



LAZARINES OF KROKOS

How is climate crisis affecting Intangible Cultural Heritage?



Domain:
Climate action &
Environment



Place:
Krokos,
Greece



Duration:
Two-days event



Target audience:
Women (including
younger girls)

Mission

The Lazarines is an age-old celebration and cherished local tradition from the region of Kozani ~~in Kozani~~. This interaction was carefully designed to explore how intangible cultural heritage, such as this festival, can serve as a powerful vehicle for strengthening community resilience and raising environmental awareness, particularly in the face of the climate crisis.

Engagement activities

The interaction focused on engaging women and girls from the local community, who are the traditional bearers of this springtime ritual, and connecting them with the challenges of climate change. Through storytelling, hands-on experimental activities, and open dialogue, the participants were invited into a meaningful space to reflect on how traditions get affected by climate change and evolve over time. The interaction explored how these cultural practices can become valuable tools for fostering climate awareness, promoting gender inclusion, and ensuring cultural continuity in a changing world.

Artistic activities

The celebration showcases the young girls and women of Krokos, who dance and sing, embodying the ritual traditions of the Lazarines. In preparation for the festival, the elderly women of the community carefully craft traditional costumes, complete with handmade flower headpieces, preserving the art and cultural heritage of the event.

IMPACT

Highlight the artistic value of tradition

Raise awareness on climate change
in relation to cultural heritage

Creation of a safe intergenerational
space for women and girls to collaborate



WHAT HAPPENED?

The Lazarines interaction unfolded as a two-day journey linking cultural heritage, intergenerational exchange, and environmental awareness. It brought together young girls, adult women, and elders of Krokos - the traditional bearers of the Lazarines ritual - alongside scientists, local organisations, and facilitators.

The process combined dialogue, artistic practice, and symbolic action. Participants reflected on climate change through open dialogue, storytelling and a participatory whiteboard exercise, connecting scientific insights with their own lived experiences and local environmental knowledge. This reflective exercise encouraged participants to consider how climate change not only threatens nature but also influences cultural practices and seasonal rituals deeply connected to the natural world.

The encounter was not limited to discussion: it was also performative. A symbolic flower planting in the public square, where the celebration takes place each year, linked ecological care with cultural renewal.

The interaction culminated in the Lazarines performance itself, where chants, dance, and costume became a powerful expression of resilience and continuity - showing how tradition can evolve to address today's challenges while strengthening social bonds.

PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT

Ahead of the Lazarines celebration, participants engaged in an open and thoughtful dialogue with Lecturer Vasileios Evangelopoulos from the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of Western Macedonia. This conversation created space for the community to explore how scientific knowledge about climate change connects with their own observations and lived experiences. Local women shared personal stories about changing weather patterns, shifting agricultural seasons, and the ways these changes are beginning to influence the Lazarines tradition itself.

Scientists from the Geotechnical Chamber contributed with practical insights into how climate change is already affecting agriculture, water resources, and daily life in the region. One particularly meaningful discussion focused on how the changing seasons are impacting the blooming of flowers: an important element of the Lazarines tradition. As flowers now bloom earlier than before, the community is adapting the materials used in the handmade floral headpieces, showing how traditions can evolve in response to environmental change.

The workshop closed with a symbolic flower planting in the public space where the Lazarines celebration took place. This simple yet powerful gesture represented both environmental care and the continuity of cultural heritage. The Lazarines performance followed with women and girls dancing and singing in traditional costumes.



Artistic activities

In Krokos, the local cultural association played a key role in bringing together the women and girls who perform singing, dancing, and costume-making at the Lazarines.

The traditional songs and dances were at the heart of the Lazarines celebration, welcoming the arrival of spring. These performances are living art forms, passed down through generations, and are led by the women and girls of the village. The rehearsal for the main celebration started a few days ahead while the interaction was taking place. These rehearsals were not just preparation, they were moments of artistic creation in themselves, where rhythm, movement, voice, and costume merged into an expressive ritual that celebrates nature's renewal.

The songs are traditional chants that speak of rebirth, the awakening of nature, and community ties. They are typically performed a cappella in small groups, as the girls move from house to house. The dances, though simple in steps, carry deep symbolic meaning, forming circles that represent continuity, female solidarity, and the natural cycles of the seasons. These artistic traditions are preserved orally and through practice, making each performance a living memory of the ancestors.

