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Hypothesis

Crowdsourcing Intangible Heritage for Territorial Development: A Conceptual Framework Considering Italian Inner Areas

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Abstract: This contribution aims to present a conceptual framework for developing territorial development strategies based on crowdsourcing technologies to enhance intangible heritage within the context of Italian inner areas. The work provides essential background information, examining technological aspects, defining intangible heritage precisely, and applying socially innovative strategies for marginal territories. Additionally, it offers a strategic framework to implement solutions that engage local communities and ensure widespread benefits. The study integrates methodologies of extensive literature review, policy analysis, and interactions with stakeholders during experimental fieldwork activities. Its objective is to bridge the gap between debates surrounding technological innovation, intangible heritage enhancement, and territorial development. The paper culminates in a synthesis of these aspects, offering a comprehensive information framework valuable for experts and scholars exploring these topics or undertaking projects aligned with these principles and tools.

Keywords: crowdsourcing; intangible heritage; territorial development; Italian inner areas; socially innovative strategies

1. Introduction: Crowdsourcing, Intangible Heritage Valorisation and Territorial Development

The conceptual framework presented in this research aims to address the knowledge gap in developing territorial strategies for enhancing intangible heritage through crowdsourcing technologies. The research problem lies in the need for effective and innovative approaches to safeguard and promote intangible heritage within Italian inner areas, considering the challenges posed by marginalization and the evolving landscape of cultural heritage in the digital age. By bridging the gap between technological innovation, intangible heritage enhancement, and territorial development, the framework seeks to offer a holistic solution that empowers local communities and ensures the preservation of cultural identity and heritage values.

Intangible cultural heritage is deeply rooted in local communities' territories and shared culture, and it has already garnered attention from local, national, and international institutions and scholars [1,2]. This article is built upon the idea of valorising such heritage and establishing a system through the development of a digital infrastructure capable of gathering information on cultural activities, their historical evolution, and the elements that classify them as expressions of cultural significance at various levels and scales [3]. Crowdsourcing is a reliable, yet underexplored tool for collecting data and information by engaging the local community. By opening the platform, it allows for the emergence of the social relevance of intangible heritage and validates the impact of heritage on local identity. Moreover, crowdsourcing facilitates the empowerment of relationships and supports the exploration of new economic development opportunities [4–6]. To achieve these opportunities, however, it is necessary to design open and inclusive platforms capable

of engaging as many members and local community stakeholders to include them in social-innovation-based territorial development strategies [7–10]. This should combine the expression of intangible heritage by the various actors involved in local dynamics, making it accessible to different types of audiences and potential users through coordinated communication and local engagement actions [11,12].

Moreover, this can generate impacts that sustain the cultural value of productive activities in the territories while valorising the heritage to attract new residents and achieve strategic outcomes in the urban regeneration of marginal areas [13,14]. An open crowdsourcing platform may allow for additional elements of intangible heritage that are tangential to the tangible heritage to be included. This could facilitate connecting the dots between expressions of intangible heritage in adjacent territories to generate links through the construction of a shared repository of data and information able to sustain new economic activities and social interactions based on the strengthening of the network infrastructure of intangible heritage and the significant reinforcement of the local identity [15–17]. In this contribution, the idea and the choice of the Italian inner area context have originated from a project proposal prepared by the National Research Council of Italy, Institute for Sustainable Economic Growth (CNR-IRCrES) as part of the Italian Government's National Recovery and Resilience Plan [1] [18]. The proposal aimed to create a geo-referenced information system on the intangible cultural heritage of local communities, linked to the places of the territory, to be tested on a particularly significant cultural area such as that from the site of the Municipality of Alessandria del Carretto (CS) and more generally of the Pollino National Park. Beyond the particular context, this model applies to territories with the characteristics of the Italian inner areas. To this end, in this paper, we have dedicated a section to an in-depth description of their structural and marginal features [19].

Based on the aforementioned background, the paper is structured as follows: the subsequent subsection delves into the methodological framework (Section 1.1). Following that, Section 2 explores the concept of crowdsourcing and its application in cultural innovation, with a specific emphasis on digital tools. In Section 3, an overview of the policy framework for valuing intangible heritage is presented, including reference to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage [2], as well as other relevant international policy frameworks. Section 4 introduces a conceptual model for the application of crowdsourcing in the context of intangible heritage and territorial development. The challenges and opportunities associated with utilizing crowdsourcing to promote intangible heritage and territorial development are discussed in Section 5, encompassing strategies for scaling up and sustaining crowdsourcing initiatives. The paper concludes by summarizing the principal findings and contributions, along with implications for policy and practice, limitations, and potential avenues for future research.

1.1. Methodological Framework

The research question this paper addresses is: how can we develop effective strategies for leveraging crowdsourcing technologies to enhance intangible heritage and support territorial development in marginal areas? Based on the attempt to answer this question, the paper aims to outline a conceptual framework for cultural innovation and territorial development strategy based on intangible heritage crowdfunding tools. The framework aims to sustain bottom-up development processes by involving local communities, strengthening relationships, and creating opportunities to enhance cultural heritage. From a methodological perspective, the research presented in this paper has followed three distinct activities and corresponding methods:

1. An extensive literature review on the application of crowdsourcing to intangible heritage valorisation projects.
2. An analysis of the evolution of policies and treaties that have shaped the concept of intangible heritage, drawing on a wide range of grey literature.
3. Additionally, the research was enriched by interactions, model design, and feedback collection from stakeholders and researchers involved in the project.

As such, the research practice results from a blend of research activities developed during the design process of the project proposal, interactions, and bibliographic research, which led to a "reflection in action" [20]. The research activities provided a concrete opportunity to learn during the research action, studying a methodology of analysis and restitution of the different cultural elements that contribute to the definition of economic, historical, architectural, landscape, and anthropological characteristics, particularly in inner areas.

2. Crowdsourcing as a Tool for Cultural Innovation

2.1. Definition and Principles of Crowdsourcing

Despite the lack of a universal definition, crowdsourcing has become an increasingly popular phenomenon, used in various industries and sectors, including healthcare, education, government, and entertainment. Its adaptability and flexibility enable it to be utilised in a wide range of situations, from generating new ideas and designs to solving complex problems and engaging stakeholders. The term "crowdsourcing" is composed of two distinct words: "crowd", which refers to the collective individuals who engage in the initiatives, and "sourcing", which encompasses various procurement practices that seek to identify, evaluate, and involve suppliers of goods and services. Following this framework, scholars such as Jeff Howe assert that crowdsourcing is a commercial practice that involves delegating a particular task or project to a group of individuals, commonly referred to as "the crowd" [21]. Crowdsourcing is a term coined by Jeff Howe [22] to describe a diverse range of activities that take on different forms, including the creation of user-generated content (such as Wikipedia), crowdfunding to fund projects (such as Kickstarter), collaborative problem-solving through online platforms (such as InnoCentive), information gathering (such as Google Maps), and the production of goods and services (such as Threadless). [23,24]. The flexibility of crowdsourcing makes it an effective and powerful practice but also presents challenges by means of defining and categorising it. Although there have been efforts to develop a theoretical knowledge base, it still needs to be fully established. For instance, Brabham [25] defines crowdsourcing and creates a typology of it, and Vukovic [26] provides a general overview of various characteristics of crowdsourcing, including the kind of crowd that can participate, the incentive schema, the different variants of crowdsourcing initiatives, or the requirements of a crowdsourcing initiative [27], and Geiger [28] develops a taxonomy using different examples. However, there is no agreed-upon definition of crowdsourcing, as it is viewed from various perspectives. For example, some definitions focus on its problem-resolution potential [29,30], while others see it as a means of promoting innovation in the business development process of organisations [25,31]. The systematic review conducted by Hossain and Kauranen [32] analysed 346 articles, revealing an intriguing division of the motivations of crowds, which are considered critical factors in crowdsourcing.

