young people are becoming interested in videogames, social media, YouTube and the Internet, but not in history and cultural heritage. However, some young people argued that they had a combination of both interests, i.e., they like videogames as well as history and cultural heritage — and that both are possible at the same time. At any rate, consensus was generally that the new technologies have changed the leisure time of the young, resulting in less motivation for learning about historical, political or social issues.

The young people all agree that the sources of historical knowledge that they like the most are physical visits to heritage sites, listening to testimonials and watching documentaries. They also highlighted certain learning experiences within the school, for instance, a project on the transmission of history through family memories where grandparents are interviewed about the dictatorship, etc. They recognised the importance of visiting heritage sites in order to gain awareness about events in recent history that should not happen again. The visits also increase their cultural knowledge and understanding of the past.

The family is seen as an important transmitter of cultural heritage in daily life. Several experiences were mentioned where the family had a relevant role, sometimes involving the parents, but often also the grandparents. The mechanisms through which families pass along the cultural heritage are very diverse: talking about these issues either directly or as part of political discussions; sharing books; going on visits to heritage sites, museums or themed exhibitions; partaking in the local festivities or enjoying traditional foods, etc. Frequently mentioned were traveling on holidays and visiting heritage sites or museums. Museum-going seems to be more common when visiting foreign countries, and heritage sites are mostly visited at the local (or Catalan) level. In the cases of young people (of Latino and Moroccan backgrounds) coming from other countries, the transmission of the cultural heritage combines the traditions of their family's country and those of the country of reception, which, they say, creates a few contradictions. Although the parents want to keep the traditions of their countries of origin, they are faced with the dilemma of also wanting their children to become integrated and assimilate the traditions of the reception country; as they try to adapt to the local traditions, the process creates identity conflicts in their children.

During the Turó de la Rovira walking interviews, two participants of the group pointed out that the heritage site was more important to them as a place to meet with their friends than as a place of historical significance. As will be seen later, these two girls took a critical stance on what they perceived as a certain ethnocentric view of history in the focus groups. As the researcher who took notes of the interviews put it:



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*I find it interesting that for the two girls the “Bunkers” (the anti-aircraft batteries) have a lot of meaning in their own lives, but not because of their value as historical heritage, but because they are a meeting place to go to with their friends: they went up there a lot (especially when they were teenagers, now not so much) to meet with friends, to relax, talk about life, drink or eat something, and also to get away from the big city (and contemplate it from above, with a distance ...)*

(Turó de la Rovira, notes on the walking interviews to Cristina and Patricia)

Finally, it should be noted that several of the young people who took part in the different tours pointed out that young people do not generally go to heritage sites or museums because they are not aware of their existence or because the tickets are too expensive for them. They said that more information is needed on the existence of these places, and that it should be presented in a way that is attractive to young people. Furthermore, they said, access should be free. In this regard, they explained that sometimes they know that there are special discounts or free entrance days, but they don't know how or when. In short, their opinion is that policies should be adapted so as to promote historical sites, at least with regard to letting people know about their existence and providing easier access to young people.

*Patricia: We know that going to such and such museums or such and such places is something that not all young people can afford, but it also happens that there are museums of which we didn't even know their existence... I go to [those] kind[s] of places because I work with children... We have been there because of the educational centre... Otherwise I wouldn't go. And I'm sure there are a thousand places I'd be very interested in... It's just that I don't know about them.*

(FG Turó de la Rovira, Patricia)

*Marta: Yes, because more information is being promoted about other things that are less necessary. But not about the hours when some museums offer free access to the public, about discounts, or about theatre shows, dance, music. They are not promoting themselves, so people don't know these things are happening.*

*Sílvia: If you don't look for it, you won't find out.*

*Roger: You have to keep in mind that many people are not interested anyway, they prefer watching a football match.*



Sol: *Maybe they're not interested because it hasn't been instilled in them, wanting to go to the theatre.*

(FG Shelter 307, Marta, Silvia, Roger, Sol)

### 4.3. Transmission of the cultural heritage

There was a general consensus that transmitting cultural heritage is important, and that this has not been sufficiently acknowledged at the institutional level. According to them, among the most important agents for promoting cultural heritage, beyond political institutions, are formal education, the mass media, specialised magazines, the family, and social networks. In the focus groups of the Turó de la Rovira and Shelter 307, the lack of active policies to foster knowledge about the cultural heritage among the young was criticised, especially as regards access to and promotion of the heritage sites.

