

UNESCO WHIPIC

International Centre for  
the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites  
under the auspices of UNESCO

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# Research on the World Heritage Convention and Interpretation Policy

**Heritage Interpretation for  
Sustainable Development**

Research Office | December 2022

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# Acknowledgement

Upon the establishment as an official Category 2 Centre of UNESCO in 2022, WHIPIC initiated one of its first research projects on heritage interpretation policy in May. The research highlights the role of heritage interpretation that contributes to sustainable development and how the World Heritage system can support it.

The research began with a literature review and went on to a series of roundtable discussions with heritage practitioners around the world, which served as crucial sources to draw up meaningful conclusions on the future directions for heritage interpretation policy as well as WHIPIC's future research areas.

We would like to acknowledge with full gratitude those who participated and contributed to the research on the World Heritage Convention and interpretation policy.

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**Research on  
the World Heritage Convention  
and Interpretation Policy**

**Report Paper**

# I. Introduction

## 1. Purpose of this report

This report aims to provide a complete overview of a project on the relationship between heritage interpretation and sustainable development in a World Heritage context, which was carried out within WHIPIC's research policy research programme. In order to understand the background to this research, the rest of this section provides further information on key themes emerging in World Heritage, as well as a summary of the research process. The following chapters then provide the content and results of the research programme, before drawing some conclusions for WHIPIC's consideration for future initiatives.

## 2. Background

The World Heritage Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was established and adopted in 1972 as a new provision for the global level protection of heritage with Outstanding Universal Value. Though the convention was initiated with the ratification of 20 States Parties, it has become the most ratified international treaty for cultural and natural heritage preservation in the world. Throughout the past years, the Convention has sought to protect cultural and natural heritage of significant values and thus, has evolved to respond to the changing needs of the global society and a changing understanding of what constitutes heritage. In 1975, the List of World Heritage in Danger was created to bring more attention to the heritage sites that need special international consideration and priority assistance, while the World Heritage Committee developed selection criteria for inscribing properties on the World Heritage List, and drew up the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention setting out the principles for the management of the properties on the list. Recognising the imbalance on the World Heritage List between regions of the world, the Global Strategy was developed in 1994, an action programme designed to make a balance in the World Heritage List by moving away from the merely architectural view on the cultural heritage and by taking anthropological, multi-dimensional and universal views, including the intangible aspects of heritage places. In celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention in 2004, the World Heritage Committee adopted the Budapest Declaration on World Heritage, inviting the stakeholders to support the four key Strategic Objectives, so called the "4Cs", which are Credibility, Conservation, Capacity-building and Communication for heritage conservation, having the fifth C, Community, included in 2007. This has been part of a move to ensure that rights-holders and stakeholders are fully involved in the World Heritage processes and that the knowledge and values that they hold is recognised. The Convention welcomed the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a focus on World Heritage and Sustainable Development: The Role of Local Communities, implying the upcoming mainstream of the Sustainable Development Goals integrated in the World Heritage framework(UNESCO, 2022a). In that regards, Nature-Culture Journey project was organised by ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM to see the close links between nature and cultural heritage, highlighting the need for management system with understanding that relationship between people and natural environment have worked to shape both our physical environment and belief

system(ICOMOS, 2021).

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Agenda 2030, which sets out the 17 goals to achieve sustainable development for the sake of poverty reduction, good health and Well-being of humanity, universal quality education and gender equality. As part of the United Nations organisations, the World Heritage Committee adopted the *Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Process of the World Heritage Convention* (hereafter, WHSD Policy) to contribute to achieving the UN's agenda within the heritage sector. Along with the WHSD Policy, the World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines integrated the idea of sustainable development to consider human rights, well-being of communities, through their participation in the process of heritage management and conservation of the World Heritage properties. At the time of publication of this report in 2022, the Convention with such history now celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and with a need for agenda that would respond to ever more complex demands for the World Heritage to contribute to contemporary society and global challenges.

In the same year, the International Centre for Interpretation and Presentation of the World Heritage Sites under the auspices of UNESCO (hereafter, WHIPIC) was also officially inaugurated, after its establishment as a preparatory office in 2019. The objectives of WHIPIC are to contribute to accelerating sustainable development through the conservation and promotion of World Heritage properties, achieved by conducting research on the principles and guidance of World Heritage interpretation and presentation; developing and implementing capacity-building programmes in World Heritage; and establishing an information system and building technical capacity as a foundation for World Heritage interpretation and presentation. The research part is divided into four specific subject areas which are interpretation and presentation definitions and concepts; regional and thematic research; and interpretation policy research. Among these four different subject areas, this present report comes into the interpretation policy research area, which focuses on how the concepts of interpretation are applied in policy and in practice while contemplating on better ways to support the role of heritage interpretation in the policy area of the World Heritage system as well as at national levels. Moreover, the interpretation policy research in general aims to set encompassing principles and directions for other activities of the WHIPIC including capacity building programmes and informatisation projects which can yield more productive outcomes when clearer ideas on the concepts of heritage interpretation are provided before planning.

## 3. Objectives

In many countries there have been growing demands that heritage should function as a contributing element to the contemporary society. The World Heritage Convention and the WHSD Policy seems to recognise such demands are in line with Article 5 of the World Heritage Convention, which mentions that "the State Parties are required to endeavour to adopt a general policy that aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community"(UNESCO, 1972), while WHSD Policy states "in addition to protecting the OUV of World Heritage properties, States Parties should, therefore, recognise and promote the properties' inherent potential to contribute to all dimensions of sustainable development and work to harness the collective benefits for society"(UNESCO, 2015).

Hence, the objectives of the WHIPIC's interpretation policy research were set to find out:

- How heritage interpretation can contribute to sustainable development
- The prerequisites for heritage interpretation that contributes to sustainable development in practice
- How World Heritage system can better support heritage interpretation for sustainable development

Based on these, this research project aims to draw up the research areas that the WHIPIC could take initiative in the future.

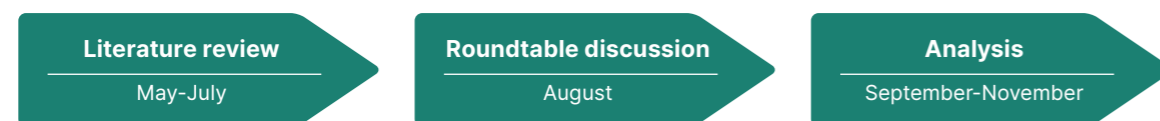
## 4. Definition of heritage interpretation

In fact, the research would have been more concrete if it began with a set of definition on heritage interpretation developed by the WHIPIC because it could provide a boundary and criteria of heritage interpretation that can be applied to the interpretation policy research. However, the theoretical research on the definition and concept of heritage interpretation and presentation was also underway in parallel. Though, soon after, the WHIPIC team and external practitioners discussing to build a definition of heritage interpretation came to agree on generating the definition of heritage interpretation as below.

"A meaning making process through communication, participation and experience. It increases understanding and creates, encourages connections between people and heritage places. In the decision-making process of what is interpreted and how, it premises heritage interpretation based on an ethical approach and a consideration of the full range of heritage values including Outstanding Universal Value and community-held values."

Though the theoretical research on the definition of heritage interpretation and presentation may come up with revised definitions in the future, this research took this definition as the core idea for addressing heritage interpretation.

## 5. Methodology



This research project underwent literature review and three roundtable discussions. The literature review examined how heritage interpretation can support World Heritage properties in integrating a sustainable development perspective contemplating mainly on the WHSD Policy. It comprehends the concepts of heritage interpretation, sustainable development and how these work in the World Heritage system. It then draws up on the necessity to examine further how heritage interpretation for sustainable development is practiced in reality and revisit the World Heritage policies focusing on the Operational Guidelines and WHSD Policy.

Based on the literature review, three roundtable discussions were proceeded in order to answer to the questions as below.

- What is heritage interpretation in sustainable development perspectives?
- What are the prerequisites for heritage interpretation for more effective sustainable development?
- What are the roles of heritage practitioners and communities in heritage interpretation for sustainable development?
- How can World Heritage system better support heritage interpretation for sustainable development?