Given that crowdsourcing encompasses a wide range of purposes, from simple to complex, the motivations of crowds can vary considerably depending on the nature of the task. In certain crowdsourcing activities, such as Wikipedia and open-source software development, crowds are intrinsically motivated [33]. Intrinsic motivation is also prevalent in citizen journalism, citizen science, and public participation in state and community building. On the other hand, crowds engage in micro-tasking as crowd labour to obtain financial returns in exchange for the micro-tasks they perform [34]. When the task is complex, extrinsic motivations are more prevalent than intrinsic motivation. Additionally, motivations in intermediary crowdsourcing platforms appear to be primarily extrinsic [35].

2.2. Application of Crowdsourcing to Intangible Heritage and Territorial Approaches

One significant contribution of crowdsourcing in cultural heritage preservation is the engagement of local communities in the preservation process. By involving local communities, crowdsourcing enables a collaborative approach to cultural heritage preservation. This approach recognises that cultural heritage is not only the preserve of experts and scholars

but also belongs to the communities that created it. By involving communities, crowd-sourcing empowers them to take ownership of their cultural heritage and participate in its preservation. Crowdsourcing also enables the collection and sharing of cultural heritage data. One of the most relevant examples of the application of crowdsourcing to intangible heritage is the "Citizen Archivist" program launched by the US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in 2010 [36]. The program invites volunteers to transcribe and tag historical records, making them more accessible to researchers and the public. Another example is the "Europeana 1914–1918" project [37], which crowdsourced stories, photos, and other artefacts related to the First World War. These projects demonstrate how crowdsourcing can facilitate the collection and dissemination of cultural heritage data, thereby enhancing access and understanding of cultural heritage. One of the main benefits considered in crowdsourcing for cultural heritage preservation is that it can help to overcome resource constraints [38]. Many cultural institutions lack the staff and funding to undertake large-scale digitisation and preservation projects. Crowdsourcing can enable these institutions to tap into the knowledge and skills of a global community of volunteers willing to contribute their time and expertise to these efforts [39]. Crowdsourcing can also enhance cultural activities by facilitating greater participation and engagement among audiences. For example, crowdsourcing can collect user-generated content, such as photos and videos, from visitors to cultural sites and events. This content can then be shared online, creating a more interactive and participatory experience for audiences. For example, the "Smithsonian Digital Volunteers: Transcription Center" project at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History used crowdsourcing to transcribe handwritten field notes from historical expeditions. Volunteers worldwide can access the notes online and help transcribe them, making the information more accessible to researchers and the public [40]. Crowdsourcing can also be used to involve audiences in the creation of new exhibits and programming. For example, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art used crowdsourcing to create an exhibition called "Snap + Share," which explored the relationship between photography and social media. The museum invited visitors to submit their photos and ideas for the exhibit, and some of these submissions were incorporated into the final exhibition [41].

When we talk about crowdsourcing applied to the enhancement of cultural heritage, there are also several issues to consider, as noted by Trevor Owens [42]. The term "crowd" can be misleading, as most successful crowdsourcing projects do not rely solely on large and anonymous groups of people. Rather, these projects often rely on the participation of engaged members of the public who are passionate about the subject matter. The success of these projects is built upon a long tradition of volunteerism and civic engagement in creating and developing public goods [43]. Trevor Owens raises a valid question about the definition of "sourcing" and its association with work and value. Merriam Webster's definition of crowdsourcing [44] helps to clarify this relationship further: "the practice of obtaining needed services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people and especially from the online community rather than from traditional employees or suppliers." However, the keyword in this definition is "outsourcing." Crowdsourcing is a concept originally invented and defined in the business world, and it is important to reconsider the implications when applying it to cultural heritage. As Owens notes, the definition of crowdsourcing in cultural heritage contexts may be more complex and nuanced than its definition in the business world. We must carefully consider the unique aspects of cultural heritage when utilising crowdsourcing methods. Constantinidis' contribution [45] sheds light on the challenges of engaging people in crowdsourcing cultural heritage and the importance of designing appropriate engagement strategies. His discussion on the potential of digital preservation strategies for safeguarding cultural heritage is of particular significance, wherein he emphasises the need for key influential people, called change agents, especially in regions threatened by social and political instability [46], citing his experience working in Afghanistan. One such strategy involves using photos of cultural heritage sites that visitors and local Afghan people upload to either Google Maps/Earth or

a dedicated (GIS) website, which can be used to reconstruct destroyed heritage digitally. The digital reconstruction of lost heritage can also be undertaken through crowdsourcing efforts, as demonstrated by the Mosul Project [47].

Within the context of intangible heritage enhancement, digital tools, and community engagement, it is crucial to acknowledge the contributions of relevant literature. One such publication, "Digital Intangible Heritage: Inventories, Virtual Learning, and Participation" by Alivizatou [48], holds particular relevance in this domain. Alivizatou explores the intersection of digital technologies and intangible cultural heritage, focusing on the development of inventories, virtual learning platforms, and participatory approaches. The publication highlights the potential of digital tools in documenting, preserving, and disseminating intangible heritage, with a specific emphasis on the active involvement of communities and the challenges associated with digitization.

Another significant contribution to this field is the publication "Between Imagined Communities and Communities of Practice: Participation, Territory, and the Making of Heritage," edited by Adell et al. [49]. This work delves into the complex dynamics between imagined communities and communities of practice in relation to heritage. It delves into how participation, territoriality, and collective processes shape the creation and interpretation of heritage. Drawing upon diverse case studies and theoretical frameworks, the editors and contributors shed light on the multifaceted nature of heritage creation, representation, and engagement. The publication emphasizes the importance of understanding the social, cultural, and political dimensions of intangible heritage and explores how digital tools can facilitate inclusive and participatory approaches to heritage preservation and valorisation.

These publications exemplify the ongoing efforts to bridge the realms of intangible heritage, digital technologies, and community engagement. By examining the potential of digital tools, exploring participatory approaches, and acknowledging the complexities surrounding heritage creation, representation, and interpretation, these works contribute significantly to the advancement of knowledge in this field.