Xavi: *I think that historical memory is not being promoted very much, we are used to visiting museums of natural sciences, of art... But there haven't been so many changes in historical memory sites. Ok, there's the shelters, you can go visit them. But apart from those, there aren't enough museums or exhibits dealing with historical memory.*

(FG Shelter 307, Xavi)

However, there were also two different points of view about what should be understood by cultural heritage and what content should be promoted. The first view emphasised the importance of preserving local cultures in the face of the dangers of globalisation. The arguments in favour of this approach were diverse: protecting vulnerable cultures, preserving the country's own heritage and cultural diversity, and promoting historical memory in the face of globalisation. The Catalan culture certainly, but also others, were considered as vulnerable in this respect.

The second view placed a stronger emphasis on the parochial features and excessive ethnocentricity of culture, referring explicitly to both the Catalan and Spanish cultures, and on the excessive weight given to the history of the Catalan and Spanish societies, taking into account that nowadays we live in much more diverse societies. This argument appeared during the Turó de la Rovira focus group. The strongest criticism came from the two girls who have a foreign family background and live in culturally diverse neighbourhoods. The other participants of the focus groups were caught in the dilemma of agreeing with these arguments but at the same time accepting





the need to preserve the local Catalan culture and promote the knowledge of what happened during the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship.

The young people of the different focus groups recognise that formal education is an important institution in the transmission of cultural heritage, all the more given the fact that everybody attends compulsory education. But they feel it needs to be adapted somehow in order to motivate young people. In the first place, they said there should be more out-of-classroom activities related to cultural heritage. And their historical knowledge should be broadened by using a bottom-up outlook and approach in explaining how common people lived in historical or war periods.

*David: The problem is that history books talk a lot about the Civil War but they just describe the great battles. So what you see is always the great battles, the great generals on both sides, and you never identify with the person living in the city, the people, those who could have been you in that situation. So it was very inspiring to me to see the shelter, because you really feel how people lived, the people of Barcelona, during the last years of the war.*

(FG Shelter 307, David)

In the second place, they pointed out that the recent past of Spain is often only barely touched upon, instead of running through the high school curriculum, so that students can finish compulsory secondary education with an in depth knowledge of the recent historical past. They further said that, in the two years of non-compulsory secondary education, those students who choose social sciences and humanities have a better and deeper knowledge on historical issues than the students who choose sciences or technology. These differences have to do with the characteristics of the Spanish curriculum. In the third place, emphasis was placed on the importance of formal and non-formal education in the development of critical thinking and the promotion of cultural diversity as a basis for a broader view on cultural heritages.

#### **4. 4. Understanding of the concepts of ‘culture’, ‘cultural heritage’ and participation in cultural activities**

This section deals with how young people understand culture, cultural heritage — with an emphasis on Europe and its meaning — and their participation in cultural activities. What does culture mean for young people? All the focus groups have in common an understanding of culture in broad terms. The two focus groups with older youths tend to share more abstract definitions of



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culture. Very different aspects of culture were mentioned: history, things one learns, the performing arts, cinema, photography, literature, music, values, traditions, pop-up parties, gastronomy, religions, etc. Even cultural activities that are more typical of young people, such as urban art and urban dance, were mentioned as aspects of culture. In this respect, criticism was levelled against an excessively ethnocentric view of what culture is, much like what we discussed in the previous section. There was agreement on the fact that we are living within diverse cultures in a globalised world.