The first two sessions gathered heritage practitioners with profound experiences in heritage interpretation and engagement with the communities of the World Heritage sites. The panellists were asked to share good practices of heritage interpretation for sustainable development and to contemplate on better practicing the heritage interpretation for sustainable development at heritage sites. The last session invited representatives from the heritage international organisations or practitioners of heritage policy in order to reflect on the original intention of the WHSD Policy and to seek for ways to better support heritage interpretation for sustainable development within the World Heritage system. Then, the discussion sessions were analysed and re-examined to draw meaningful implications for future heritage interpretation and WHIPIC's future research areas.

# II. Literature Review

## Heritage Interpretation in Support of Sustainable Development

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### 1. Introduction

This literature review has a focus on World Heritage, which has aspirations to protect and conserve the world's most special places, both natural and cultural, while ensuring heritage has a role in the life of the community. In 1972 when the World Heritage Convention was drawn up, the global community recognised the difficulty of managing continuity and change when the modern world is developing at such great speed. Unfortunately, as the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention is celebrated, this challenge has not yet been resolved. Indeed, in the many ways, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is facing ever faster change: from socio-economic inequalities to large-scale infrastructure and building developments to the climate emergency and mass extinctions. In this context, the *Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention* was adopted in 2015 so that the World Heritage Convention could support the United Nations' commitment to tackling urgent global issues. It was also considered important that World Heritage made a proactive contribution to sustainable development because otherwise it would find itself a victim of wider change. Today the aim is that heritage plays a positive role in contemporary society, while also gaining greater appreciation, support and protection.

The other focus of this review is the discipline of heritage interpretation. Despite having early roots in late 19th century efforts to create protected areas, it is still only partially understood within the heritage sector. This review understands heritage interpretation to be any approach that seeks to provide people with meaningful experiences related to heritage, where they can gain greater understanding of and connections to that heritage.

When heritage interpretation is enacted as a deliberate and planned practice based on learning, communication, psychology, and behaviour theories, it can support a change in a person's attitudes, fostering an increased appreciation of the heritage. Furthermore, that appreciation can be the springboard for behavioural changes to support ongoing heritage use and enjoyment, as well as its protection and conservation for the future.

The premise of this review is that this articulated understanding of heritage interpretation can be used to support World Heritage processes from nomination to ongoing management, as well as to contribute to sustainable development ambitions. However, these ambitions can only be achieved if more conventional forms of education and presentation activities are replaced by heritage interpretation used to its full potential.

## 2. World Heritage and sustainable development

### 2.1 Managing World Heritage in the twenty-first century

Despite the remarkable vision behind the establishment of a list of World Heritage to be protected for future generations, the planet's most special natural and cultural places are ever more at risk. Analysis of World Heritage from 1979 to 2013 shows that the factors which most negatively impact properties are: management and institutional issues; buildings and development; and social/cultural uses of heritage. IUCN's most recent evaluation of natural World Heritage provides similarly sobering data: there are concerns about more than two thirds of properties. They note that natural properties are at greatest risk from climate change, invasive species and tourism(Osipova et al., 2020).

These trends should highlight that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the conservation of heritage places cannot focus only on preserving physical attributes in isolation but significant attention is needed to the wider setting and the context of World Heritage. While the sheer number of World Heritage properties under pressure from such factors is alarming, it is interesting to note that there are a number of issues that could potentially be addressed by interpretation (section 3).

In parallel to these increasing pressures, there are also increasing numbers of demands made that heritage should contribute to contemporary society. Many policy areas internationally and nationally now promote the role of heritage in areas such as poverty reduction and employment; peace and reconciliation; social inclusion; wellbeing; climate change; disaster risk management, etc. Many of these most urgent issues come under the umbrella of sustainable development.

While seeking to respond to this increased complexity at heritage places, the heritage sector has reflected on the practise of heritage management and how many false assumptions need to be overcome in order to provide effective management. These include the artificial division of nature and culture; the artificial division of tangible and intangible heritage; the lack of recognition of the contribution of communities; the imbalanced role of the heritage 'expert' compared to other knowledge holders; the lack of connection between heritage authorities and other institutional and civic society actors; etc.(Thompson and Wijesuriya, 2018).

### 2.2 Sustainable development

The term 'sustainable development' is often described using the definition first found in the Brundtland Report: 'Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising



Figure 1 'Sustainability' has been understood in the heritage sector in four main ways which lead to different approaches among heritage institutions and practitioners. Image by author based on Logan & Larsen, 2018

the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'(Brundtland, 1987). However, the word 'sustainable' is used with many different meanings, often creating confusion. In the heritage sector alone, it has been shown that the concept of 'sustainability' has been used in four main ways, as illustrated in Figure 1(Logan and Larsen, 2018). This review reflects the 'heritage for sustainable development' approach, where the aim is that heritage contributes to sustainable development, while also gaining protection. The importance of the heritage sector being able to move from a 'sustainable heritage' perspective to approaches that embrace the role of 'heritage for sustainable development' has been explored by Thompson and Wijesuriya(2018).

### 2.3 Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention

The complexities of managing World Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, together with increasing recognition of the need to contribute to genuine sustainable development, led to the creation of a specific World Heritage policy on the subject. The 2015 *Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention* (often known as the World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy, it is here abbreviated to WHSD Policy) was drawn up to ensure that UNESCO's World Heritage programme was in line with the United Nations' sustainable development agenda(UNESCO, 2022b). Although it was written with a specific aim, it soon became clear that it could also tie together many of emerging discussions in the heritage sector, i.e. overcoming the nature-culture, taking people-centred approaches, etc. and show where heritage could proactively contribute(Boccardi and Scott, 2018). This policy document has been a major milestone for the international heritage sector and structures much of the thinking in this paper. For more information about the Policy(its purpose, issues and implications), see Annex II-1.

It should be noted that although many people are most familiar with sustainable development as structured

<p><b>Inclusive Social Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributing to inclusion and equity</li> <li>• Respecting, protecting and promoting human rights</li> <li>• Achieving gender equality</li> <li>• Enhancing quality of life and well-being</li> <li>• Respecting, consulting and involving indigenous peoples and local communities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Inclusive Economic Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring growth, employment, income and livelihoods</li> <li>• Promoting economic investment and quality tourism</li> <li>• Strengthening capacity building, innovative and local entrepreneurship</li> </ul>
<p><b>Environmental Sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting biological and cultural diversity and ecosystem services and benefits</li> <li>• Strengthening resilience to natural hazards and climate change</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fostering Peace and Security</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring conflict prevention</li> <li>• Protecting heritage during conflict</li> <li>• Promoting conflict resolution</li> <li>• Contributing to post-conflict recovery</li> </ul>

**Figure 2** The four dimensions of sustainable development that are included in the WHSD Policy. Image: by author based on WHSD Policy

by the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the WHSD Policy is based on the framework and dimensions of sustainable development from the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>1</sup> This is a framework based on only four key dimensions and it is worth noting the specific areas where the WHSD Policy urges action by the World Heritage community (Figure 2).

## 2.4 The role of World Heritage in sustainable development

Heritage has often been left out of the international debate about sustainable development. The UN's 2012 milestone report on sustainable development, *The Future We Want*, only made cursory references to the need to conserve heritage, without acknowledging its potential to contribute (UN, 2012). Within the more recent 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, heritage is only explicitly mentioned under Goal 11 for sustainable cities and communities (UN, 2022). However, the heritage sector is beginning to show the diverse ways that heritage can contribute and can also benefit from being more integrated into sustainable development efforts.

The discussion of the role World Heritage can play in sustainable development actually goes back many years before the adoption of the official policy. Already in 2004, a conference was held to discuss how Article 5 of the World Heritage Convention could be operationalised, in particular, through contributions to sustainable development. Diverse cases from around the globe provided examples which ranged from how local communities could gain social and economic benefits from their heritage (Cissé et al., 2004) through to how traditional practices and knowledge systems could improve management systems (Tahoux-Touao et al., 2004). One reoccurring theme of these papers was how essential community participation is in order to gain benefits for both people and heritage.