From this tradition of territorialist work, the experience of the ICH Scotland [50] project emerges as a noteworthy endeavour in the realm of intangible heritage enhancement. Intangible cultural heritage encompasses a wide array of traditions and practices, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social customs, rituals, festive events, and knowledge pertaining to nature and crafts. Despite the intangible nature of this heritage, it carries substantial significance, shaping individual and collective identities, fostering cultural respect, and facilitating intercultural understanding. The creation, continuity, and transmission of intangible cultural heritage are collaborative efforts, driven by the active participation of communities. In Scotland, the approach to intangible cultural heritage takes a holistic and inclusive stance, acknowledging the diverse communities within the country. Aligned with the principles delineated in UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the ICH Scotland project aims to promote and safeguard Scotland's intangible cultural heritage, recognizing its intrinsic value within the nation's cultural fabric. Notably, the project embraces a distinctive facet: the utilization of Wiki crowdsourcing, a participatory platform that empowers communities to contribute to the documentation, preservation, and dissemination of their intangible heritage. By harnessing the collective knowledge and engagement of community members, the ICH Scotland project exemplifies an innovative and dynamic approach to ensuring the vitality and appreciation of Scotland's intangible cultural heritage.

It is essential to acknowledge the multifaceted and contentious aspects surrounding the enhancement of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), particularly in relation to its political discourse and the potential for commodification. Scholars such as Kozinets [51], Wilkie [52], Van Hooland et al. [53] and Lor and Britz, [54] have conducted extensive research on the digital commodification of culture and its far-reaching implications. By critically examining the impact of digital technologies and platforms on cultural heritage and cultural consumptions, they provide valuable insights into the intricate complexities and challenges involved in preserving authenticity and fostering community engagement

amidst the forces of commercialization. In addition to the digital realm, the broader issue of commodification of cultural heritage is addressed by Matarasso [55]. Through an insightful exploration of the commercialization and commodification of arts and culture, Matarasso underscores the complex interplay between economic development, cultural value, and social impact. His research invites a thoughtful consideration of the ethical implications and potential negative consequences associated with the commodification of cultural heritage, highlighting the need for careful navigation of economic imperatives while safeguarding the intangible aspects that give heritage its intrinsic worth. In Italy, Berardino Palumbo's research has shed light on the controversial aspects of cultural heritage commodification. Through ethnographic analysis, Palumbo examines the political conflicts within non-anthropological museums in southeastern Sicily, revealing the political and conflictual character of these institutions [56]. Additionally, his work explores the concept of Global Taxonomic Systems (GTS), which shape a global imagery and influence attitudes, values, and emotions on a global scale [57]. Palumbo's contributions offer valuable insights into the complexities of cultural heritage commodification in Italy.

3. Policy Framework for Valuing Intangible Heritage

3.1. The Evolution of UNESCO's Framework on Intangible Heritage

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Agency (UNESCO) provides an essential institutional framework concerning cultural heritage policies, which is considered an essential reference point for any work on this matter. The institution is widely acknowledged for its dedication and achievements in conserving cultural heritage. Specifically, this paper aims to examine UNESCO's involvement in shaping policies related to intangible heritage, a relatively new notion intricately linked with material cultural heritage [58]. In its effort to safeguard cultural heritage, UNESCO took a significant step by adopting the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage during its 17th General Conference on 16 November 1972. The convention's primary objective was to create a comprehensive list of sites, including historical centres, monuments, and landscapes, that required protection and development. Despite criticism, this convention signified a significant milestone in UNESCO's political and scientific endeavours related to cultural heritage. However, certain countries raised concerns that the convention was founded on a Eurocentric model of heritage and did not appreciate the value of their cultural expressions [2]. The issue of preserving folklore and oral traditions were raised early on, just one year after the World Heritage Convention was established when the government of Bolivia urged UNESCO to include a protocol to protect such intangible cultural heritage in future international agreements. The subject sparked scientific debate in the 1980s, and various expert commissions engaged in the discussion. Ultimately, this conversation led to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2003. This convention marked an important milestone in UNESCO's efforts to protect cultural heritage, particularly intangible cultural heritage, and provided an essential framework for safeguarding such heritage on a global scale [59].

Throughout the last decade of the 20th century, UNESCO made crucial decisions and gained significant experiences that emphasised the importance of protecting intangible heritage for all societies worldwide. Additionally, the organisation recognised the need for an integrated approach in this field.

In 1989, UNESCO adopted the recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore, which defines folklore as creations based on traditions expressed by a cultural community or individuals and recognised as reflecting the community's cultural and social identity. This recommendation represented the first international legal instrument to regulate intangible cultural heritage. It covers various aspects of cultural heritage, including definition, identification, preservation, diffusion, guardianship, and international cooperation [60].

In the early 1990s, UNESCO made significant strides in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. In 1992, the World Heritage Committee broadened the World Cultural

Heritage category to encompass Cultural Landscapes. They established new criteria to recognise properties as "combined works of nature and man of outstanding universal value" and identified three main categories: landscapes intentionally designed and created by humans for aesthetic and prestige purposes; landscapes that have organically evolved with human cultures (originating from social, economic, administrative, or religious motivations); and "associative cultural landscapes" with strong relationships between natural elements and the symbolic imagery of human cultures, including religious, artistic, and historical elements. These criteria expanded UNESCO's ability to recognise and safeguard cultural heritage sites, acknowledging the complex and intertwined relationship between humans and their environments [61].

In 1994, the World Heritage Committee expanded the definition of World Heritage and its List with the adoption of the Global Strategy. This aimed to better reflect the full range of cultural and natural treasures of the planet, beyond just the material heritage, and recognise sites that demonstrated human presence on that territory, including aspects related to cultural interaction, coexistence, and the creative sphere the communities concerned [62]. In 1995, UNESCO evaluated the impact of its previous recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore among States Parties. This evaluation was presented in 1999 at the Smithsonian Institution, underscoring the recommendations' importance in shaping global cultural heritage policies. The Living Human Treasures Program and the subsequent Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage mark significant steps forward in recognising and preserving cultural heritage beyond the physical objects and structures commonly associated with cultural heritage [63]. In the same year, the conference "A Global Assessment of the 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore: Local Empowerment and International Cooperation" conducted a five-year evaluation by experts from various disciplines, including anthropology, law, and economics. This endeavour aimed to prioritize communities as custodians of intangible cultural heritage and to ensure the preservation of traditions [64].

The success of this program served as an inspiration for the development of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which recognises the importance of individuals transmitting cultural elements within a community [65]. From 1997 to 2005, the Masterpieces Program established a world list of unique examples of intangible cultural heritage, promoting awareness of its value among UNESCO States Parties and inspiring the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The World Masterpieces list has since merged with the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage [66]. The 2003 Convention was also influenced by the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which received unanimous approval from UNESCO in 2001, shortly after the September 11 attacks. This declaration views cultural diversity as a "common heritage of humanity" that is as essential for individuals as biodiversity is for nature. It promotes the importance of respecting the dignity of individuals who embody this culture and highlights that cultural diversity is not a fixed heritage, but rather a dynamic process that requires preservation and transmission to future generations. This declaration foreshadowed the key principles of the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage [67]. In 2003, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was signed in Paris and entered into force three years later. This convention defines "intangible cultural heritage" as practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, and associated objects that communities, groups, and sometimes individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage.