What is understood by cultural heritage? When it came to defining what cultural heritage is, it was more difficult for the participants of the three focus groups to engage in as elaborate a discussion. This might have been because they found the question too abstract. One of the interpretations emphasised a concept of cultural heritage that linked it to typical food, popular traditions and folk dances (like *sardanas* and *sevillanas*, which were mentioned). Another interpretation understood cultural heritage as those aspects of culture that ought to be preserved for future generations.

*Roger: Cultural heritage is all those things attached to our culture that must be preserved for future generations. Because it is our highest defining element, so that in the future, when they study our time, they can understand how we lived, our ideas based on this culture and the heritage that we left behind.*

(FG Shelter 307, Roger)

The feeling of European identity is not internalised among young people. In the focus groups, there are different views about what it is to be European. The two focus groups with older young people were more critical about the idea of Europe; in particular, they criticised what they see as a Eurocentric way of understanding history, traditions and so forth. For the younger focus groups, Europe is a path for a better life and better educational and working conditions. They were very open to moving to other European countries, and even other continents.

Furthermore, the cultural activities carried out by the young people of the focus groups are very diverse. Again, as with the research study on young people receiving formal education (Rovira et al., 2020), the youngest male students admitted to playing videogames a lot, whereas girls said they tend to watch more Internet series (especially on Netflix) and follow social networks. Both said that they follow You Tubers. Some videogames set in historical settings were mentioned: Assassin's Creed or Call of Duty. Other cultural activities mentioned were listening to music,



dancing, concerts, festivals, sports, playing an instrument, going to the theatre or following some popular culture groups. Some said they go to museums and to exhibitions on history and arts.

Moderator 2. *Do the people around you think the same or do they spend more on culture?*

Xavi: *They have different opinions.*

Roger: *There are colleagues you can still convince just by telling them “come on, let’s go one day to Montjuïc, let’s go to the MNAC o[r] to some museum”, but there are others who have a hard time leaving home.*

Moderator: *That’s because they are too much into videogames.*

Xavi: *The problem is that they are very new to the new technologies, or they are just not interested in going out and visiting a museum.*

Roger: *And there’s a relationship of dependency on the new technologies, and I don’t think culture is being much encouraged either.*

(FG Shelter 307, Xavi, Roger)

Lastly, the two social and political topics that they mentioned as being more popular in their discussions with friends, were feminist issues and the climate crisis, sometimes in the context of discussions about starting a climate strike at school. In this sense, the group that participated in the themed walking tour in the semi-urban location mentioned that they discussed gender issues more after attending the activity. Some male students said that the activity had made them more sensitive to the discrimination of women. Various studies based on survey data indicate precisely that these two issues (feminism and the climate crisis) are among the main concerns of young people in Catalonia (Rubio et al., 2019, Ballesteros, 2019). In parallel, both the climate change and feminist social movements, in which the younger generations are very prominent in Spain, have been booming since the end of this decade producing perhaps a greater identification effect among the young participants of the research.

## 5. Discussion

### Educational programmes about cultural heritage matter

The collected empirical evidence points to the importance of educational programmes for both sites. Teenagers and young people often learn about cultural heritage outside of the school curricula (Trilla, 1993). Interacting with these heritage sites plays a fundamental role in improving



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the cultural literacy of young people, because it allows cultural transmission to extend beyond the educational curriculum. However, we found variations in the degree of impact on young people's learning, which depends on the type of content and, above all, the pedagogical methods and dynamics employed.

According to the assessment given by the young people we consulted during Can Jonch programme in 2019, the popular city walking tour organised by Can Jonch was not as well appreciated as the other experiences that were linked to the MUHBA, which were hosted by very dynamic and expert guides. It became clear that this had to do mostly with the methodological approach employed for this particular year's topic.

