

# EPoCH 2025: Emerging Perspectives on Conservation and Heritage Communication & Participation



## BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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TITLE

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this study suggests and establishes – hypothetically – a first approach that favours both requests for restitution of sensitive cultural heritage, and the contemporary dilemma of sustainable identities, communities, and the crucial role of museums in representing displaced ethnoarchaeological assets.

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## Magdalena Calvo Chacón

Graduated in Fine Arts at University of Chile and master's degree in Conservation of Cultural Heritage at Complutense University of Madrid. Her research focuses on the ethical and moral problematics in cultural management and studies, through decolonizing perspectives and the contemporary dynamics between migration, sustainability, community development and upraising discourses regarding the preservation of Cultural Heritage on the contemporary scene.

## Community-driven conservation and heritage resilience on the island of Mozambique

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The Island of Mozambique, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, possesses a rich cultural and architectural heritage increasingly threatened by extreme weather events, particularly cyclones. Sustainable conservation efforts require the involvement and empowerment of local communities to address these challenges effectively.

In response to the devastating impacts of cyclones Gombé (2022) and Dilkeledi (2025), the "Resilient Mozambique" project was launched to enhance the conservation and resilience of the island's heritage. A core component of this initiative was a structured online training program, designed to equip community members and local authorities with essential skills in heritage conservation, risk assessment, and disaster preparedness. The training consisted of four thematic sessions: (i) World Heritage principles and policies (2 days); (ii) Diagnosis and Conservation methodologies (3 days), which focused on assessing the state of conservation, restoration techniques, and preventive conservation strategies; (iii) GIS applications for heritage management (5 days), aimed at developing a multi-sectoral tool for monitoring and planning interventions and assessing main risks and vulnerabilities; and (iv) habitat-resilient construction techniques (2 days), emphasizing sustainable building practices adapted to local climatic conditions.

The Diagnosis and Conservation session was divided into three key components: evaluation, intervention, and planning. The first part focused on assessing the conservation state of built heritage, introducing participants to diagnostic methodologies such as visual inspections, mapping, photographic, and technical documentation. A hands-on practical session enabled participants to apply these techniques by analyzing a local building and documenting pathologies using standardized diagnostic sheets. The second component addressed intervention strategies, exploring traditional conservation techniques, compatibility of materials, and decision-making criteria for restoration. Participants engaged in a simulation exercise where they proposed interventions for the analyzed structures, encouraging critical thinking on balancing authenticity and integrity. The final section focused on long-term planning, discussing heritage management policies and the role of community participation in conservation efforts. The training concluded with a collaborative exercise in which participants drafted preliminary conservation plans, aligning local knowledge with international preservation standards.

This training model sought to bridge technical expertise with local knowledge, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility within the community. By equipping participants with practical skills and theoretical foundations, the initiative aimed to build long-term resilience and improve local conservation capacities. A key discussion point is the effectiveness of remote capacity-building initiatives and the challenges of implementing conservation strategies from a distance. While preliminary results indicate increased community engagement and awareness, practical applications remain dependent on access to resources and continued institutional support.

By sharing insights from this experience, this abstract contributes to the broader discourse on integrating community participation into conservation strategies for climate-vulnerable heritage sites. It highlights the necessity of tailored, locally driven approaches that empower communities to take an active role in preserving their cultural and architectural heritage.

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