The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Heritage Convention in 2012 created a surge of new interest in the subject, as the celebrations focused on the theme of local communities and sustainable development. Of particular note is the publication *World Heritage: Benefits Beyond Borders*, which described 26 detailed case

<sup>1</sup> The World Heritage Centre has been working on a Synergy Table to align the WHSD POLICY with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN New Urban Agenda, African Union Agenda 2063, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the UNESCO SIDS Action Plan, UNESCO Culture 2030 Indicators, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

studies to understand the state of play at properties around the world (Galla, 2012a). The book emphasised the role that local communities can play in the management and conservation of World Heritage properties, but demonstrated that reciprocal benefits for those communities and their heritage could only be obtained if a holistic and integrated view of World Heritage is taken.

Another significant publication on this subject was the 2018 *World Heritage and Sustainable Development*, which specifically explored the WHSD Policy and its implementation to that point (Logan and Larsen, 2018). With overviews from the key actors in the World Heritage system, it also explored the four dimensions of sustainable development in detail, before providing more case studies of efforts underway at properties around the world. By 2021, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies were able to report that at least 151 World Heritage properties were mainstreaming sustainable development approaches into conservation and management (UNESCO, 2021). Although these are early days for most projects, they were able to point to specific examples, such as the work to develop sustainable fisheries in Lake Malawi for the benefit of biodiversity and local livelihoods (UNESCO, 2022c), or the project to use visitation to the Industrial Heritage of Barbados in support of sustainable development (UNESCO, 2020).

Most recently in 2022, Labadi (2022) published the results of her research into how heritage can contribute to sustainable development agendas through detailed examination of a series of international projects implemented at heritage places in Africa. She identified a series of prerequisites for heritage to contribute to sustainable development:

- Integrate heritage into sustainable development challenges
- Consider heritage as dynamic
- Stop essentialising [stereotyping] locals
- Consider heritage in its multiple dimensions
- Reject the idea that heritage is always positive
- Manage heritage for social justice
- Reject the self-serving logic of the international aid framework.

In addition to these publications, others have charted the efforts taken in specific countries and regions with regard to World Heritage and sustainable development overtime, including: Africa (Moukala and Odiaua, 2018), Switzerland (Larsen, 2019), and the Middle East and North Africa (Gilberto and Labadi, 2022). There have also been approaches to sustainable development with regard to specific types of heritage, such as historic cities (UNESCO, 2016). Although there are regional variations, there are some global trends such as the challenge of working with legal and institutional frameworks that are usually not designed to respond to World Heritage requirements or deal with sustainable development; the difficulty of dealing with unconstrained economic development, in particular, infrastructure and building development; the importance of community-led projects, in particular, when traditional knowledge systems can be utilised, rather than efforts led by international organisations.

## 3. The contribution of heritage interpretation to sustainable development

### 3.1 Heritage interpretation in World Heritage processes

In the World Heritage Convention, States Parties recognise their core duties as the 'identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage' (Article 4). Evolving approaches to heritage mean that today 'presentation' is often understood to be related to heritage interpretation. As planning for heritage interpretation deliberately aims to support management, protection and conservation, it can provide an important contribution in support of these core duties.



This contribution that heritage interpretation can provide is recognised in the specific guidance on nominations in the Operational Guidelines. In the instructions on what should be described in terms of visitor facilities and infrastructure, it is noted that:

The section should describe the inclusive facilities available on site for visitors and demonstrate that they are appropriate in relation to the protection and management requirements of the nominated property. It should set out how the facilities and services will provide effective and inclusive presentation of the nominated property to meet the needs of visitors, including in relation to the provision of safe and appropriate access to the site. The section should consider visitor facilities that may include interpretation/explanation (signage, trails, notices or publications, guides); museum/exhibition devoted to the nominated property, visitor or interpretation centre; and/or potential use of digital technologies and services (overnight accommodation; restaurant; car parking; lavatories; search and rescue; etc.).

However, with an expanded understanding of the potential role of interpretation in supporting the protection and management of World Heritage, nominated properties could be encouraged to think more ambitiously about how people are encouraged to connect to the heritage place.

The World Heritage Convention goes on to mention other State Party commitments which could be usefully addressed by interpretation: 'to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community'(Article 5), and: 'by educational and information programmes, to strengthen appreciation and respect by their peoples of the cultural and natural heritage' (Article 27). This shows that communities<sup>2</sup> have been a concern of World Heritage since its inception, although greater emphasis has been placed on them since the adoption of a fifth strategic objective to 'enhance the role of communities in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention' (UNESCO, 2022d). Approaches to communities and their relationship to World Heritage have evolved over the last 50 years, as more people-centred approaches to heritage are being encouraged. However, even while greater recognition is being given to the knowledge, skills and capacities of communities, all too often it remains a challenge to provide genuinely meaningful ways for communities to participate in World Heritage processes. Interpretation can be one area where communities contribute to World Heritage and benefit from it.

As recognition of the importance of communities in heritage management and conservation has become more widely accepted, it has been recognised that communities contribute in diverse ways to World Heritage managements and that, specifically, communities can:

- contribute to the significance of heritage places by ascribing values;
- contribute to the significance of heritage places by being part of the heritage (in particular with regard to intangible heritage);
- contribute to governance by participating in decision-making;
- contribute to management by carrying out actions for the heritage place's maintenance and conservation;
- be beneficiaries of the heritage place and its conservation.

Ongoing discussion of this new way of recognising multiple community contributions recognises links with sustainable development. It is becoming clear that if communities contribute and benefit in connection to heritage then various Sustainable Development Goals are being supported, for example:

- Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage;
- Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships;
- Devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products;
- Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development,

including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development;

- Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts;
- Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries;
- Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

### 3.2 Heritage interpretation in support of sustainable development

When moving to the specific topic of how heritage interpretation can support sustainable development, this review found that the heritage interpretation sector does not often fully address sustainable development. For example, the term 'sustainable/sustainability' used in the *Journal of Interpretation Research* almost entirely addresses the sustainability of a heritage place (i.e., its protection and ongoing management) or refers to the sustainable nature of heritage interpretation infrastructure (i.e., how environmentally friendly it is). In most other publications, the term 'sustainability' is linked to the tourism sector, for example, with the term 'sustainable tourism'<sup>3</sup>(Moscardo et al., 2015; Nowaki, 2021).

While such thoughtful socio-economic and environmental perspectives can certainly contribute to sustainable development, there is often a lack of a holistic vision for embracing more ambitious goals. In fact, the *Journal of Interpretation Research* recently reviewed the themes they had published over the last decade and noted 'major deficiencies in the field with regard to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice...' and concluded by urging interpretation professionals to greater efforts to include better diverse people and perspectives into their work(Stern and Powell, 2021).

In turn, the literature being produced by heritage professionals with regard to sustainable development rarely refers directly to heritage interpretation. However, interpretation is in reality often a common ingredient of many heritage-based sustainable development projects, without this being expressly acknowledged. For example, just in the book *World Heritage: Benefits Beyond Borders* alone, which contains a number of case studies from World Heritage properties where sustainable development efforts are under way, a range of interpretation activities are illustrated even though they are referred to with different names, e.g., environmental education, consciousness raising, public education(Debevec, 2012); public tours, public education sessions(Inniss, 2012); festivals, performances(Galla, 2012b); cultural tours(Galla, 2012c); community-based tourism(Mananghaya, 2012); tourism activities, tour guiding, art and drama programmes linked to conservation(Scott et al, 2012); visitor experiences through stories and performances(Galla, 2012d); community exhibitions, local heritage projects, special events(Thomas, 2012); and museums(Pessis et al, 2012). By not acknowledging that what is taking place is heritage interpretation, the heritage sector is

<sup>2</sup> The concept of 'community' differs from country to country and who belongs to a particular community is best defined by community members themselves (and who may feel a sense of belonging to multiple communities). However, in the context of this discussion, the term 'community' will be used for groups of people who have a connection to a heritage place. This does not necessarily imply legal ownership; in some cases, communities may be rights-holders and have customary ownership. It is noted that in the World Heritage context, the 'local community' is most frequently discussed (e.g., in the Operational Guidelines; UNESCO 2021), meaning the group of people who live in or near to a World Heritage property. However, there can be communities who are not physically located near to the heritage place but who have historic, cultural, spiritual or other connections.