From this moment onwards, intangible cultural heritage is conceived as being recreated by communities in response to their environment, fostering respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. It includes performing arts, social practices, festive events, ceremonies, knowledge, and craft knowledge that are in close interrelation with the physical and social environment of the communities. The intangible heritage consists of three elements: practice, the bearer community, and the element's significance. The convention reflects a redefinition of heritage as a complex entity whose interpretative key must

be found in the groups and human communities involved [68]. Moreover, the diversity of expressions creates the definition of heritage rather than adherence to a descriptive standard. A monument, a landscape, a historical centre, or a single square are no longer perceived only as isolated examples of excellence of the material heritage of humanity but have acquired a new dimension precisely through the concept of intangible heritage, seen as a source of identity, creativity, and cultural diversity.

In addition, while the UNESCO World Heritage List includes properties that demonstrate exceptional universal value for intangible heritage, the 2003 Convention provides for a representative list, which may consist of the elements that communities and groups consider representative of their identity, as well as an urgent safeguard list, in which to include the elements at risk of extinction for which immediate action must be required. Finally, the Paris Convention provides for the creation of a national inventory of intangible cultural heritage, as well as the protection, promotion and transmission of heritage to future generations, encouraging the active participation of communities, groups and individuals involved in safeguarding their intangible heritage. More specifically, the convention stipulates that the identification of intangible heritage elements shall be based on the "participation of relevant communities, groups and non-governmental organisations" (art. 11 b) [2]. It is important to note that even during the preparation of national applications for inclusion in the Intangible Cultural Heritage List, the community responsible for carrying the intangible element must take several actions to preserve and transmit the element. This is a strict criterion required for applying (ICH-3), and the community is expected to provide ad hoc training. The training focuses on the role of different actors involved in the inventory process. It is community-based, with at least one-third of the participants expected to be community members. The workshops aim to train community members in ethnographic research techniques, enabling them to participate in the identification process not only as researcher's informants but also as full-fledged researchers, thereby recognising and legitimising their expertise [69–71].

3.2. Faro Convention and Heritage Communities

The Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, known as the Faro Convention, adopted in 2005 [72], formally recognises, for the first time, the central role of individuals and groups organised in communities in the process of identifying, preserving, and transmitting intangible cultural heritage; the right to establish "heritage communities" is therefore very explicitly defined. Article 2(b) states: "a heritage community is made up of a group of persons who attach value to specific aspects of the cultural heritage, and who wish, within the framework of public action, to support them and pass them on to future generations". More generally, the vision behind the Faro Convention essentially sums up the Council of Europe's mission in the cultural field: to favour European citizens in their relationship with their common heritage. This concept is emphasized in Article 2(a), which defines intangible cultural heritage as a collection of resources inherited from the past that people identify as a reflection and expression of their evolving values, beliefs, knowledge, and traditions, regardless of ownership. It encompasses all aspects of the environment that result from the interaction between populations and places over time, including resources, properties, values, knowledge, traditions, environment, populations, and places. All concepts also refer to a potential economic profile of cultural heritage on a territorial scale, following European policies that indicate sustainable management, including cultural heritage, as a strategic choice. Finally, Part III of the Faro Agreement, titled 'Shared responsibility towards cultural heritage and public participation', emphasizes the need for collaborative efforts, knowledge sharing, and functional cooperation among various stakeholders, including public authorities, experts, owners, investors, businesses, non-governmental organizations, and civil society. Article 11 specifically calls for the development of joint projects. A centred and useful indication for our discourse, precise in organisational terms for public action, as it should translate, in the private sphere, into the assignment of roles of responsibility

to bodies that involve all the parties involved and, in the public sphere, to project teams transversal to the various bodies. In summary, the 1989 UNESCO Convention began to introduce the concept of intangible cultural heritage, while the 2003 UNESCO Convention provided a more precise definition of this term and established instruments for preserving and promoting intangible cultural heritage. Finally, the 2005 Council of Europe Convention at Faro recognised the central role of the community in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. It provided a broader definition of this term, emphasising the fundamental role of heritage communities in transmitting knowledge and practice to subsequent generations and, simultaneously, including external actors as an integral part of the capitalisation processes, including researchers: "this inclusion sounds like an expected recognition: cognitive and communicative mediation cannot be considered external and false to a heritage endowed with intrinsic value, but an integral part of its expressive value and its identifying and regenerative power for collective memory" [73].

4. A Conceptual Framework to Apply Crowdsourcing for Territorial Development in Italian Inner Areas

In this section, we present a framework of digital valorisation of intangible heritage as a driver for economic and social development at the territorial level. In the composition of our framework, we have considered the so-called internal Italian areas, territories rich in intangible cultural heritage but at risk of disappearing due to strong depopulation flows (Figure 1). Despite this reference, we aim to create a basic framework readily applicable to other contexts whose peculiarities are not related to the characteristics of specific territories or intangible cultural heritage. We thought about this territory because the presence of intangible cultural assets in rapidly deteriorating demographic areas implies the risk of a loss of historical and anthropological knowledge hand-in-hand with the dispersion of the communities living in these areas. An intervention for the protection and enhancement of these activities would have a double value: to prevent the loss of a cultural asset and to help the survival of the communities of people who animate the activities based on intangible cultural assets. The use of crowdsourcing allows us to go beyond mere conservation of the memory of the cultural heritage, actively involve the community in its defence and strengthen the identity of the territory through this participation, inserting a first significant brake on its dissolution. The rest of the section will describe the framework structure and the possible socio-economic effects.