Thus, as has been pointed out by the diverse literature on education and culture (Carbó, 2015), in order to reach young people it is necessary to organise activities that are aimed at them. These activities are better appreciated if they are experiential. Young people learn by doing, and also through things that make them feel emotionally touched. One such great experience was the visit to Shelter 307. Learning through emotional experiences provides positive incentives for young people. And there are certain experiences that do not necessarily take place in formal education settings (Bisquerra Alsina, 2010). Moreover, pedagogical and communication methods are relevant and must be well adapted to the different groups of young people. We saw how the guides at the MUHBA's sites did not hesitate to make small modifications to the contents and the way of telling things, after observing how the young people interacted with the heritage sites.

A relevant point to highlight is that all three heritage sites are open to anyone interested in their thematic areas, but the educational programmes are mainly thought for formal education learning (they are basically addressed to secondary education students). A positive thing is that this allows the curricular content to be complemented by means of direct experiences on the part of the students. Direct experience allows students to have moments and experiences of recent history in a more experiential and close way, developing more capacity for empathy, a part of experimenting learning methodologies that are less common in the classroom. Even so, these outings are often accompanied by classroom work, they are not antagonistic experiences. In addition, young people attending activities outside the school have a shared experience which can provide greater autonomy and opportunities to relax whilst getting to know other places, which can motivate them to learn.



As far as we can see from the discussions in the focus groups and the walking interviews, the alternative processes to interaction with heritage sites seem to be family experiences, self-motivation or studying university degrees related to these topics (History, Humanities, Social Sciences, etc.). What is evident is that these cultural literacy experiences linked to heritage sites do not compensate for the fact that these educational programmes need to be more open to other audiences, such as older young people and those who are no longer in the secondary educational system.

### **The need for inclusive approaches to history in heritage sites**

Some young participants in the study voiced a critique against what they see as an over-ethnocentric view of history. This gives much relevance to the debate on which histories should be given visibility at the heritage sites. Today's societies are changing a lot. Many of the young participants expressed an open and positive outlook towards cultural diversity. In this regard, as we already mentioned in Rovira and Ferrer-Fons (2019), we can see that it is still potentially possible to expand the programmes and activities and offer a broader focus that reflects the cultural diversity present in Catalan society, where 15% of the population is already born abroad. Although international migrations are a very recent phenomenon (they began in 2000 and reached a peak percentage of arrivals in 2008), cultural policies are playing a role in recognising diversity. As indicated by studies on youth identities (Espín, 2015), it is important to take into account that the cultural practices of young people are being marked by the cultural diversity that has come about as a result of migrations, cyber culture and social movements (for instance, the feminist or the climate crisis movements of recent years). In fact, as Feixa & Nilan (2009), Feixa & Figueras (2018) or Pujolar, Martínez, & González (2010) have pointed out, youth identities are currently characterised by being culturally hybrid. This reality appeared more or less explicitly –depending also on the composition of the focus groups— in all cases.

Another thing that came out was the need to focus more on the lives of ordinary people and not so much on the great battles, political parties and institutional actors. The exhibition at the Turó de la Rovira on informal housing in neighbourhoods inhabited by migrants during the 1940s-1960s, consisting in many rows of shacks, was regarded positively as an innovative view. This aspect of social memory and the recent past reinforces the idea that the Catalan national identity is an identity made up of different cultural backgrounds. Immigrants who came from other parts of Spain in the sixties were called “the other Catalans” (Candel, 1964), in a reference that was intended to point to the formation of a complex but inclusive Catalan identity. It must be mentioned that the



exhibition on informal housing and shacks at the Turó de la Rovira does not make much explicit reference to the Catalan identity, but rather to the local identities of the city.