<sup>3</sup> As no individual sector is sustainable on its own, it might be more helpful to avoid the term 'sustainable tourism' and instead think in terms of 'tourism that contributes to sustainable development'.

missing many opportunities, e.g., identifying more ambitious objectives, more effectively achieving results, tapping into additional resources, etc.

### 3.3 Heritage interpretation 'contributing to inclusion and equality'

Environmental sustainability is perhaps the area that is most easily supported by heritage interpretation, because the discipline first developed in that context, and inclusive economic development is often the focus of many tourism activities, however, inclusive social development still seems to raise many challenges for heritage practitioners. Therefore, these next two sections will add some additional comments on the areas of inclusion and wellbeing which lie within the social dimension.

#### Extract from the WHSD Policy: **Contributing to inclusion and equity**

18. States Parties should ensure that the conservation and management of World Heritage properties is based on recognition of cultural diversity, inclusion and equity. To this end, States Parties should commit to and implement policies, interventions and practices of conservation and management in and around World Heritage properties that achieve the following for all stakeholders, and in particular for local communities:

- i. Improve the ability, opportunities, and dignity of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status;
- ii. Promote equity, reduce social and economic inequalities and reduce exclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status;
- iii. Recognise, respect, and include the values as well as cultural and environmental place knowledge of local communities.

There are many facets to social inclusion and exclusion and these will be context specific. First, it is important to note that when there are rights-holders connected to a World Heritage property, they have priority over other communities and other stakeholders. In these cases, their inclusion in sustainable development or in heritage interpretation is not optional but they need to be engaged throughout (Silberman, 2012). There are many examples where Indigenous people need to restrict physical access to some places or to protect secret traditional knowledge and this needs to be respected in any interpretation of their heritage (Disko and Ooft, 2018).

Another important approach to inclusion is for heritage practitioners to stop working in isolation but to ensure they engage with diverse stakeholders, in particular, local communities living in or near to the heritage place and other connected communities (Hosagrahar, 2018). Heritage interpretation can be successfully designed for local communities (and still remain relevant to other visitors), such as the Museum Siam in Bangkok (Court, 2016), instead of the all-too-common situation where it is primarily provided for international or national visitors. Heritage interpretation has also proved to be an activity that can be an easier area in which heritage specialists can learn to partner with communities. This means that communities can be part of the decision-making about what to interpret, to whom and how. This allows diverse perspectives to be included and an inclusive interpretation of heritage to be shared.

There are then many groups within communities which are often socially excluded but who need to be considered in heritage interpretation. Individuals, families and groups who live in poverty often find that

their economic exclusion is also connected to social exclusion and, through educational disadvantages, to intellectual exclusion. Heritage management and interpretation often reinforce these mechanisms. For example, access to and use of heritage places, including its heritage interpretation, is often the privilege of dominant groups; in many cases tourists are privileged over local residents. Even in cases where sustainable tourism is promoted, commercialisation of heritage can increase social inequalities. Hosagrahar (2018) cites the problematic case of the Culture Gully in Gurgaon (India) where heritage entertainment for tourists requires the contribution of local artisans and traditional performers, however, they are not given any decision-making role around the sharing of their culture, which is frozen in time for tourist consumption, losing its dynamism in the social context. Instead, she offers a comparison with Nablus where a healthier outcome was gained due to the inclusion of the community within cultural projects.

Another frequent challenge is exclusion based on gender. Labadi outlines the many ways in which a gender perspective needs to be mainstreamed within World Heritage processes and this applies to heritage interpretation too: for example, 'the need to make women's, as well as men's, concerns, experiences, knowledge and expertise integral dimensions of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs related to World Heritage Convention' and 'the right to participate in, access to and contribution to cultural life' (Labadi, 2018). There are some examples of World Heritage where the contribution of women is part of the Outstanding Universal Value and included in the interpretation provided at the property, such as the Vega Archipelago in Norway (Joahnsen, 2012).

Another key area of concern is how to include people with disabilities who often face social exclusion, which again can be exacerbated by mechanisms in place that exclude them from participating in heritage interpretation. Physical access is now becoming more common for wheelchair users, although many heritage places continue to be inaccessible. In these cases heritage interpretation can help provide meaningful experiences at a distance; this includes a range of virtual and augmented reality tools (Foley and Ferri, 2012). Such creative interpretation has been also used to help people with visual impairments, for example, the Digital Library for Cultural Heritage at the National Palace Museum of Korea. One interesting result emerging from research into this area, is that heritage interpretation that is designed to provide greater accessibility for people with disabilities, actually provides improved accessibility for much larger parts of the population. For example, wheelchair access benefits families with pushchairs, older people, pregnant women and others with mobility issues. Items that can be touched, often designed to help blind people, are very popular not only with children but with a large section of the adult population too. Heritage interpretation adapted for greater intellectual accessibility not only helps those with disabilities, but many others with different learning approaches, a lack of education, international visitors and ethnic minorities, all of whom benefit from diverse media and clearer communication (Rayner, 1998).

For each of these areas of inclusion mentioned above, and others, the literature suggests that greater equity can only come when:

- priority is given to rights-holders and communities related to the heritage
- participation increases not only in terms of the number and diversity of people involved, but also in the quality of the role they can play
- decision-making is shared
- benefits are shared

Specifically, with regard to heritage interpretation, inclusion is increased not only when previously excluded groups become a priority audience for interpretation, but also when they are involved in planning interpretation for themselves and for others (Silberman, 2012).

### 3.4 Heritage interpretation 'enhancing quality of life and wellbeing'

#### Extract from the WHSD Policy: **Enhancing quality of life and well-being**

World Heritage properties have the potential to enhance quality of life and wellbeing of all stakeholders, and in particular local communities. Therefore, in implementing the Convention, and whilst fully respecting OUV, States Parties should:

- i. Adopt adequate measures to ensure the availability of basic infrastructure and services for communities in and around World Heritage properties;
- ii. Promote and enhance environmental health (including the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation) for all
- iii. Recognise that World Heritage properties themselves often play a direct role in providing food, clean water and medicinal plants and ensure measures are in place for their protection and use in an equitable way.

Quality of life, as used in the context of United Nations policies, is "the notion of human welfare (well-being) measured by social indicators (such as the possibility to vote, demonstrate, or participate in political parties) rather than by 'quantitative' measures of income and production"(UN, 1997). However, the issue of well-being is multi-dimensional and the WHSD Policy includes references to much broader range of indicators. It is a difficult term to define precisely given the subjective nature of human well-being and its variations among cultures and individuals. However, some features do seem to be broadly applicable to most people in most places.

Interestingly, well-being is the one area of sustainable development which can be found in connection with each of the other areas. This implies that human well-being cannot be guaranteed without a genuine sustainable development that works across all dimensions.

#### **Well-being in connection to environmental sustainability**

The WHSD Policy notes that 'natural heritage, containing exceptional biodiversity, geodiversity or other exceptional natural features... are essential for human well-being'(UNESCO, 2015). These have been systematically analysed by IUCN with regard to natural World Heritage and a long list of ecosystems services and benefits that contribute to human well-being was identified(Osipova et al., 2014). There is a growing literature to show that these benefits are not only physical but also contribute to mental well-being(Bratman et al., 2019; Pattacini, 2021). Similarly, the historic environment can contribute considerably to quality of life. Work on historic urban landscapes has shown that they can improve both physical and mental well-being(Hussein et al., 2020; Reilly et al., 2018). Heritage interpretation can provide experiences that bring people into contact with their natural and cultural environment and enable them to connect with it on a more meaningful level, providing them with increased quality of life.

