Inclusive Cultural Heritage: Challenges and Opportunities for Accessibility

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Patrimônio Cultural Inclusivo: Desafios e Oportunidades para Acessibilidade

RESUMO

Objetivo: Este estudo tem como objetivo analisar as estratégias de acessibilidade implementadas pelo Museu de Arqueologia Regional (MAR), evidenciando como essas ações podem ampliar o acesso ao patrimônio cultural e servir como modelo para outras instituições. Busca-se demonstrar a relevância de práticas inclusivas na promoção da equidade e na valorização da diversidade cultural.

Metodologia: A pesquisa adota uma abordagem qualitativa, de natureza exploratória e descritiva, utilizando o método dedutivo. Os dados foram coletados por meio de revisão bibliográfica, análise documental e experimentação, com foco em materiais institucionais, relatórios de projetos, publicações acadêmicas relacionadas às iniciativas do MAR, bem como a implementação de adequações às ações realizadas. A análise foi conduzida com base em abordagens interpretativas, considerando as dimensões físicas, sociais e simbólicas do patrimônio cultural.

Originalidade/relevância: Este trabalho aborda um gap teórico importante ao explorar como práticas acessíveis podem ser integradas à gestão cultural. A temática é relevante no campo acadêmico por articular acessibilidade, inclusão e patrimônio cultural, oferecendo uma análise prática e inovadora por meio do estudo de caso do MAR.

Resultados: Os resultados indicam que as iniciativas do MAR, como exposições táteis, oficinas adaptadas e treinamentos de equipes, ampliaram significativamente o acesso ao patrimônio cultural e promoveram a inclusão de públicos historicamente marginalizados. Essas ações demonstram como a acessibilidade pode ser integrada de forma eficaz à gestão cultural, fortalecendo o impacto social das instituições.

Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas: O estudo contribui ao demonstrar a viabilidade de práticas acessíveis e sua replicabilidade em diferentes contextos. Além disso, reforça a importância da inclusão como um eixo central na gestão de espaços culturais, ampliando a compreensão teórica sobre a relação entre acessibilidade e patrimônio cultural.

Contribuições sociais e ambientais: As ações analisadas no MAR promovem inclusão social ao democratizar o acesso à cultura, fortalecendo os laços comunitários e valorizando a diversidade. Adicionalmente, destacam-se os benefícios para a preservação do patrimônio cultural como um recurso sustentável e acessível para gerações futuras.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Acessibilidade cultural. Inclusão social. Gestão do patrimônio.

Inclusive Cultural Heritage: Challenges and Opportunities for Accessibility

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to analyze the accessibility strategies implemented by the Regional Archaeology Museum (MAR), highlighting how these actions can enhance access to cultural heritage and serve as a model for other institutions. The study seeks to demonstrate the relevance of inclusive practices in promoting equity and valuing cultural diversity.

Methodology: The research adopts a qualitative approach with an exploratory and descriptive nature, using the deductive method. Data were collected through a literature review and document analysis, focusing on institutional materials, project reports, and academic publications related to the MAR's initiatives. The analysis was conducted based on interpretative approaches, considering the physical, social, and symbolic dimensions of cultural heritage.

Originality/relevance: This work addresses a significant theoretical gap by exploring how accessible practices can be integrated into cultural management. The topic is academically relevant for articulating accessibility, inclusion, and cultural heritage, offering a practical and innovative analysis through the MAR case study.

Results: The findings indicate that MAR's initiatives, such as tactile exhibitions, adapted workshops, and team training, significantly expanded access to cultural heritage and promoted the inclusion of historically marginalized groups. These actions demonstrate how accessibility can be effectively integrated into cultural management, strengthening the social impact of institutions.

Theoretical/methodological contributions: The study contributes by demonstrating the feasibility of accessible practices and their replicability in different contexts. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of inclusion as a central axis in the management of cultural spaces, broadening the theoretical understanding of the relationship between accessibility and cultural heritage.