### **Cultural heritage policies addressed to the young: a pending challenge**

One of the least expected opinions that came out from the discussions was the view that there was a lack of policies to support the cultural heritage. In light of what was discussed in our Mapping Reports of Cultural Heritage (Rovira & Ferrer-Fons, 2019), this seems somehow contradictory. From the experts' points of view, there was collaboration between the heritage sites networks and the educational sphere in the promotion of cultural sites. However, according to the young people involved in the focus groups, these initiatives are not reaching them, they are not aware of them, and even the fact of going to school does not guarantee that everyone will get to interact with these heritage spaces. It may be that it is their age, especially of the older young people (those who visited the Turó de la Rovira), that is influencing them and making them see these activities as more necessary at this point, but in almost every case they find that there is room for improvement. The young people also complain about the little information they receive about these spaces, as well as the lack of easy access — in particular free entrance — or the fact that they have no knowledge of their existence or of their activities. Curiously, many of these spaces do offer free entrance (for students, for young people, sometimes even for anyone), but the young people insisted that they did not know about it. What this lack of knowledge indicates is that more work needs to be done as regards dissemination of information on the heritage sites and elaboration of policies to engage young people with these spaces. It must be mentioned here that the MUHBA's guided tours are paid activities, which clearly poses a constraint to the involvement of young people. There should be more options of free guided tours available to the young.

Finally, one of the issues that came up for discussion in all of the focus groups was that youngest people are far from showing any interest in participating in activities organised by the heritage sites. Many of the young people in the groups saw themselves as an exception within their network of friends. In this regard, allusions were made to the fact that many young people prefer to use social media and play videogames in their free time. With that in mind, it may be worthwhile conducting research into the creation of cultural products — even video games — that are capable of combining a playful side with educational content related to heritage sites. It is evident that these heritage sites are not reaching the social networks of young people. According to certain authors (Bernete, 2007), the Internet can become a new learning environment, and it is potentially possible to develop content that is related to heritage sites, adapted to this new environment, that



may attract the interest of young people. It appears that cultural participation is being enabled by the possibilities offered by the Internet for education. As mentioned in the academic literature (Bernete, 2007), the media and new technologies are forcing us to adopt a new way of understanding education and cultural participation. The Internet not only represents a new technological environment, but also a new learning environment. As Ariño and Llopis (2016) pointed out, new technologies (or, as they call them, socio-technologies) are changing the way of generating culture.

## 6. Conclusion

The first conclusion of our study is that the educational activities offered at the heritages sites that we visited show that they are intended as a means for teenagers and young people to learn about the cultural heritage, often outside of the school curricula or as an expansion of their contents and teaching approaches. Young people enjoy activities carried out outside the school premises, and they like to learn about the historical past in the same places where the events took place. They like to move away from the mainstream approaches to history teaching, and learn rather about the way common people lived and survived during the Spanish Civil War, for instance. They feel more empathy when you tell them what happened to people like them.

However, these and other activities need to be extended to young people who are no longer studying secondary education. The access of young people to the heritage sites needs to be more inclusive. We have seen clearly how the educational programmes are mainly designed as formal education activities, in particular for schools. As the young participants in the study acknowledged, there is little information on youth-oriented activities, and access to the heritage sites is perceived as difficult. It is therefore necessary to promote new programmes and work on strategies and policies to disseminate information on the heritage sites and their activities, using social networks that are close to young people as well as other communication strategies. In addition, activities carried out in collaboration with youth leisure entities and formal organisations should be capable of bringing the cultural heritage to the young, and also to people in general who are outside of the educational world.

In the second place, it has been shown that both sites have an active approach to the recovery of memory and cultural heritage, in permanent interaction with local actors and educational centres. As we pointed out in Rovira & Ferrer-Fons (2019), memories of the Franco regime and of the Civil



War were silenced in Spain, and no repair policies were set in motion until the end of the 20th century. The approach of many public cultural institutions, including the MUHBA and Can Jonch, has been to change the understanding of history and assume a new perspective for the study of the past and the heritage. This process of historical memory recovery is linked to a potential European discourse on the memory of the recent past and the impact of the war on European societies. Nevertheless, we can say from the experience that this is still a pending area for development. In case it is implemented in the near future, an approach to the European past should try not to be euro-centric, but strive to open itself to the multicultural groups and traditions that coexist within today's diverse society, be it Catalan, Spanish or European.