4.1. The Context of Our Proposal: Italian Inner Areas as the Territorial Development Target

The National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI) represents one of the three strategic options for programming European Union funds for the 2014–2020 cycle. Launched in December 2012 by the then Minister of Territorial Cohesion Fabrizio Barca, it represents an attempt to counter the decline of a large part of the territory of our country, far from service centres, characterised by phenomena of ageing, depopulation, and economic decline [74,75] (Figure 1). The National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI) aims to address the issue of depopulation in the inland areas of Italy. This has been achieved through a national map that identifies municipalities based on their distance from the centres where primary education, health, and transportation services are available [65]. The strategy covers 1077 municipalities (which represents 13% of all Italian municipalities) and is divided into 72 project areas distributed across all regions of Italy. The total population of the areas covered by SNAI is 2,072,718, representing 3.4% of the country's population, while the total land area is 51,366 sq km (16.7% of Italy's territory).
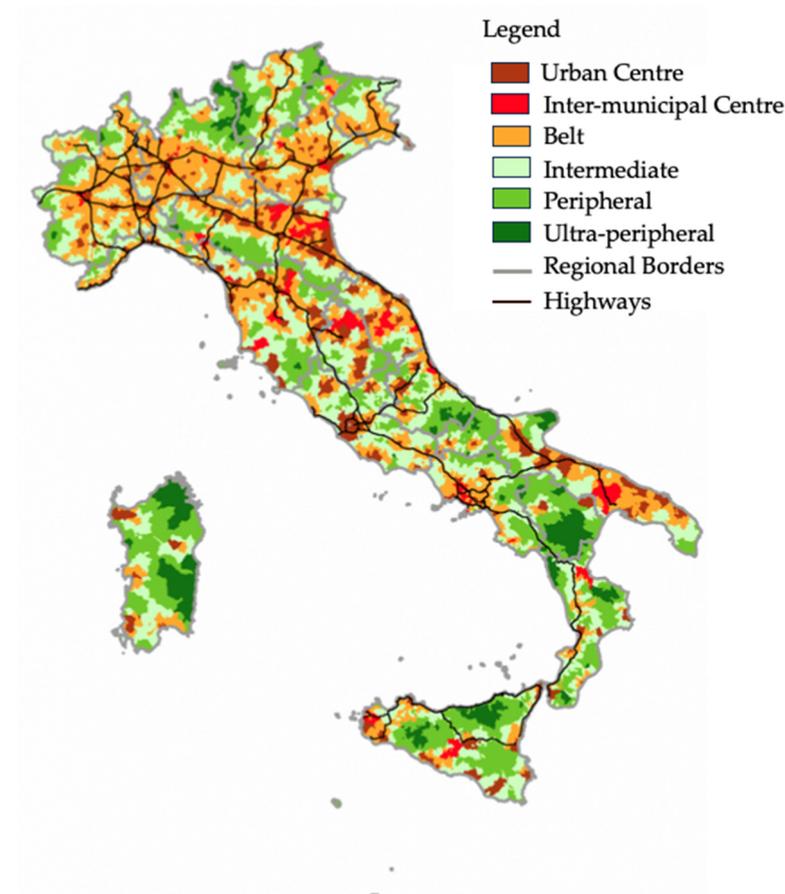
Figure 1. The figure displays a map of the Italian inner areas as defined by the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion, uniquely identified as areas significantly distant from centres providing essential services (such as education, healthcare, and mobility). These areas are highlighted in varying shades of green, with a greater intensity indicating a higher level of territorial isolation and limited access to services. In contrast, urban areas are represented by brown and red colours. Modified by the authors based on the source (https://politichecoesione.governo.it/; accessed 13 May 2023).

To achieve its goals, the SNAI follows an experimentalist approach, using co-planning techniques that encourage collective learning and participation from all levels of government and citizens. The planning process places municipalities at the centre of decision-making, as they are the institutional level closest to citizens. These municipalities work together in contiguous aggregations, creating permanent territorial systems where functions and services are exercised in the association. This allows for the effective implementation of public services and the promotion of investment projects for local development. The strategy aims to rebuild the conditions for exercising citizenship rights in these areas by acting on the levels of essential health, education, and mobility services and promoting measures for local development [76]. For the first time, the problem of inner areas is brought into focus at the main level, and a project for the country is built around it, converging EU and ordinary resources. It is designed at the national level and then defined by the regions and local actors [77].

The Strategy for Inner Areas represents a political and cultural challenge. This ambitious initiative defines specific territorial development objectives and new policy problems, providing a detailed description and outlining a perspective for its treatment, putting new tools into action, mobilising skills, and attempting to experiment with the place-based approach [78]. The SNAI has been instrumental in identifying those areas characterised by sustained demographic decline and physical remoteness from primary service hubs, such as hospitals, schools, and railways. However, it is worth noting that Italian inner

areas are also endowed with significant natural and cultural assets, which make them unique and appealing destinations. As acknowledged by the SNAI itself, tourism has been identified as a critical sector for the local development of these areas [69,70]. This sector has witnessed rapid growth in recent decades. It is expected to grow exponentially, thus becoming a crucial driver for economic growth, job creation, and wealth generation, especially if connected with sustainable development strategies based on the valorisation of cultural heritage [79,80]. The case of Italian inner areas serves as a compelling example of how regions that are not conventionally recognized as tourist destinations can harness their untapped natural and cultural resources to drive development and stimulate economic revitalization [81]. Additionally, scholars such as Barbera [82], Bindi [83], and others [84] have conducted critical examinations of the challenges associated with local development and creative activism in remote and rural areas of the country. Their contributions shed light on the complexities and critical aspects inherent in these contexts, providing a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved in revitalization initiatives.

4.2. Basic Framework of Intervention: A Structured Interaction between Experts, Local Communities and External Audiences

The conservation and enhancement of intangible cultural heritage begin with the establishment of a Digital Documentation Centre (DDC), serving as a focal point for experts, stakeholders, and the local community to foster a shared approach in alignment with the principles of the Faro Convention [62] (Figure 2).
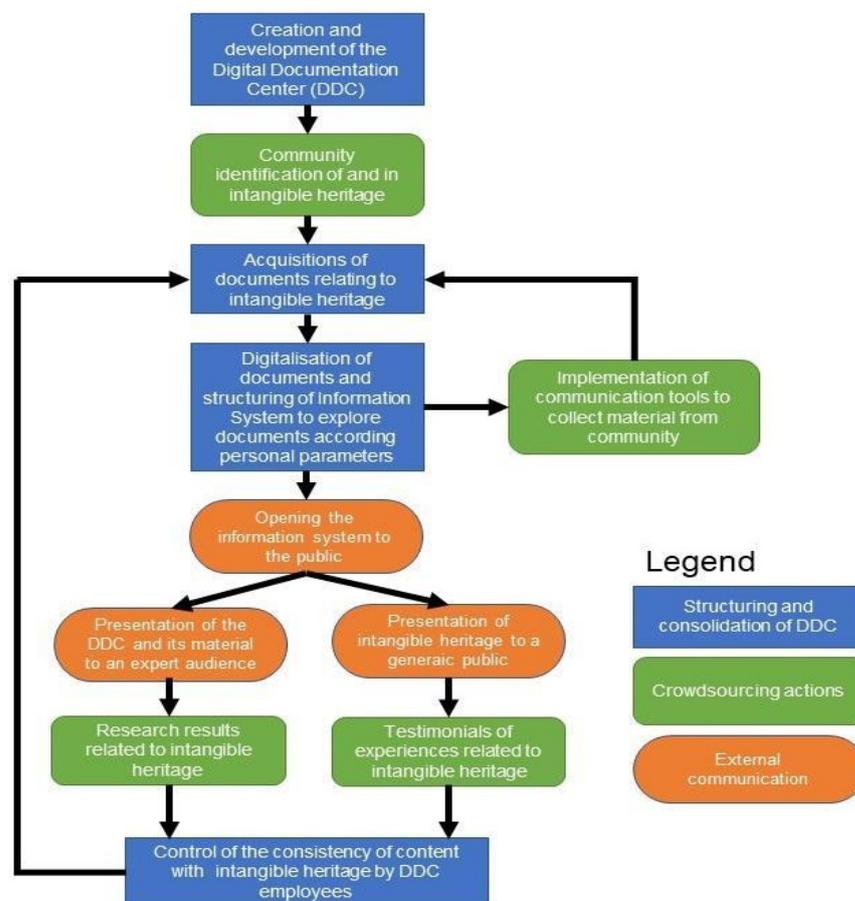

Figure 2. The figure depicts the sequence and interconnections of the implementation phases within the analytical framework. The actions are categorised into three main areas: the establishment of the DDC (represented by the blue boxes), the utilisation of crowdsourcing (illustrated by the green boxes), and the expansion of community engagement beyond the DDC (depicted by the orange boxes). Authorship of the authors.