The WHSD Policy states that 'poverty eradication is one of the greatest challenges facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development and the well-being of present and future generations, the Convention should therefore contribute to promoting sustainable forms of inclusive and equitable economic development, productive and decent employment and income-generating activities for all, while fully respecting the OUV of World Heritage properties'(UNESCO, 2015).

In some cases, well-being is only equated with economic development, and this can lead to difficulties,

as was learned at Hoi An, which has since sought to identify economic models which provide genuine benefits for the local community without losing their culture and quality of life(Hoi An Centre for Monuments Managements and Preservation, 2008). Tourism in particular brings many risks of economic gain at the expense of social and cultural losses that end up eroding, rather than enhancing, quality of life(Jeon et al., 2016). However, examples are emerging of World Heritage properties that are able to use their status as leverage to alleviate poverty for their communities, such as the examples given from the Serra da Capivara and Blaenavon Industrial Landscape in *World Heritage: Benefits Beyond Borders*(Pessis et al., 2012; Thomas, 2012). Heritage interpretation can be part of community-led efforts to use their heritage for inclusive economic development, thereby reducing poverty and improving well-being.

#### **Well-being in connection to inclusive social development**

WHSD Policy states that 'Social inclusion recognises and addresses... disadvantaged positions with the aim of fostering well-being and shared prosperity'(UNESCO, 2015). Having recognised that social and cultural exclusion have a significant negative impact on quality of life, heritage projects that increase participation can contribute to the dimension of inclusive social development(Reyes-Martinez et al., 2021; Reyes-Martinez, 2022). Although there is a need for more evidence-based research in this area, there are indications that World Heritage properties do contribute in this area. For example, the involvement of women in a project to create ceramics in support of the conservation of the Historic Monuments at Makli, Thatta (Pakistan), not only provided them with economic benefits but radically changed the women's social role, giving them more dignity and a creative role in the community(Gauhur, 2018). In a similar way, heritage interpretation can be used as a social mechanism to overcome exclusion and provide connections between people and with their heritage, thereby contributing to their quality of life.

## 4. Looking to the future

This section offers some preliminary suggestions for ways to achieve a future where interpretation plays an active contribution to World Heritage management and supports sustainable development.

### 4.1 Communication and awareness raising

During WHIPIC's preparatory phase, activities already began that have begun to raise awareness in the heritage sector about heritage interpretation. This included online lectures and related publications. More work in this area within wider networks, including the contribution of WHIPIC to activities organised by others, would continue to raise the profile of heritage interpretation. This is an important effort because heritage interpretation is often overlooked as a subject in activities related to heritage management, with a result that many heritage specialists do not entirely understand the discipline, nor perceive the benefits of it.

### 4.2 Research directions: identification of case studies

Under the 2003 *Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage* the elements of intangible cultural heritage practices and expressions have been mapped. This offers a way for people to explore case studies, see their connections and obtain more information. A similar mapping and visualisation exercise could be done with regard to interpretation of World Heritage. This would potentially encourage greater awareness of the role of interpretation in this area and inspire other examples.

#### 4.3 Research directions: identifying methods for ensuring interpretation contributes to sustainable development

While it is relatively easy to align interpretation content with various dimensions of sustainable development (e.g., from conservation messages to representing different genders), the actual process of planning and delivering interpretation also needs to be fully embedded in a sustainable development perspective. This must surely be one of the key messages that WHIPIC can promote to the World Heritage and heritage interpretation communities. This is particularly crucial for participants from site management teams because efforts to ensure that interpretation is viewed through the lens of sustainable development will potentially influence the way that other management processes are viewed.

Much of this work is already being carried out intuitively by practitioners but would now benefit from more mature and multidisciplinary consideration to provide clarity. Moreover, given the recognition that emerging approaches in interpretation is similar to thinking elsewhere in the heritage sector, opportunity for more structured reflection so that greater alignment can be achieved.

### 5. Preliminary conclusions

This review has attempted to highlight areas of theory and practice that are emerging within World Heritage, together with evolving approaches to interpretation. This summary shows that there is a great deal to be gained by aligning these areas of heritage practice in order to achieve more ambitious sustainable development objectives.

The key points raised that are relevant to the development of WHIPIC'S activities on heritage interpretation for sustainable development include:

- Heritage is under increasing pressure from a swiftly changing world and is also being required to play an ever greater role in contemporary society;
- In response to this, a sustainable development perspective is now necessary for World Heritage properties, and in particular it needs to be integrated into all processes, including interpretation;
- Fortunately, interpretation has a strong history of supporting heritage management objectives and efforts to support dimensions of sustainable development are already taking place, therefore, the next step is to build on progress made and to align this more systematically with the dimensions of sustainable development;
- To face these challenges, it is necessary to make use of the existing capacities residing in three groups – practitioners; institutions; communities and networks – involved in World Heritage processes, including interpretation;
- To achieve the greatest results, it will be necessary to consider communities in a range of roles: as people experiencing heritage interpretation, as people gaining benefits from heritage interpretation, and as people actively involved in its planning and implementation.

# Annex II-1

## Reflections on the Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Giovanni Boccardi

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The adoption of a Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention, in 2015<sup>2</sup>, was a significant step for the heritage conservation field, and will inevitably have a lasting impact. This decision was the product of a path that had been laid out by international bodies and heritage practitioners over decades. From site managers who had faced conflicting interests, at times leading them to make controversial decisions, to the increasing dangers of climate change and natural disasters affecting sites, to the growing importance of sustainable development philosophies within the UN community, the adoption of the policy was the natural and necessary next step in the evolution of World Heritage. Its goal was to define a baseline to help heritage managers understand and approach heritage with a more holistic view, resulting in positive advancements for the planet, the people, the economy, and heritage, together.

### The need for a policy

After sustainable development was first introduced as a notion in the Brundtland Report of 1987, *Our Common Future*<sup>3</sup>, it took considerable time for the World Heritage community to consider its relevance to

<sup>1</sup> This text is extensively drawn from the paper "A View from the Inside: An account of the process leading to the adoption of the policy for the integration of a sustainable development perspective within the World Heritage Convention", by Giovanni Boccardi and Lindsay Scott, (published as part of the book "World Heritage and Sustainable Development, New Directions in World Heritage management", 2018, P. Larsen and W. Logan Eds. Routledge, London)

<sup>2</sup> By the General Assembly of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention at its 20<sup>th</sup> Session, Paris, 2015 (Resolution 20 GA 13, accessible from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6578/>). The policy itself is accessible from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sustainabledevelopment/>

<sup>3</sup> The Report is accessible online from: <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>

the Convention. The word "sustainable" first appeared in the 1994 edition of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*<sup>4</sup> (hereafter the Guidelines), in connection to the newly-introduced concept of cultural landscapes, which were recognised as often reflecting "specific techniques of sustainable land-use" worthy of protection and "helpful in maintaining biological diversity". It is only in 2002, however, that, the reciprocal relationship between heritage and sustainable development was officially recognised, for the first time, with the Budapest Declaration adopted by the Committee on the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention<sup>5</sup>. In 2007, with Decision 31 COM 13A<sup>6</sup> (Christchurch, New Zealand), the Committee recalled the Budapest Declaration, adding 'communities' as the fifth strategic objective for implementation of the World Heritage Convention. Communities was termed "the fifth C," because it was to sit alongside credibility, conservation, capacity-building, and communication. This was a significant turning point in opening the doors for sustainable development, as it affirmed that the wellbeing of the concerned communities, including both present and future generations, was the ultimate goal of conservation.

Over the following years, and despite the lack of an agreed definition, the terms 'sustainable development' and 'communities' were increasingly used in the context of World Heritage, mainly in relation to individual state of conservation reports and nomination files. Notwithstanding these advances, the Convention remained – in its policies and procedures – mainly focused on the protection of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), the key requirement for the inscription of sites on the World Heritage List. All other aspects related to social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development were considered in World Heritage only insofar as they constituted a threat to the OUV of a given listed property, not as objectives of the Convention in their own right. This was somewhat ironic as in many World Heritage properties innovative conservation approaches were being developed and applied, which integrated a concern for at least some dimensions of sustainable development.