Third, one of the unexpected findings of the fieldwork is that young people have pointed out the importance of knowing the historical past to understand their origins, and be aware of the traumatic episodes of recent Spanish and Catalan history (in particular, the Civil War or the Franco dictatorship), however, this has not been used to talk about the Spain-Catalonia political conflict regarding the independence of Catalonia. In fact, only in a few moments, did some reference to the conflict appear tangentially, and it has not been related to identity issues. The dominant discourse of the young participants was that of a shared gaze of openness towards the diversity of origins and diverse historical experiences, and they did not enter into identity issues, such as the adoption of an interpretation of the historical past and culture to reaffirm a certain national identity. We do not know if this situation is due to the composition of the young participants, the time the fieldwork was carried out (the political conflict was less active in the agenda than in previous years) or to a broader trend of young people focusing more on other aspects. Without doubt, it needs more exploration using other CHIEF data.

Finally, young people's access to heritage sites shows how important this is for increasing cultural literacy and recovering historical memory. The transmission of cultural heritage often occurs through interaction with formal education and/or through intergenerational family experiences. This needs to be expanded by increasing the range of objects and experiences that the young visitors can engage with when visiting heritage sites. In parallel, it is worth exploring a strategy to identify other heritage sites or social experiences related to the near past that could be of interest to young people. Participatory processes involving diverse samples of young people deliberating about which contents, activities and sites are the most needed, as seen from a youth perspective, can also be quite useful. This might help to reduce the reluctance of many young people to visit heritage sites. Awakening curiosity about the past, and the possibility of relating the past to the present and the future, are important educational elements that, if taught through experiences that





are closer to the interests of the young, could serve to create a certain substrate and interest towards other experiences developed by the heritage sites.

### **Policy recommendations**

**1. Promoting educational programmes between heritage sites and schools.** Educators and students stress the importance of linking educational programmes to museums and heritage sites in order to offer direct access to knowledge about the past and heritage to pupils. The interaction between formal education and heritage sites is a starting point for new forms of engagement of young people to the heritage and to cultural literacy. *Interacting with these heritage sites plays a fundamental role in improving the cultural literacy of young people, because it allows cultural transmission to extend beyond the educational curriculum.*

**2. Promoting the active involvement of pupils and young people in the activities of museums and heritage sites.** This necessarily means the importance of a guide for the activity. Educational programmes should be based on creativity and collective work, experimenting with the topics about the past, its connection to the present day, questions emerging from conflict of the past, etc. In short, make the approach to heritage a fieldwork exercise where young people can explore questions and issues.

**3. Improving access to heritage sites for young people.** It is clear that more focused communication and dissemination is necessary in order to reach young people. The information about museums and heritage sites must be segmented for each specific audience. So, a specific communication strategy for young people is recommended to inform about the discounts and the possible activities they can do into the site. The possibility to do activities by themselves in the very spaces of the heritage sites could be a good strategy to attract young people.

**4. Internet and gamification could be new places for the participation and for a more participative interaction inside and outside the very physical location of the heritage sites.** Their activity could be extended beyond thanks these two resources. Internet and gamification could be also a tool for the internalisation of the contents of heritage sites into the schools as a tool for learning and cultural participation in a more transversal way.

**5. Diversity and present values of our society must be incorporated in the narration that heritage sites are transmitting.** Young people live in a diverse social milieu and have a critical point of view about heritage and its transmission. This presents an opportunity for society to enhance perspectives about the cultural heritage itself, and its link to local and global identities.



Heritage sites need to have a global and world perspective, more than European one, considering that migrations are no longer just a European issue, and younger identities are more global and interregional than European.