The initial phase of the process inherently entails researching, studying, and acquiring pre-existing documentary collections (generated and preserved by universities, museums, archives, and other documentation centres, as well as those owned by independent researchers). Simultaneously, new documentation on the relevance of intangible heritage is actively promoted. The cataloguing of these documents will form the core foundation of the DDC, enabling the discernment of the historical and cultural attributes of the intangible heritage subject to intervention. The cataloguing and reconstruction of the event's evolution are intricately linked with establishing a digital database comprising documents associated with the event. This Information System facilitates the correlation of diverse document types (official records, descriptive texts, photographs, and historical films), allowing for the narration of events that can be tailored according to users' requirements, such as specific timeframes or formats of the collected documents.

Crowdsourcing plays a pivotal role in shaping the structure of the documentation centre during this phase. The information system design offers a direct access channel for the community, serving as a pathway through which members can contribute their documents about the event. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to gather first-hand testimonies regarding people's involvement and the progressive development of such involvement over time. This aligns with the insights shared by Artese and Gagliardi, emphasising the importance of community contributions [84,85].

The hypothesis is that establishing such a communication channel is a way to resolve diverse challenges associated with document collection and preservation efforts concerning intangible heritage. It initiates community engagement that can unfold in an organic and ongoing manner, preventing it from being unintentionally steered solely by experts entrusted with studying the event. Consequently, a wealth of nuanced descriptions about the role of intangible heritage in the region can be amassed, capturing the first-hand perceptions of community members. An additional benefit arising from this mode of data collection is economic: the direct and continuous acquisition of information eliminates the need to organise field campaigns to gather testimonies. This circumvents the difficulties inherent in identifying suitable interviewees and the time constraints typically associated with such campaigns [86].

The active participation of individuals through crowdsourcing procedures brings about an additional benefit by encouraging them to recognise the significant role that intangible heritage plays in shaping public life. Moreover, it triggers a mechanism of gratification, as contributors directly contribute to enriching the historical narrative of intangible heritage. These crucial aspects form the foundation for fostering a sense of community centred around intangible heritage, establishing and nurturing a sense of territorial identity with which individuals can readily identify. It is important to note that this process does not involve indulging in nostalgic sentiments, promoting contrived picturesque notions, fabricating traditions, or artificially socialising living practices [87]. The creation of the DDC, achieved through the meticulous collection and organisation of documents, alongside the implementation of the information system, fulfils the primary responsibility of the experts. However, it does not mark the culmination of the process to enhance the intangible heritage. The accumulated documents must be accessible to the public, employing various approaches tailored to the desired usage of the material. The DDC must adapt its range of services according to the specific audience it intends to engage with regarding intangible heritage.

Initially, the creation of the DDC primarily targets experts who can benefit greatly from the collected and organized documents in terms of cultural enrichment. These resources are invaluable for reconstructing the development and history of intangible heritage. The audience includes historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and other professionals who require adequate support and resources for their respective fields of study.

However, establishing the DDC should not be limited to crystallizing intangible heritage. It should also serve as a tool to engage a broader audience and stimulate their curiosity in exploring and appreciating this unique aspect of the region. By actively

involving people in experiences related to intangible heritage, a deeper connection with their surroundings can be forged [88]. The creation of the DDC, through the collection and organization of documents and the implementation of the information system, fulfils the primary role of collecting to be made accessible to the public through different means, tailored to the specific use and audience: catering both experts and the general public.

The development of the Information System within the DDC enables remote access to the collected material via the web, allowing experts to explore the documents through different paths based on factors such as population participation over time or changes related to specific aspects of intangible heritage. The Information System should also have external references to documents and materials like those describing the intangible heritage of the region.

Additionally, the same elements, recalibrated with a greater focus on the current condition of intangible heritage, can be used to raise awareness and promote the territory. The communication should highlight captivating elements of cultural heritage, describing their meaning for the community and fostering a sense of participation.

While sharing materials through the Information System is essential, it is also important to have a physical contact point. A physical space serves as a reference point for experts to view the original documents and offers the general public an opportunity to deepen their knowledge of intangible heritage. The DDC should provide both digital and physical services in a complementary manner. Crowdsourcing plays a significant role in expanding and promoting intangible heritage beyond its original boundaries. It allows for the collection of additional information and personal experiences from experts and the general public. However, careful selection is necessary to ensure that the cultural value of intangible heritage is not diluted or its distinct characteristics are not blurred.

Trained personnel are required to manage and expand the DDC independently. Their training is an important contribution to the project, as they can help make the DDC a permanent institution and a cultural and social reference point for the community. The framework structure presented here applies to a single community with its intangible heritage, but it can be expanded to involve other communities in the same area. The goal is to create a network of communities capable of enhancing the cultural and natural offerings of the common area while promoting the unique intangible heritage of each community, without fostering competitive behaviour among them.

4.3. Expected Social and Economic Impact of Framework Implementation

In this section, we analyse the economic and social impact of the proposed framework. In particular, we base our analysis on UNESCO indicators [79] relating to the economic and social participation effects of the promotion of cultural activities, focusing on those that can be directly applied to a local context referring to the valorisation of intangible cultural heritage (Figure 3).

In terms of the economic aspect, our analysis primarily focuses on "Cultural employment," which entails quantifying the individuals directly engaged in managing the cultural activity under examination, as well as those involved in closely related events and the associated services generated by these initiatives [80]. As for the social dimension, we consider "Participation in identity-building cultural activities" and "Participation in going-out cultural activities." These metrics gauge the extent of community involvement in activities that contribute to shaping cultural identity and the level of public engagement in cultural events tied to the intangible heritage at the core of our analysis [89].

The framework's objective is to optimise these indicators, considering the initial premise of our analysis: to facilitate the advancement of intangible cultural heritage, which serves as a key factor in fostering a distinct local community identity. In this regard, the utilisation of crowdsourcing within the DDC structure is crucial in encouraging widespread community involvement in shaping an identity profile. However, it is important to note that the promotion and valorisation of heritage encompass a broader range of contributions beyond crowdsourcing, as we will explore further.
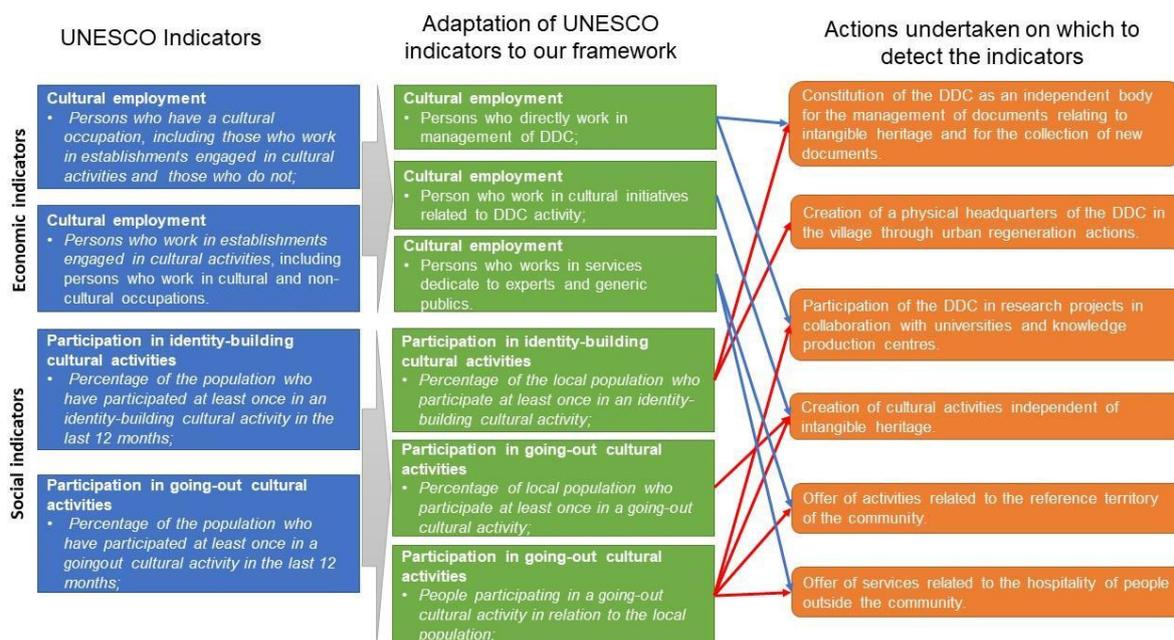
Figure 3. UNESCO indicators considered in the socio-economic analysis of the framework (blue boxes), reworking to adapt the indicators to the local context (green boxes), tools directly linked to the considered indicators (orange boxes). Authorship of the authors.