It was only in 2009, in beginning the reflection leading to the fortieth anniversary of the Convention (to take place in 2012, at the same time of the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development), that the Committee deemed necessary to launch a deeper reflection on what sustainable development actually meant in relation to World Heritage conservation. A number of expert meetings and discussions were thus organised, which helped better articulating conceptual and practical challenges of bringing together World Heritage conservation and sustainable development.

It was recognised, thus, that the protection of heritage, as an attribute of natural and cultural diversity, played a fundamental role in fostering strong communities, supporting the physical and spiritual well-being of its individuals and promoting mutual understanding and peace. It was also noted that a well conserved heritage could contribute directly to sustainable development across all of its dimensions through many goods and services and as a storehouse of knowledge, and that such potential was still not sufficiently understood and harnessed.

Based on the above, the World Heritage Committee, at its 34<sup>th</sup> Session (Brasilia, 2010), agreed "that it would be desirable to further consider, in the implementation of the Convention, policies and procedures that maintain the Outstanding Universal Value of properties, and also contribute to sustainable development"(Decision 34 COM 5D<sup>7</sup>), and requested a consultative meeting on the matter. This took place from 5 to 8 February 2012 at Ouro Preto, also in Brazil, and made significant progress in clarifying the terms of the relationship among World Heritage, conservation and sustainable development. In their conclusions, the participants in the Ouro Preto meeting recognised that:

*"...with changing demographics, growing inequalities and diminishing resources, the goals and objectives of heritage conservation must be seen in the context of a greater system of social and environmental values and needs, encompassed in the concept of sustainable development. This will require heritage institutions to come to terms with these conditions and begin to seek new solutions. Ultimately, if the heritage sector does not fully embrace sustainable development and harness the reciprocal benefits for heritage and society, it will find itself a victim of, rather than a catalyst for wider change."*<sup>8</sup>

The Ouro Preto Meeting recognised the need for a sustainable development policy in World Heritage and outlined its possible aim, scope and content, suggesting also a roadmap for its development, for consideration by the Committee. The latter reviewed the results of the Ouro Preto meeting at its 36<sup>th</sup> Session (St. Petersburg, 2012), and adopted Decision 36 COM 5C, requesting the World Heritage Centre, with the support of the Advisory Bodies<sup>9</sup>, "to convene a small expert working group to develop, within a year, a proposal for a policy on the integration of sustainable development into the processes of the *World Heritage Convention*".<sup>10</sup>

The overall goal of the policy was to assist States Parties, practitioners, institutions, communities and networks, through appropriate guidance, to harness the potential of World Heritage properties, and heritage in general, to contribute to sustainable development, and ensure that their conservation and management strategies are appropriately aligned with broader sustainable development objectives. In the process, of course, the primary objective of the World Heritage Convention, which is to protect the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, should not have been compromised.

## The relationship between sustainable development and World Heritage viewed through different lenses

The long process that led to the definition of the policy revealed how the various actors within the Convention, from States Parties to Advisory Bodies, individual experts and NGOs, held different views on the nature of the relationship between World Heritage, conservation and sustainable development, depending also on which dimension of sustainable development was being considered. These views were manifested at various stages of the process as the scope and contents of the policy were being progressively developed.

One point of view was the recognition that World Heritage was, in itself, a critical component of human wellbeing. According to this perspective, by simply fulfilling its original mission, that is, by protecting the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value of listed property, the Convention was - ipso facto - contributing to sustainable development. This position came often from the natural heritage side, when it was argued that the safeguarding of hundreds of the world's most important natural protected areas was obviously a major contribution to environmental sustainability, and therefore to sustainable development. According to this position, sustainable development was a goal that had to be achieved at a scale often larger than that of the individual World Heritage properties. These, on the other hand, represented a select number of areas containing exceptional natural values, often threatened by development pressure. It was therefore appropriate and even necessary – in conserving and managing natural World Heritage properties – to focus in particular on one dimension of sustainable development, notably by protecting biological diversity and ecosystem services and benefits, assuming that other dimensions could be pursued elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> The successive version of the Guidelines are accessible online from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>

<sup>5</sup> The Budapest Declaration on World Heritage states that the members of the Committee "seek to ensure an appropriate and equitable balance between conservation, sustainability and development, so that World Heritage properties can be protected through appropriate activities contributing to the social and economic development and the quality of life of our communities". The Declaration is accessible from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1217/>

<sup>6</sup> Accessible from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/5196>

<sup>7</sup> Accessible from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4232>

<sup>8</sup> The proceedings of the Ouro Preto meetings are accessible from: <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/events/documents/event-794-2.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> The three Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Convention are the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM).

<sup>10</sup> Decision 36 COM 5C is accessible from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4610>

A similar position was expressed also from the cultural side of the World Heritage spectrum. The underlying assumption was that, next to its environmental, social and economic legs, the international community should have recognised the cultural dimension of sustainable development, often referred to as "the fourth pillar". Again, the emphasis was on the intrinsic contribution of World Heritage for sustainable development. Those supporting this view considered that a policy on sustainable development, developed specifically within the context of the Convention, should have insisted primarily on the cultural (and natural) values of World Heritage promoting these as essential and inter-related parts of sustainable development, together with the social and economic elements. The policy, in a sense, was not so much seen as a means to mainstream a series of new concerns in World Heritage, beyond heritage protection, but rather as an opportunity to affirm heritage's own relevance to sustainable development. An interesting consideration that was made, in this regard, was the universal nature of World Heritage sites, which required consideration of stakeholders well beyond "local communities", specifically in relation to the cultural value of these properties.

In addition to a legitimate wish to see heritage recognised as a major component of sustainable development, an underlying concern of this position was that, by integrating a wide variety of other objectives in the practice of the Convention and placing them, as it were, on equal footing with heritage protection, its original aim could have been compromised. What some feared was that the inherently vague notion of sustainable development could have been used as a sort of "Trojan horse" to undermine the very core of the Convention's mission. Seen from this viewpoint, the idea of an official go-ahead to, for example, 'inclusive economic development' to be handed down from the Committee, the most authoritative voice in heritage, could have seemed at times, potentially threatening.

There were also concerns that were expressed on whether sustainable development could be covered within the mandate of the Convention and, accordingly, whether the Committee could be entrusted with a role in dealing with it. One Member State, indeed, wondered whether, from a strict legal point of view, it was possible to introduce within the Convention a new set of requirements that were not envisaged in the original text of 1972 ratified by over 190 States Parties. In its view, the negotiation among possible conflicting objectives (that is, heritage conservation vs. other sustainable development goals) should have been the responsibility of the individual States, based on existing international and national laws, and not the job of the World Heritage Convention, which had no legitimacy to get involved in these matters.

These concerns were reflected in the final text of the policy in two ways. First, where reference is made to the fact that "by identifying, protecting, conserving, presenting and transmitting to present and future generations irreplaceable cultural and natural heritage properties of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), the World Heritage Convention, in itself, contributes significantly to sustainable development and the wellbeing of people".<sup>11</sup> Secondly, the policy clarifies, wherever necessary, that in any case the OUV of the listed properties should never be compromised in the pursuit of sustainable development.

Next to this more 'conservative' approach, was the recognition that the Convention needed to align its practice with existing international humanitarian standards and other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and assume its share of social responsibility. It was not possible for the Convention, it was argued, to continue to focus exclusively on the protection of OUV considering that the number of listed properties was now over one thousand, including around 250 urban settlements. Integrating sustainable development required harnessing the missed opportunities for sustainable development from a conservation and management strategy that focused only on OUV. It also required addressing the conundrum of what happens when the OUV itself is the cause of conflict upon its surroundings. If the surrounding environment or community is endangered or damaged because of heritage protection, are we then not disavowing our most vital elements: humanity and nature working together as a whole? And thereby doing a disservice to the heritage, which without humanity and nature's successful interplay, would be irretrievably lost? The escalation of larger world problems, such as climate change, meant that in determining how to link conservation and development, the hardest questions needed to be asked: if humanity and nature were

to fail, what would be the value of heritage, at all? This rightly begged the question: when saving heritage, what exactly needed saving? What do we do when heritage is saved at the expense of other elements that make up a successful society? The inclusion of sustainable development into World Heritage management policy was meant to address this contradiction, and enable better outcomes for both heritage and humanity, allowing both to then be better equipped to strengthen one another. In this context, World Heritage properties appeared to provide a unique opportunity to promote – through the over 1000 listed properties worldwide – innovative models of sustainable development.