Elder women played a central role in preparing the handmade costumes and floral crowns. The costumes (embroidered dresses, aprons, and carefully crafted headpieces made from local flowers and plants) are unique folk art pieces that reflect the seasonal identity of the region. Each item holds cultural and artistic significance.

The symbolic flower planting that followed the rehearsal added another layer of meaning. This act was more than just a gesture of environmental care: it became a performative expression of the Lazarines' traditional role in 'bringing spring' to the community. It beautifully connected cultural heritage with ecological awareness.

Together, these artistic practices (song, dance, costume-making, and symbolic action) created a vibrant cultural performance. They not only preserved an important local tradition but also reimagined it as a space for resilience, environmental reflection, and intergenerational artistic expression.



Impact of the interaction

The interaction had a deep impact on the local community, the participating artists, and the collaborating stakeholders. It strengthened the role of intangible cultural heritage as a living, dynamic space for dialogue and raised awareness about climate and social challenges. Importantly, it empowered the women and girls of Krokos to see their traditional practices not just as cultural preservation, but as meaningful contributions to today's urgent conversations.

Culturally, the event revitalised the Lazarines tradition. It invited participants to see their songs and dances not as distant folklore, but as contemporary, living acts of artistic and ecological storytelling. This reactivation of heritage gave the performers an opportunity to reflect, reinterpret, and reframe their practices in light of climate change and shifting seasonal patterns.

Socially, the interaction created a safe, intergenerational space where women and girls could come together to share, create, and exchange perspectives. It strengthened community ties, celebrated local knowledge, and fostered mutual learning between cultural bearers and scientific experts.

Environmentally, the workshop helped participants connect broad climate concepts to their own lived experiences. Activities like the participatory whiteboard reflection and the symbolic flower planting made climate impacts tangible and sparked meaningful awareness at the local level.

The local participation added a valuable layer to the conversation:

- The Geotechnical Chamber of Western Macedonia provided concrete insights on how climate change is already affecting soil, water resources, and agriculture, particularly in relation to saffron, a key local crop.
- The Chamber of Commerce of Kozani emphasised the importance of linking cultural heritage to sustainable economic development, ensuring traditions can thrive in a changing world.
- The Saffron Producers' Cooperative offered direct stories from the field, sharing how climate shifts are impacting their farming practices and highlighting the need for innovation rooted in local knowledge.

These diverse perspectives enriched the dialogue and demonstrated the strength of cross-sector collaboration. The initiative became a platform where scientific knowledge, business concerns, cultural values, and artistic expression could meet to explore shared challenges.

At a broader level, the project showed how arts-based, community-driven approaches can actively contribute to research and innovation. It opened the door to new partnerships and demonstrated the value of weaving tradition, emotion, and local identity into climate resilience strategies.

Ultimately, the interaction proved that intangible cultural heritage can be a powerful catalyst for environmental reflection, social connection, and future-oriented thinking. It provided an inclusive, place-based model for addressing global issues at the local level, bridging generations, disciplines, and perspectives to build community resilience.



For successful replication, CluBE emphasises the importance of focusing on the following key aspects:

- Start from the local community and treat cultural participants as artists; Work with people who are already involved in keeping local traditions alive, like cultural associations, older women, or local groups.
- Use traditional rituals to start conversations and connect generations. The Lazarines tradition became a way to talk about bigger issues like climate change and caring for nature. Because it's familiar and meaningful, it helped people feel comfortable joining the discussion. The involvement of both young girls and older women allowed for sharing knowledge and experiences between generations, something very valuable that should be repeated in other places.
- Include local experts, businesses, and cooperatives as part of the discussion. Scientists, local businesspeople, and members of the saffron cooperative joined the event and shared useful information about how climate change is already affecting farming, water, and daily life in the region. They were not just “guest speakers”, they were part of the community conversation. This made the exchange more balanced and relevant to real local challenges.
- Adjust the method to fit the local context. Each place is different. What worked in Krokos might look different elsewhere. The goal isn't to copy the event exactly but to use the same process, work with the community, support collaboration, and link culture with social and environmental issues. It's important to be flexible and respect local customs, rhythms, and people.



Resources

CluBE benefited from the graceful participation of its members, and financially supported the flowers planting activity and the uniforms.



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