Social and environmental contributions: The actions analyzed at MAR promote social inclusion by democratizing access to culture, strengthening community ties, and valuing diversity. Additionally, they highlight the benefits of preserving cultural heritage as a sustainable and accessible resource for future generations.

KEYWORDS: Cultural accessibility. Social inclusion. Heritage management.

Patrimonio Cultural Inclusivo: Desafíos y Oportunidades para laAccesibilidad

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Este estudiotiene como objetivo analizarlasestrategias de accesibilidad implementadas por el Museo de Arqueología Regional (MAR), destacando cómo estas accionespueden ampliar elacceso al patrimonio cultural y servir como modelo para otrasinstituciones. El estudio busca demostrar larelevancia de lasprácticas inclusivas enlapromoción de laequidad y lavalorización de ladiversidad cultural.

Metodología: La investigación adopta un enfoque cualitativo de naturalezaexploratoria y descriptiva, utilizando el método deductivo. Los datos se recopilaron mediante una revisión bibliográfica y unanálisis documental, conénfasisenmaterialesinstitucionales, informes de proyectos y publicaciones académicas relacionadas conlas iniciativas del MAR. El análisis se llevó a cabo con base en enfoques interpretativos, considerando las dimensiones físicas, sociales y simbólicas delpatrimonio cultural.

Originalidad/relevancia: Este trabajo aborda un importante vacío teórico al explorar cómolasprácticasaccesiblespuedenintegrarseenlagestión cultural. La temática es relevante enelámbito académico por articular accesibilidad, inclusión y patrimonio cultural, ofreciendounanálisispráctico e innovador a través delestudio de caso del MAR.

Resultados: Los resultados indican que las iniciativas del MAR, como exposicionestáctiles, talleres adaptados y capacitación de equipos, ampliaron significativamente elacceso al patrimonio cultural y promovieronlainclusión de grupos históricamente marginados. Estas accionesdemuestrancómolaaccesibilidadpuedeintegrarse de manera eficaz enlagestión cultural, fortaleciendoel impacto social de lasinstituciones.

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Contribucionessociales y ambientales: Lasaccionesanalizadasenel MAR promuevenlainclusión social al democratizar elacceso a la cultura, fortaleciendoloslazoscomunitarios y valorando ladiversidad. Además, destacanlosbeneficios para lapreservacióndelpatrimonio cultural como un recurso sostenible y accesible para lasgeneraciones futuras.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Accesibilidad cultural. Inclusión social. Gestión delpatrimonio.

1 INTRODUCTION

Accessibility in cultural heritage emerges as a topic of great relevance in the contemporary context, aligned with global commitments to social inclusion and the promotion of human rights. Recognized as an essential tool for expanding access to cultural assets, accessibility transforms cultural spaces into democratic environments, ensuring that heritage is shared by all. This study highlights accessibility as a vector of innovation and inclusion, focusing on the practices of the Regional Archaeology Museum (Museu de Arqueologia Regional - MAR), which exemplifies successful actions in this field.

The justification for this research lies in the need to overcome historical barriers that restrict universal access to cultural heritage, particularly for marginalized groups. By showcasing MAR's practices, this study aims to demonstrate how accessibility can be implemented integrally, promoting social transformation and strengthening the role of cultural institutions as inclusive and democratic agents.

The objective of this text is to present and discuss the accessibility strategies developed at MAR, analyzing how these actions can be incorporated into the planning and management of cultural spaces. Furthermore, the study seeks to emphasize the importance of inclusive practices for valuing cultural heritage as a collective and democratic resource.

The methodology adopted is qualitative, with an exploratory and descriptive approach. The deductive method guided the analysis of the specific case of MAR, allowing for a detailed understanding of its practices and the identification of principles that can be replicated in other contexts. Data collection was based on a literature review, document analysis, and experimentation, including institutional materials, reports, and academic publications related to the museum's initiatives, as well as the implementation of adaptations to heritage education activities proposed by the institution. These data were organized to map the main initiatives and challenges encountered in promoting accessibility.