When analysing the framework's impact, it is essential to consider the broader contextual conditions of the locality. The effectiveness of the presented framework heavily relies on the available infrastructure, considering the digital nature of the documentation centre and the aspiration to engage diverse audiences in sharing experiences related to cultural heritage, both in virtual and physical realms. However, when discussing the potential outcomes, we must always begin with the assumption that the undertaken actions are adjusted according to the existing circumstances. It is important to recognise that changes can be fostered, but ultimate decisions cannot be solely determined locally.

A primary and direct consequence is intimately tied to establishing the DDC: the digitisation and virtual dissemination of the accumulated material do not signify the abandonment of a physical space for the documentation centre. The DDC's headquarters is essential for preserving the historical documents collected, allowing interested individuals to safely access and peruse them, and housing the servers required for storing, categorising, and sharing digitised documents. The design of the DDC's headquarters has the function of valorising the documentation centre by establishing a reading room and the necessary IT facilities for executing planned activities. The idea is to localise this in an existing building within the town, initiating a path of urban revitalisation by repurposing an abandoned structure suited for this purpose. This may provide the community with a natural meeting place synonymous with the foundational element for constructing community identity. Alongside the involvement of the documentation centre in community dynamics, establishing a physical location also necessitates the presence of individuals responsible for managing services directly linked to the documentation centre. These individuals may work on-site, ensuring the project's continuity and development, initially under the guidance of experts and eventually autonomously.

In addition to establishing a physical headquarters that strengthens the bond between the community and the intangible heritage, the DDC must adopt an appropriate legal framework that grants it full autonomy in managing activities related to intangible heritage events. It should not be merely an appendage of other local stakeholders. As mentioned earlier, the newly formed entity must maintain connections with local entities, starting with the municipality. However, its primary focus should be promoting the enhancement of intangible heritage and establishing links with other cultural institutions. It should

encourage the participation of community members and outsiders in intangible heritage events while promoting new events. Care must be taken to maintain the essence of cultural heritage and the sense of community the project aims to foster.

The autonomy of the entity responsible for managing the DDC also entails a commitment to reduce dependence on financial support from local institutions. The documentation centre should position itself as a cultural institution seeking collaborations with similar knowledge-producing entities. It should strive to become a partner for universities and research centres, engaging in research projects that leverage its expertise in disciplines such as anthropology and history to explore the characteristics of intangible heritage. Similarly, sociological aspects relating to the heritage's integration into the community's social fabric should be addressed. Participation in such projects would attract funding for DDC management and require the active involvement of specialised personnel, enabling the centre to break free from isolation and become part of the scientific community.

The cultural management of intangible heritage also involves efforts to entice and invite experts to analyse the collected documents on-site. The DDC should provide tools and spaces for material analysis, generating a stream of specialised visitors who further establish the centre's reputation as a culturally significant institution deserving of attention.

The role of the DDC encompasses communication efforts aimed at introducing the intangible heritage to a broader audience, inviting them to participate in related events and share in the experience. A well-executed communication strategy would attract a diverse audience interested in the intangible heritage, eager to learn about and become part of it, even if only briefly. This would generate cultural tourism centred around intangible heritage. To further support this flow of tourists, activities beyond the intangible heritage's strict scope can be promoted, such as showcasing the surrounding territory or organising cultural events such as literary and film festivals. These events would predominantly cater to cultural interests, emphasising specific elements of the community. The objective, therefore, is to leverage the enhancement of the intangible heritage to foster "quality tourism" that not only focuses on maximising attendance during specific dates but distributes the influx of visitors throughout the year, promoting a more balanced and consistent development of the region and avoiding sudden spikes in visitation.

Sustained and diversified visitor flows, whether "experts" or "general tourists," contribute to the growth of essential tourism support services such as hospitality and catering. This presents an opportunity for urban regeneration by creating "Scattered Hotels" (Albergo diffuso), which repurpose vacant homes and buildings resulting from waves of depopulation in the town. These properties are transformed into accommodations distributed throughout the village but managed as a cohesive hotel. An example of a successful Scattered Hotel is Sextantio, located in the village of Santo Stefano di Sessanio, Italy. This unique hotel embraces the concept of Albergo diffuso by renovating abandoned houses and turning them into guest rooms, seamlessly integrated into the fabric of the historic village. By preserving the local architectural heritage and reviving the local economy, Sextantio has become a renowned destination for tourists seeking an authentic cultural experience.

Additionally, a range of services closely tied to the activities promoted by the DDC would be developed. These may include managing tourist services in the area, organising cultural events proposed by the DDC, and providing facilities proper to those arriving in the community to work on documents, such as offering coworking spaces that provide suitable environments for "expert" visitors to conduct their research on-site.

In summary, the framework will have a socio-economic impact if the planned activities are implemented, with a sustained and active involvement of individuals from the local community in the work activities associated with the intangible heritage, beginning with the DDC. The complete success of the framework relies on certain conditions, mainly the stabilisation of visitor flows, which would enable the planned activities to operate consistently rather than being contingent on isolated events. Equally important is the potential effect of these activities on reversing the population decline in the relevant areas. The framework can be successful if the activities directly and indirectly linked to cultural

heritage can reverse these population trends and transform the involved villages into destinations rather than solely points of departure.