## Implementing the policy: current efforts and challenges ahead

World Heritage management is exemplary and has implications for smaller heritage properties worldwide. With that in mind, how will the policy now be implemented? The policy adopted by the General Assembly of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention contains a series of principles and aspirational goals, for all the relevant dimensions of sustainable development. The actual implementation of the policy on the ground, however, will require translating these principles into operational procedures and practical guidance. This will involve introducing a number of changes, as appropriate, to the *Operational Guidelines*.

The General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention, indeed, requested proposals for changes to the *Operational Guidelines* in its resolution 20 GA 13<sup>12</sup>, when adopting the policy at its 20th Session in 2015. In addition, the General Assembly asked for proposals on indicators for measuring the progress of the policy's implementation, as well as for capacity-building initiatives, needed to enable implementation, including an indication of the related costs.

Over the past years, the Committee has indeed adopted a series of revisions to the *Operational Guidelines* to integrate the principles expressed within the 2015 Policy. SD-related issues have been also included within the Periodic Reporting questionnaires. It is important to underline, in this respect, that while the policy was only adopted in 2015, consideration of sustainable development within heritage theory and practice has of course a much longer history. Even in the absence of an explicit policy, that is, numerous efforts have been undertaken, and are still ongoing, to consider environmental, social and economic aspects in conservation plans and programmes, including in a World Heritage context. What is however missing, in most of these initiatives, is a coherent and structured approach whereby all dimensions of sustainable development are addressed and recognised as "interdependent and mutually reinforcing, with none having predominance over another and each being equally necessary", as stated in the policy, and integrated equally for natural, cultural and mixed properties in their diversity.

To achieve this, significant and long-term investments will be required. First, the body of knowledge on the relationship between World Heritage and sustainable development, across all of its dimensions and within different contexts, will need to be considerably strengthened, including by identifying relevant case studies and drawing from them the relevant lessons. Guidance will also need to be developed, based on this knowledge, for both States Parties, at central and site level, and Advisory Bodies, to enable the appropriate integration of human rights, equality and sustainability concerns into World Heritage work. A set of indicators, moreover, will be required, to assess progress in implementing the policy, which would need to be incorporated within established monitoring and reporting mechanisms within the Convention.

<sup>11</sup> Paragraph I.3 of the policy, accessible from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sustainabledevelopment/>

<sup>12</sup> The resolution 20 GA 13 is accessible online from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6578/>

The main difficulties that lie ahead for achieving the full implementation of the policy stem, not surprisingly, from its groundbreaking character. By recognising that heritage protection is only one element within the larger equation of human wellbeing, the policy has at the same time acknowledged the complex interrelations between conservation, on one hand, and all other dimensions of sustainable development, on the other, and stated that all these concerns must be considered together.

In doing so, the policy poses a fundamental challenge to the field of conservation, as it inevitably blurs the boundaries between heritage and other societal concerns, thereby strengthening the relevance and legitimacy of many other stakeholders, disciplines and areas of expertise, in decisions about heritage. The application of the policy into practice will have to acknowledge this and provide the necessary mechanisms for the integration of a diverse range of perspectives, and actors, into a single process at various levels, notably social, institutional, technical and financial. Only in this way, will it be possible to find the appropriate and consensual solutions to the above-mentioned equation.

What this new approach implies, at the fundamental level, is the recognition that the conservation and management of heritage is no longer just a scientific/technical question, regulated by a set of doctrinal principles and guidelines established by experts within a single discipline. It is instead part of the larger debate on the appropriate use of public resources and the principles that should underpin the government of society, where a compromise needs to be found among different interests and visions of the world.

How these considerations may affect the institutional process regulating the Convention is, at present, still an open question. Going beyond the "World Heritage box", and indeed beyond the narrow boundaries of the heritage field, is bound to create discomfort if not tensions among those who have presided over this area of work over the past decades. New players will enter the arena, with different priorities, ranging from human rights, gender equality and poverty reduction to environmental sustainability, pushing for new rules of the game. Perhaps new types of expertise, from the mainstream sustainable development sector, will be required to advise the Committee, in addition to the three existing Advisory Bodies. More importantly, the Policy should – in theory – give a much more important role to the civil society and its organizations in the implementation of the Convention.

At a more fundamental level, the recognition of the inherently political nature of heritage management and protection, and of its close relation with issues of equality, democracy and respect for human rights, may engender a completely new range of discussions in the implementation of the Convention. What was in the past conveniently considered an exclusively technical question, regulated by norms living in a world of their own, will in the future become integral part of the broader debate on which values and principles should regulate our societies. States Parties, in other words, will be expected to demonstrate not only that the physical attributes of a World Heritage property are being preserved, but that human rights are being respected, local communities are being meaningfully involved in decisions, gender equality is being pursued, and so on. If the debates of the Committee on the state of conservation of properties have sometimes been rather tense in the past, the introduction of the policy on sustainable development, with its new requirements touching on critical aspects of governance, is bound to expose differences in ideological and political visions of the world, with the potential for even deeper controversies.

In the longer term, the introduction of a sustainable development perspective into World Heritage – with its inherent people-centred approach – might also result in an evolution of the conceptual standpoints of the Convention. In the face of changing conditions, including because of climate change, and based on consideration of human rights, the question might arise, by way of example, about whether Statements of Outstanding Universal Value of listed properties should be intended "forever", or might be subject to periodical review, through a broad consultative process.

In the end, implementation of this policy will affirm that it's time we learn to live with our heritage which

has too long been protected as apart from our living breathing societies. By putting heritage within the sphere of the sustainable development agenda, and aligning it with existing humanitarian and multilateral environmental agreements, this policy establishes an essential link between the heritage community and the rest of the world. To move forward with this policy is to acknowledge that, to save heritage, we must concern ourselves with issues "beyond" heritage. If it is truly to be a World Heritage, then the world, its people, its environment, and all that it contains, must be equally protected, and only then, are we assured the best chance that our heritage will survive.

## Possible implications of the Policy for heritage interpretation

With specific regard to heritage interpretation, the 2015 Policy contains various relevant provisions.

Under the section on Inclusive Social Development, paragraph 18 emphasises the need to ensure that the conservation and management of World Heritage properties is based on recognition of cultural diversity, inclusion and equity, including by recognising, respecting and including "the values as well as cultural and environmental place-knowledge of local communities".

Paragraphs 20, 21, 22 and 23, by advocating for the respect of human rights, the rights of Indigenous Peoples and gender equality, implicitly calls for giving consideration to the diverse range of sensitivities and perspectives on heritage values, historical narratives and related attributes in identifying and conserving heritage.

Finally, under the Section on Peace and Security, prevention, direct reference is made (notably in paragraphs 29 and 30) to the need to adopting "cross-culturally sensitive approaches to the interpretation of World Heritage properties that are of significance to various local communities and other stakeholders, particularly when nominating or managing heritage places associated with conflicts". To this end, the Policy calls on States Parties to adopt "an inclusive approach to identifying, conserving and managing their own World Heritage properties that promote consensus and celebrate cultural diversity, as well as understanding of and respect for heritage belonging to others, particularly neighbouring States Parties".

In relation to these provisions, the question is how can the World heritage "system" promote, if not enforce, their respect by the States Parties and other actors within the Convention? This is still an open matter, whose implementation in practice will face a number of difficulties, considering the inherently intergovernmental nature, and eminently political character of this normative mechanism. One important element, in this regard, will no doubt be the development of practical guidelines, capacity building programmes and advocacy initiatives.