For data analysis, interpretive approaches were applied, considering the relationship between the physical, social, and symbolic aspects of cultural heritage. This perspective enabled the evaluation of how MAR's practices reflect contemporary demands for inclusion and universal access, highlighting its innovations and contributions to the cultural field. Methodological rigor was ensured through the triangulation of sources and the alignment of information with cultural accessibility guidelines, providing robustness to the conclusions presented.

The text is structured into four sections offering a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the topic. The first section, Theoretical Foundations, establishes the conceptual basis necessary to understand the evolution of the concept of cultural heritage and its intersections with accessibility and inclusion. This section addresses historical transformations and the expanded role of heritage, encompassing tangible and intangible elements, emphasizing inclusion as a central axis in contemporary cultural management.

The second section examines the Challenges to Accessibility in Cultural Heritage, focusing on barriers faced by cultural institutions, including architectural, physical, cognitive, and social limitations. It discusses the tensions between preserving historical values and the

necessary adaptations to make spaces more accessible, proposing creative and collaborative solutions to overcome these challenges.

In the third section, titled Case Study of the Regional Archaeology Museum (MAR), the inclusive practices developed by the institution, as analyzed in this research, are examined in detail. This section explores MAR's initiatives, such as tactile exhibitions, adapted workshops, and staff training, highlighting the positive impact of these actions on democratizing access to culture. The study underscores how MAR integrates accessibility into its institutional strategy, presenting itself as a replicable and adaptable model for other contexts.

The fourth section, Conclusion, synthesizes the main results and contributions of the study, demonstrating how MAR's case exemplifies the feasibility of integrating accessibility into the strategic planning of cultural institutions. Additionally, directions for future research are proposed to deepen the relationship between cultural heritage and inclusion, encouraging broader and more collaborative practices.

In conclusion, the text presents a comprehensive perspective on accessibility in cultural heritage, highlighting MAR's analysis as a concrete example of innovation and social impact. By promoting accessibility as a structural axis of cultural policies and practices, the study reinforces the importance of transforming cultural heritage into a truly inclusive resource, enriching the cultural experience for all audiences and fostering a more equitable society.

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The concept of cultural heritage transcends its initial association with material assets of historical and artistic value, such as monuments and artworks, which predominated during the 19th century, particularly in the Western tradition (Choay, 2001). This initial perspective, centered on an elitist and monumentalist vision, was progressively expanded throughout the 20th century, allowing for the inclusion of natural elements, cultural practices, and community traditions that reinforce the role of communities in defining and experiencing what is considered heritage (UNESCO, 1972, 2003). This evolution reflects the recognition that cultural heritage is essentially a social construct, whose meanings vary according to the historical, social, and institutional contexts in which it is embedded. By integrating tangible and intangible, natural and cultural aspects, the concept fosters a dynamic and pluralistic understanding that is fundamental to building a more inclusive and equitable society (Poulot, 2009; Lowenthal, 2005).

The advancement of international regulations, such as the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2003), reinforces this perspective by highlighting that cultural practices, representations, and expressions are vital for maintaining community identity. According to Heinich (2014), the process of "artification" is central to understanding the transformation of cultural assets into heritage elements, conferring new meanings and social status. This transformation is particularly relevant when aligned with the demands for accessibility and inclusion, which broaden the audience and promote greater equity.

In the contemporary scenario, universal accessibility emerges as an essential element to ensure that cultural heritage is truly inclusive. According to the Convention on the Rights of

Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006), ratified in Brazil by Decree No. 6.949/2009, accessibility is a fundamental human right aimed at ensuring equality of opportunities and full participation in society. This approach broadens the concept of accessibility, extending beyond the removal of architectural barriers to include sensory, communicational, and cognitive dimensions. In the cultural context, it becomes indispensable for ensuring that people with disabilities have full access not only to essential services but also to the wealth of cultural experiences that contribute to their civic development and identity (Brazil, 2009).

Regarding accessibility in museums, various laws and regulations support accessibility in cultural heritage across different countries. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted by the UN, establishes that everyone has the right to access culture and education, promoting inclusion and equality of opportunities. This convention emphasizes the importance of respecting the autonomy, independence, and inherent dignity of all individuals, reinforcing that accessibility should be viewed as a fundamental human right (UN, 2006).