5. Discussion

The recent development of a geo-referenced information system focused on intangible cultural heritage, closely tied to specific locations within the territory, has provided us with a real opportunity to explore a methodology for analysing and preserving various cultural elements that contribute to the economic, historical, architectural, landscape, and anthropological characteristics of Italian inner areas, such as that of the Municipality of Alessandria del Carretto (CS) and, more generally, of the Pollino Park. This includes raising awareness and engaging younger generations in their cultural heritage, encompassing festivals, devotional expressions, traditional techniques and agricultural products, local cuisine, and knowledge of craft techniques. Sustainable development of territories, the integrated and systemic enhancement of local resources, and the interpretation or depiction of place meanings are consistent themes in research related to cultural heritage and landscapes. In this context, the practical and conceptual aspects bring visibility and substance to territorial investigations, reaffirming the dual value of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in terms of identity and economic significance. These cultural elements possess a relational nature and derive meaning from their close connection to the local community, the historical background of the places, and the surrounding landscape. The identification and understanding of heritage find practical applications in promotion and preservation, transmitting the values associated with sites, and fostering awareness among younger generations about the integrated heritage. This integrated heritage encompasses the intricate relationship between intangible values and physical spaces, including the territory, sites, monuments, and artworks. Evidently, this approach also opens up possibilities for specific local policy interventions that aim to be as sustainable as possible for the involved territories. Effective interventions require innovative visions and tools from both social and economic perspectives. The identification and understanding of heritage find concrete applications in promotion and preservation, emphasising transmitting the values associated with sites and raising awareness among younger generations about the integrated heritage, as previously described. Implementing these interventions should involve negotiations with local authorities, ensuring close consultation and shared decision-making with the respective communities. As researchers, we must acknowledge that we are not solely engaged in pure research but rather in the preparation of research interventions and the enhancement of cultural heritage, which inevitably involves political, scientific, informative, and institutional challenges [90,91].. Research on heritage can be classified as a form of impure research [92], which encompasses the ethnographic and anthropological approach rooted in field reflections, emerging throughout the researcher's engagement and interaction with social actors. It represents a dynamic interplay between various stakeholders, including researchers, community representatives, administrators, and other relevant actors (referred to as the crowd). However, it is important to note that impure research should not be equated with fraudulent, political, biased, or unethical practices. Rather, impure research emphasizes a reflective and context-driven exploration of the intangible heritage. Integrated approaches to protecting, preserving, and conserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage require a distinctive methodology. This methodology must begin with comprehensive knowledge of local history and the values attributed to cultural heritage by the community, which can be seen as a mental construct. Additionally, it should encompass the phases of interaction between nature and culture that have shaped the territory into its current form. The anthropological approach to the concept of culture and the shift in social sciences towards process-oriented perspectives, rather than focusing solely on individual objects, have significantly contributed to redefining heritage as a complex entity comprising interdependent expressions. The key to interpreting this entity lies within the groups and human communities involved. As Marc Augé [93] highlighted, "The place, the anthropological place, is simultaneously the principle of meaning for those who inhabit

it and the principle of intelligibility for the one who observes it." Therefore, the territory, with its heritage communities, assumes strategic importance, built upon the sharing of infrastructural, economic, and cultural resources. It is interpreted through various criteria such as historical, economic, geographical, landscape, environmental, and anthropological factors. These criteria encompass traditions, festivals, devotional expressions, agricultural techniques and products, traditional local cuisine, knowledge and craft techniques.

Today, offering the practical opportunity for direct community involvement plays a crucial and innovative role in sustainable development projects focused on cultural heritage. Communities can actively participate in the social transformation of the territory, starting from the preliminary phases. Documenting tangible and intangible heritage, collecting data and information directly, and identifying complementary and sustainable development paths are integral to a participatory methodological approach. Through this approach, people can identify and communicate the resources and values they consider necessary. This highlights the importance of crowdsourcing for cultural heritage. This push towards social innovation entails a change in perspective and policies within this strategic sector. It stimulates the involved communities to actively utilise new tools, especially by granting control over access to and using culturally and economically valuable data to those who have generated and transmitted it over time.

6. Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the recent development of DCCs presents a significant opportunity for studying and implementing methodologies to analyse and enhance intangible cultural heritage in marginalized areas. This framework may represent a valuable tool for sustainable development and integrated enhancement of local resources within the realms of cultural heritage and landscape research. By acknowledging both tangible and intangible elements, the practical and conceptual dimensions of these efforts contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the territory.

The identification and comprehension of cultural heritage hold practical implications for promoting, preserving, and transmitting values, particularly among younger generations. Employing a holistic and interdisciplinary research approach allows for a thorough exploration of the territory and its heritage communities. Given the impure nature of heritage research [94], collaboration and negotiation between researchers, community representatives, administrators, and other stakeholders becomes crucial. Integrated approaches to protection, preservation, and conservation demand a distinctive methodology that encompasses local history, community values, and the interplay between nature and culture. The strategic significance of the territory, along with its heritage communities, relies on the shared utilization of resources across multiple criteria.

By emphasizing direct community involvement and adopting a participatory approach, the facilitation of sustainable development projects and the identification and communication of necessary resources and values through crowdsourcing become possible. Achieving social innovation in this sector requires the evolution of policies and perspectives towards empowering communities and granting them control over valuable data [95,96]. Through this approach, active and responsible stewardship of cultural heritage can be ensured for future generations. In the light of these considerations, our attempt was focused on providing a cognitive model that establishes a methodological principle of linking the container to the content, connecting an object or collection to the building that houses it, and associating an artifact with the archaeological area or historical urban plan tied to the ritual aspects of traditional festivals. According to the model developed, we recognize how the knowledge-building process must transcend the tendency to focus solely on monumental complexes and natural binding sites, shifting towards a more comprehensive understanding of heritage that encompasses cultural and natural elements of varying but equally valuable qualities [97,98]. These elements gain specific scientific significance through their reciprocal functional and structural relationships, as well as their connections

to the historical, social, anthropological, and landscape contexts they represent. Therefore, a holistic and interdisciplinary research approach becomes indispensable [99].

Considering the territory as a whole, shaped by natural processes and human activities, necessitates the integration of various fields of knowledge when selecting cultural heritage sites for study and intervention. In this regard, it is crucial to further explore the proposed framework, the Digital Documentation Centre, as a means to capture and leverage the rich cultural heritage present in marginal mountain areas. Moreover, an in-depth analysis of the potential of crowdsourcing in this context would provide valuable insights into harnessing collective intelligence and community participation for the preservation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage.

While our research has provided valuable insights into the generalization of a development model for crowdsourcing based DCC to enhance intangible cultural heritage in marginalized mountain areas, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations inherent in our study. One specific limitation lies in the absence of empirical validation in a real-world setting, which represents a significant avenue for future research. By conducting empirical studies, we can gather concrete data and evidence to validate and further refine the proposed framework, Digital Documentation Centre, and its applicability in preserving and analysing cultural elements. Empirical research would allow us to assess the effectiveness of the framework in practical scenarios, validate its outcomes, and assess its impact on the stakeholders involved. By embracing an empirical approach, we can bridge the gap between theory and practice, allowing for evidence-based decision-making and fostering a more nuanced understanding of the complexities surrounding the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. Future empirical studies would serve as an essential next step, expanding our understanding and enabling the development of more targeted and effective strategies for the valorisation of intangible cultural heritage in marginalized mountain areas [100].

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Notes

1.   Assistance for the application to achieve the funding of the M1C3—Investment 2.1 "Attrattività dei borghi" (tr. Attraction of villages).

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