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## 9. Appendix

**Table 1. Data collected and profile of participants of the focus groups**

	Field diary of the walking tour (notes)	Focus group (recorded)	Number of participants in the focus group, age shown in brackets	Walking interviews (not recorded, notes)
<b>SITE 1 (Can Jonch)</b>	Yes	1 (52 min.)	8 (14-15), third year of compulsory secondary education, same school	-
<b>SITE 2A - Shelter 307 (MUBHA)</b>	Yes	1 (54 min.)	7 (17), second year of non-compulsory secondary education, same school	-
<b>SITE 2B - Turó de la Rovira (MUHBA)</b>	Yes	1 (64 min.)	10 (18-25), active young people from different settings	3 young people (18-25)



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**Table 2. Sociodemographic datasheet of the WP6 participants**

Participant focus group	Heritage site	Gender	Age	Ethnicity/ Language spoken in family	Cultural Engagement	Status	Education	Walking interview
Marc	Themed walking tour	Male	15	Spanish	Non-active	Student	3 <sup>rd</sup> compulsory secondary education	No
Ona	Themed walking tour	Female	15	Catalan	Active	Student	3 <sup>rd</sup> compulsory secondary education	No
Adrià	Themed walking tour	Male	15	Catalan	Non-active	Student	3 <sup>rd</sup> compulsory secondary education	No
Arnau	Themed walking tour	Male	14	Spanish	Non-active	Student	3 <sup>rd</sup> compulsory secondary education	No
Alex	Themed walking tour	Male	15	Catalan and Spanish	Non-active	Student	3 <sup>rd</sup> compulsory secondary education	No
Marta	Themed walking tour	Female	15	Catalan and Spanish	Active	Student	3 <sup>rd</sup> compulsory secondary education	<b>No</b>
Arantxa	Themed walking tour	Female	14	Catalan	Active	Student	3 <sup>rd</sup> compulsory secondary education	No
Judit	Themed walking tour	Female	14	Catalan and Spanish	Non-active	Student	3 <sup>rd</sup> compulsory secondary education	No
Silvia	Shelter 307	Female	17	Spanish	Non-active	Student	2 <sup>nd</sup> non-compulsory secondary education	No



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<b>Participant focus group</b>	<b>Heritage site</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Ethnicity/ Language spoken in family</b>	<b>Cultural Engagement</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Walking interview</b>
Ana	Shelter 307	Female	17	Spanish	Non-active	Student	2 <sup>nd</sup> non-compulsory secondary education	No
Xavi	Shelter 307	Male	17	Catalan and Spanish	Non-active	Student	2 <sup>nd</sup> non-compulsory secondary education	No
Sol	Shelter 307	Female	17	Spanish	Non-active	Student	2 <sup>nd</sup> non-compulsory secondary education	No
Roger	Shelter 307	Male	17	Catalan and Spanish	Active	Student	2 <sup>nd</sup> non-compulsory secondary education	No
Maria	Shelter 307	Female	17	Catalan and Spanish	Active	Student	2 <sup>nd</sup> non-compulsory secondary education	No
David	Shelter 307	Male	17	Catalan and Spanish	Active	Student	2 <sup>nd</sup> non-compulsory secondary education	No
Jordi	Turó de la Rovira	Male	25	Catalan	Active	Unemployed	Music producer	No
Victoria	Turó de la Rovira	Female	22	Catalan	Active	Employed	Master in teaching for secondary education	No
Bernat	Turó de la Rovira	Male	23	Catalan	Active	Employed	Chemical engineer	No



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Participant focus group	Heritage site	Gender	Age	Ethnicity/ Language spoken in family	Cultural Engagement	Status	Education	Walking interview
Natalia	Turó de la Rovira	Female	25	Catalan and Spanish	Active	Employed	PhD in biomedicine	No
Cristina	Turó de la Rovira	Female	22	Catalan and Spanish	Active	Employed	Degree in Art History	Yes
Pere	Turó de la Rovira	Male	21	Catalan	Active	Employed	Industrial engineer	No
Duna	Turó de la Rovira	Female	25	Catalan	Non-active	Employed	Degree in Humanities	No
Fidel	Turó de la Rovira	Male	18	Catalan	Active	Student	2 <sup>nd</sup> year non-compulsory secondary education	No
Julia	Turó de la Rovira	Female	22	Catalan	Active	Employed	Degree in Primary Education	Yes
Patricia	Turó de la Rovira	Female	24	Catalan, Spanish, Arabian	Active	Employed	Degree in Social Integration	Yes



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