In Brazil, the Brazilian Inclusion Law (Law No. 13.146/2015), also known as the Statute of Persons with Disabilities, guarantees the right to accessibility in all environments, including cultural heritage, and establishes guidelines for adapting public and private spaces. Article 53 of this legislation states that "accessibility is a right that ensures persons with disabilities or reduced mobility can live independently and exercise their rights to citizenship and social participation" (Brazil, 2015). Additionally, the Consumer Protection Code (Law No. 8.078/1990) includes accessibility as a consumer right, encompassing services and products offered by cultural institutions, reinforcing the need for concrete actions to ensure equal access (Brazil, 1990).

The Brazilian Association of Technical Standards (ABNT) also plays a key role by establishing accessibility standards, such as NBR 9050, which defines criteria and parameters for the access of persons with disabilities to buildings and urban spaces. Alongside NBR 9050, other Brazilian standards contribute to advancements in the field, addressing topics ranging from tactile flooring to guidelines for accessible public transport. These standards provide an important foundation for promoting cultural spaces that guarantee inclusion and autonomy for all individuals (ABNT, 2015).

While federal regulations provide a solid foundation, it is important to note that many states and municipalities have also adopted specific legislation that complements national guidelines and addresses regional particularities. These laws reinforce the commitment to making cultural heritage accessible and promoting diversity, ensuring that cultural institutions meet the highest standards of inclusion.

International organizations also play a relevant role in this context. The International Council of Museums (ICOM), in its code of ethics, emphasizes that museums must adopt principles of accessibility and inclusion, ensuring that their facilities are accessible to all, regardless of abilities or limitations. ICOM's guidelines stress the importance of measures that not only eliminate physical barriers but also promote cultural diversity and active participation of diverse audiences (ICOM, 2013).

However, despite significant advancements in regulations and guidelines, important challenges remain. Resistance to change, budget constraints, and a lack of awareness among

cultural managers are barriers that must be overcome. As noted by Smith (2006) and Waterson and Smith (2010), the exclusion of local and community knowledge from dominant heritage discourses perpetuates inequalities and underscores the need for participatory and inclusive approaches. Aligning legislation, standards, and universal design principles is essential to making cultural heritage truly accessible and inclusive for all individuals.

3. CHALLENGES TO ACCESSIBILITY IN CULTURAL HERITAGE

Accessibility in cultural heritage faces multiple challenges encompassing architectural, cognitive, communicational, and social dimensions, reflecting the complexity of integrating inclusive principles into spaces traditionally designed to serve a limited audience. These challenges are exacerbated by tensions between historical preservation and the necessary adaptations to promote broad accessibility. Structural barriers in historic buildings constitute one of the main obstacles. Such buildings, often designated as cultural heritage, were not designed with accessibility in mind. Stairs, narrow hallways, and the absence of ramps or elevators are common features that limit access for individuals with disabilities or reduced mobility. Adapting these spaces presents complex dilemmas: preserving aesthetic and historical value versus ensuring universal access. Innovative and reversible architectural solutions, such as mobile ramps, discreet external elevators, and adapted signage, have been proposed to balance these demands. However, their implementation still faces financial, cultural, and often political resistance. Moreover, the high costs of interventions can pose significant obstacles for smaller cultural institutions or those located in economically disadvantaged areas.

The adoption of technologies that respect the authenticity of spaces, such as invisible lift platforms and construction materials that integrate with the original design, can minimize the aesthetic impacts of adaptations. These initiatives, however, require greater awareness among cultural managers and legislators, as well as economic incentives to facilitate their execution.

Communicational accessibility constitutes another fundamental aspect of inclusion in cultural heritage. The absence of tactile, audiovisual, and interpretive resources in many cultural spaces excludes individuals with visual or hearing impairments. Technologies such as adapted audioguides, Braille signage, videos with sign language translation, and tactile models are essential tools for democratizing access to cultural heritage. The lack of these resources not only diminishes the educational experience for visitors with disabilities but also perpetuates their exclusion from full participation in cultural environments.

Additionally, creating accessible content faces challenges related to the training of technical teams and the lack of investment in assistive technologies. The adoption of digital solutions, such as mobile applications with audio description and augmented reality features, can significantly expand accessibility possibilities in cultural spaces. However, for these solutions to be effective, it is essential to train cultural management professionals to understand and consistently implement inclusive practices.

Social and economic barriers also play a decisive role in perpetuating inequalities in access to cultural heritage. As Zanirato (2020) argues, inadequate funding for accessibility

measures is a recurring issue, especially in smaller institutions or those located in peripheral areas. The absence of robust public policies and financial incentives contributes to structural exclusion that affects not only individuals with disabilities but also economically vulnerable communities.

Moreover, cultural resistance and a lack of awareness about the importance of accessibility, both among managers and the general public, reinforce exclusionary practices. Overcoming these barriers requires a mindset shift that understands accessibility as a collective right, directly tied to principles of social justice and equity. Educational campaigns and awareness-raising actions for both managers and the public are indispensable tools for fostering a culture of inclusion in cultural spaces.

Addressing these challenges demands a collective commitment involving governments, cultural institutions, professionals, and civil society in a coordinated effort. As Smith (2006) suggests, effective inclusion requires the incorporation of local and community knowledge into heritage processes. Engaging individuals with disabilities in the planning and implementation of accessible solutions ensures that these measures address their real needs and foster an enriching cultural experience for all.

Specific public policies, such as subsidies for structural adaptations, funding for assistive technology development, and training for specialized professionals, are indispensable for creating accessible conditions. Furthermore, partnerships between the public sector, private initiatives, and non-governmental organizations can accelerate the implementation of inclusive practices and amplify their impact.

Finally, promoting accessibility in cultural heritage should not be viewed merely as a legal obligation but as an opportunity to celebrate human diversity and promote equality of opportunity. Transforming cultural heritage into a resource truly accessible to all is essential for it to fulfill its role as an agent of social cohesion, learning, and appreciation of cultural plurality. This transformation is vital to consolidate cultural heritage as a collective right and an instrument for inclusive social development.

4 SUCCESS STORY – ACCESSIBILITY AT THE REGIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM: INTEGRATION, PRESERVATION, AND INCLUSION

The Regional Archaeology Museum (MAR), located at the Faculty of Science and Technology of São Paulo State University "Júlio de Mesquita Filho" (UNESP) in Presidente Prudente, São Paulo, represents a convergence of academic research, heritage education, and inclusive accessibility. Since its inauguration in 2016, MAR has played a pioneering role in preserving archaeological heritage and democratizing access to culture, earning recognition for integrating inclusion strategies that benefit both the local community and academia.

This innovative trajectory is rooted in the Laboratory of Guarani Archaeology and Landscape Studies (LAG), which has been dedicated for decades to documenting, recording, and curating archaeological materials in the state of São Paulo. LAG's work, which includes studies on historical heritage and the restoration of prehistoric ceramic vessels, has significantly contributed to preserving and disseminating the culture of Indigenous groups, whose

importance is fundamental to shaping Brazilian identity. The establishment of MAR expanded this expertise, resulting in the safeguarding of an extensive collection of archaeological artifacts amassed over more than a decade of research and heritage education activities.

In alignment with efforts to democratize access to knowledge and ensure equal rights, initiatives to promote access to museological information have been implemented in various institutions, following accessibility and inclusion guidelines. In this context, MAR stands out as an exemplary case by integrating academic research, cultural management, and inclusive initiatives.

Located at Cyro Bueno Street, nº 40, in Jardim Morumbi, Presidente Prudente, SP, the MAR complex includes the Laboratory of Guarani Archaeology and Landscape Studies (LAG), an exhibition hall, technical reserves, a computer lab, meeting rooms, and an administrative technical sector. The "José Luiz de Morais" exhibition hall showcases archaeological materials from prehistorical Indigenous agricultural groups such as the Guarani (Tupi-Guarani group), Kaingang, and Kaiapó (Jê group), represented by ceramics, chipped stones, and polished stones. Artifacts from hunter-gatherer groups are also on display, including chipped stone tools such as arrowheads, scrapers, and perforators. These materials originate from archaeological sites dated between 250 and 1,668 years Before Present (BP).

Figure 1 – Partial view of the MAR exhibition hall
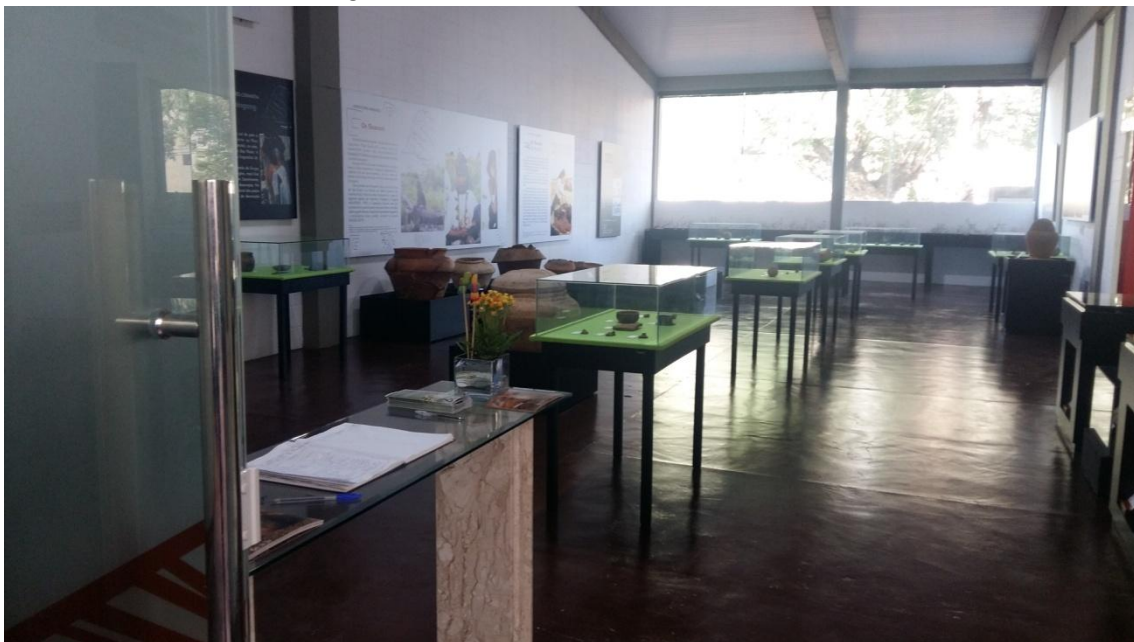
Source: MAR, FCT-Unesp, 2019

The Laboratory of Guarani Archaeology and Landscape Studies (LAG), beyond its academic research activities, maintains a strong focus on documenting and recording archaeological sites in the state of São Paulo. Its activities include the curation and study of prehistoric lithic pend ceramic materials, as well as historical heritage items such as remnants of buildings, pottery, porcelain, glass, and metal artifacts. Additionally, the laboratory undertakes the restoration of Indigenous prehistoric ceramic vessels, enabling these pieces to be presented

to the community. The study of restoration techniques has contributed to the appreciation and dissemination of Indigenous cultures, emphasizing their importance in shaping Brazilian cultural identity.

In addition to its efforts in research and conservation, MAR expands its scope through environmental licensing projects and archaeological heritage management. These projects involve intervention diagnostics, prospecting, salvage, and archaeological monitoring in high-impact contexts such as hydroelectric plants, sugarcane plantations, and basic sanitation infrastructure. These initiatives highlight the museum's commitment to preserving cultural heritage while addressing contemporary demands for sustainable development.

Guided tours aim to familiarize visitors with the stages of an archaeologist's work in the field and laboratory, the origin and history of the artifacts on display, and the lifestyles of the Indigenous peoples who created these objects in the past. MAR also conducts various socio-educational activities, including:

- Consultations related to the protection of archaeological sites and the establishment of archaeological and regional museums.
- Inventories of historical assets, whether officially designated as heritage sites or not, that are at risk of destruction, undertaken by LAG/MAR on its initiative or upon request from public prosecutors in Presidente Prudente and the surrounding region.
- Heritage education initiatives, such as lectures and professional development courses for teachers from public and private schools, along with the production of educational materials (books, workbooks, presentations, and videos).
- Collaborations with the Indigenous school in the Vanuíre Village, located in Arco Íris Municipality, where the community is taught oral history production and participates in courses on topics they select.
- Research into archaeological sites in São Paulo State, contributing to preservation, understanding artifacts, disseminating their significance, student training, and mapping Indigenous Regional Occupation Systems from pre-colonial times to the present.
- Heritage education actions offered to schools, educational institutions, and as part of contract archaeology projects. These include courses on crafting clay pots, painting Guarani ceramics, and creating rock art replicas.

Since 2017, MAR's Accessibility Program has been a landmark in inclusion. By bringing together visually impaired researchers and a diverse team of scholarship holders and interns, the program establishes an innovative model of integration. For example, blind researchers actively participate in developing accessible solutions, contributing to tactile exhibits, adapted workshops, and inclusive communication strategies. This participation not only fosters inclusion but also values the unique perspectives of these individuals, enhancing the museum's initiatives.

Figures 2 and 3 – Selection of Pieces for Tactile Exhibition

Source: MAR, 2019, 2023

Accessible workshops are a highlight of MAR's initiatives. Guarani ceramics, an important cultural marker known for its expressive tactile qualities due to its plastic decoration (La Salvia; Brochado, 1989), became the starting point for working with ceramic vessel fragments. With adaptations such as embossed molds, textured paints, and direct assistance, activities like ceramic pot modeling, painting replicas of Guarani artifacts, and reproducing rock art provide transformative experiences for visually impaired individuals. These actions not only democratize access to cultural heritage but also foster a learning environment that values the plurality of human experiences.

Figures 4 and 5 – Adapted Workshop on Clay Pot Modeling

Source: MAR, 2023

Figures 6 and 7 – Adapted Workshop on Rock A

Source: MAR, 2023, 2024

The Laboratory of Guarani Archaeology and Landscape Studies (LAG), which continues to operate in synergy with MAR, also develops projects such as the inventory of archaeological sites, the restoration of Indigenous ceramics, and the creation of educational materials. In partnership with public and private schools, the museum offers lectures, teacher training courses, and educational activities that reach diverse audiences. This networked approach reinforces MAR's impact on promoting heritage education, establishing it as a reference center in the state of São Paulo.

Another significant advancement has been the introduction of tactile exhibitions in MAR's collection. Selected pieces from the technical reserve are prepared for sensory interaction, enabling blind visitors to engage meaningfully with the collection. The production of Braille plaques, despite initial challenges, exemplifies how the museum's commitment to accessibility leads to innovations that benefit all audiences.

Figures 8 and 9 – Production of Braille Plaques

Source: MAR, 2023

In addition to its internal activities, MAR extends its reach through traveling exhibitions and workshops held in schools and cultural institutions in the region. These initiatives, often conducted with adapted materials, enhance the impact of inclusive practices and raise awareness about the importance of cultural heritage and accessibility.

These efforts have been funded by prominent grant agencies such as FAPESP, CAPES, CNPq, and FUNEP, which have supported the sustainability and expansion of MAR's initiatives. The backing of these institutions underscores the museum's strategic role as a space for innovation and inclusion in cultural preservation.

MAR's Accessibility Program demonstrates that inclusion is an opportunity for transformation, not only for the individuals directly benefiting but also for the institution as a whole. Researchers, interns, managers, and the general public are impacted by this inclusive approach, fostering dialogue between diverse perspectives and reinforcing the museum's role as an agent of social change.

Throughout its trajectory, MAR has established itself as a prime example of how accessible practices can be sustainably integrated into cultural institutions. Its commitment to inclusion, education, and cultural preservation not only expands access to heritage but also

redefines the role of museums as democratic and participatory spaces. This success story inspires other institutions to follow suit, showing that with creativity, dedication, and collaboration, cultural heritage can be transformed into a truly accessible and relevant resource for all.

5 CONCLUSION

This study highlighted the importance of accessibility as a central element in transforming cultural heritage into a truly inclusive resource. Using the Regional Archaeology Museum (MAR) as a case study, it was possible to demonstrate how integrated and innovative practices can redefine the role of cultural institutions in contemporary society. The MAR case illustrates, in a practical and comprehensive manner, how the concept of Inclusive Cultural Heritage can be realized, moving beyond the physical preservation of artifacts to create meaningful and accessible experiences for all audiences. From adapting spaces and activities to actively including people with disabilities in planning and execution, MAR exemplifies how accessibility can intersect all aspects of cultural management.

The synergy between MAR and the Laboratory of Guarani Archaeology (LAG) reinforces the transformative capacity of research combined with inclusive practice, generating significant social, cultural, and academic impacts. The involvement of visually impaired researchers in developing accessible solutions, such as tactile exhibits and inclusive workshops, exemplifies how active inclusion benefits not only these individuals but also enriches society's understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage. This success story demonstrates how cultural heritage can act as an agent of social integration, promoting equal opportunities and celebrating human diversity.

Among the key results are the innovative solutions implemented by MAR, including tactile exhibits, accessible workshops, and the production of adapted educational materials. These initiatives benefit not only people with disabilities but also strengthen the relationship between the institution and the local community. MAR's inclusive approach overcame traditional barriers in museology, proving that cultural heritage should not be restricted to a specific audience but shared widely as a collective good. This model provides a concrete example of how accessibility policies can be implemented creatively and effectively, delivering broad benefits to all stakeholders.

This study opens pathways for new research exploring experiences in different institutions and examining the impact of public policies on strengthening accessibility in cultural spaces. Additionally, studies analyzing the implementation of assistive technologies in museums could provide further insights into overcoming communicational and cognitive barriers, contributing to the expansion of cultural inclusion. The MAR case underscores the importance of connecting local actions with public policies, demonstrating how institutional support and funding resources, such as those from FAPESP, CAPES, CNPq, and FUNEP, are crucial for sustaining and extending these initiatives.

Based on the results and discussions presented, it is recommended to expand public policies focused on accessibility in cultural institutions, including strengthening financial

incentives for structural adaptations and professional training. Furthermore, the creation of collaborative networks among cultural institutions, governments, and civil society organizations could accelerate the dissemination of best practices and promote the adoption of more effective and inclusive strategies.

In conclusion, this study reaffirms that promoting accessibility in cultural heritage is not merely a legal necessity but an ethical and social commitment that values diversity and equity. The MAR case study clearly demonstrates that accessibility is a powerful means of transforming cultural heritage into an inclusive, relevant, and democratic resource. This example not only inspires other institutions but also highlights the urgency of making inclusion a fundamental pillar of contemporary cultural management. Thus, MAR establishes itself as a model of Inclusive Cultural Heritage, reaffirming that culture is, and must always be, a right for all.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

We, Graziella Plaça Orosco de Souza, Fernando Lopes da Silva, Neide Barrocá Faccio, and Sandra Medina Benini, hereby declare that the manuscript titled *"Inclusive Cultural Heritage: Challenges and Opportunities for Accessibility"* adheres to the following:

1. **Financial Links:**
   o The authors have no/declare financial ties that may influence the results or interpretation of the study. This work was funded by FAPESP.
2. **Professional Relationships:**
   o The authors have no professional relationships that may impact the analysis, interpretation, or presentation of the results. No relevant professional relationship related to the content of this manuscript has been established.
3. **Personal Conflicts:**
   o The authors have no personal conflicts of interest related to the content of the manuscript. No personal conflict related to the content has been identified.