Ultimately, however, the appropriate use of the World Heritage Convention as an instrument for human rights, peace and reconciliation will depend on the political will by the States Parties.

# III. Roundtable Summary and Implications

The roundtable discussion sessions were rendered to derive candid thoughts about heritage interpretation and sustainable development from the panellists who consisted of heritage site managers, heritage interpretation practitioners implementing the World Heritage Convention and the WHSD Policy. The first two sessions covered case studies of heritage interpretation with sustainable development approach in practice where panellists shared their own projects of heritage interpretation corresponding to different dimensions mentioned in the WHSD Policy; inclusive social development, inclusive economic development and environmental sustainability as well as fostering peace and security. Though the Policy has fourth dimension which is 'fostering peace and security', we decided to focus more on the other three dimensions because it is more relevant to a research project under WHIPIC's thematic research on heritage in conflict. The third session focused on the World Heritage system to revisit the Operational Guidelines and the WHSD policy.

Session	Topic	Panellists
Roundtable Discussion 1 (17 August 2022)	<b>Inclusion and Equity</b> - Heritage interpretation and human rights - Interpretation of colonial heritage in Africa - Heritage interpretation addressing gender equality	Peter Larsen Michelle Stefano Pascall Taruvinga
Roundtable Discussion 2 (24 August 2022)	<b>Well-being of Local Community</b> - Community involvement in heritage interpretation and management - Capacity building in responding to disaster risk - Heritage interpretation and economic development	Ang Ming Chee Shikha Jain Patricia Alberth Hattaya Siriphatthanakun Aylin Orbasli
Roundtable Discussion 3 (31 August 2022)	<b>Revisiting the World Heritage system</b> - Operational Guidelines - WHSD Policy	Sophia Labadi Gamini Wijesuriya Giovanni Boccardi Ege Yildirim

The objectives of the roundtable discussion were to identify the gaps between the heritage interpretation in policy and in practice and where these gaps happen. Also, it aimed to see the prerequisites for heritage interpretation for sustainable development and the roles of heritage practitioners and community in the process. Lastly, it aimed to find out how the World Heritage system can better support the heritage interpretation for sustainable development. Having such objectives, the discussion questions were prepared and the opinions suggested by the panellists were summarised as below.

- What is heritage interpretation in sustainable development perspectives?
- What are the prerequisites for heritage interpretation for more effective sustainable development?
- What are the roles of heritage practitioners and communities in heritage interpretation for sustainable development?
- How can World Heritage system better support heritage interpretation for sustainable development?

## 1. What is Heritage interpretation in sustainable development perspectives?

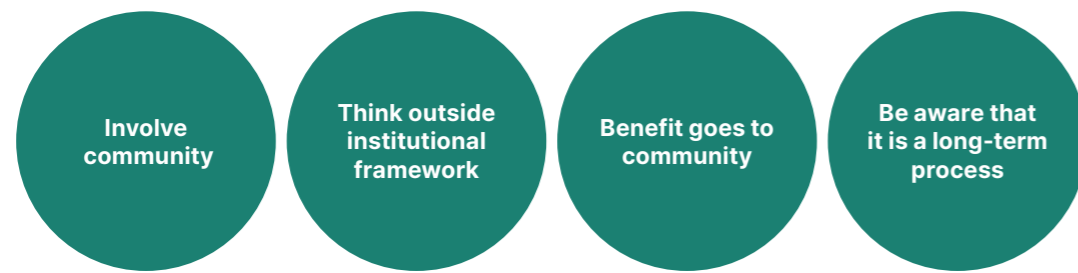
Tilden(1957) defines heritage interpretation as "an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information." His motto of "through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection(Tilden, 1957)" has been frequently quoted in the heritage interpretation field(Silberman, 2013). Heritage interpretation encompasses all the activities and processes from the very beginning stage of extracting heritage values and delivering the values to the audiences, as well as applying appropriate management systems and processes to protect the heritage sites. Therefore, heritage interpretation for sustainable development, in particular, considering the terms of sustainable development such as 'inclusion', 'equity', 'well-being', should:

- 1) refer to people-centred approaches that bring the community into the value sharing process and support better quality of life for the local community
- 2) provide people with meaningful experiences related to heritage, where they can gain greater understanding of and connections to that heritage and heritage community
- 3) provoke people to look at wider social issues from more inclusive perspective

This way, heritage plays an active, dedicative role in achieving sustainable development. For example, the Mill Stories Projects by the University of Maryland, Baltimore County in the United States, shed lights on the lives of former steel mill workers at Sparrow Points which bloomed in the 1960s but replaced by conglomerates warehouses after the mainstream of deindustrialisation in 2012. The stories of the steel mill workers fighting for wages, safety and equality were documented and brought up to the media to be shared with larger audiences. This project addresses the unsustainability that occurred at the steel mill factories through such interpretation. However, the stories of the past throw critical social messages to the public to respond to the workers' rights movement happening at the warehouse complex at the present days (Annex 1). It also now provides new opportunities for the community through the recognition of their knowledge and adaption of their heritage.



## 2. What are the prerequisites for heritage interpretation for more effective sustainable development?



### Involve Community

The importance of involving community in heritage interpretation is very explicit. The World Heritage Convention includes, as one of its strategic objectives (the fifth 'C') "to enhance the role of communities in (its) implementation" (UNESCO, 1972). The World Heritage Committee specifically encourages the effective and equitable involvement and participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making, monitoring and evaluation of World Heritage properties and the respect of indigenous peoples' rights in nominating, managing and reporting on World Heritage properties in their own territories (Decision 35 COM 12E). The WHSD Policy has a sector explicitly stating that 'Respecting, consulting and involving indigenous peoples and local communities... The states Parties should develop relevant standards, guidance and operational mechanisms for indigenous peoples and local community involvement in the World Heritage processes (UNESCO, 2015)'. In the same context, the idea that community should be involved, their voices and rights should be respected, and their ways of value recognition should be integrated from the early stage of the heritage interpretation process has also been asserted over many years by heritage people. Many projects also have already taken people-centred and values-based approaches in heritage interpretation (Wijesuriya and Thompson, 2017). Likewise, all panellists agreed that community and people should be prioritised in the heritage interpretation process.

### Think outside the institutional framework

However, merely saying that community should be prioritised in heritage interpretation may not be able to meet its initial intention of respecting their rights and stewardship. All too often community involvement can be limited to allowing them to visit their heritage or to gain some economic benefits. However, prioritising and involving community in the interpretation decision-making process is important and needs to be supported by specific and concrete objectives and decisions made outside the institutional framework. Otherwise, community participation in heritage interpretation may turn out to be effortless by the authority of the institutional framework. For example, as one of the inclusive interpretation for Robben Island in South Africa, they arranged a music concert in order to raise awareness and to enliven the site. This is linked with political prisoners at Robben Island making songs about their lives as a way of protest during their imprisonment in the past. Hence, music was an important way of exploring the experiences of people's connection to the island. However, it was interrupted by the institutional people who had a conventional view of heritage values, which were limited to the Outstanding Universal Value only, and failed to integrate music as an inclusive interpretation tool (Annex 5).

### Benefit goes to Community

Tourism is one of the sectors that local communities can get economic benefit from heritage (Gould and Burtenshaw, 2014). Pertaining to the 'Inclusive Economic Development' of the WHSD Policy, it is important that there should be a mechanism that communities get economic benefit (not just large tourism operators) in return of community involvement in the process of heritage interpretation. The City of Jaipur in India suggests a good model for economic development for the heritage community. It invests to its handicraft industry through establishing a proper institution for raising qualified craft people and created a 'Craft Walk' where visitors can directly buy quality crafts from the artisans. It can promote an improved understanding of the historic fabric of the city, and can increase economic engagement in the areas that lie outside visitor thoroughfares. Using interpretation in this way can attract independent travellers (avoiding some of the problems of mass tourism) and distribute them throughout the city. In this way, benefits are better distributed among the community and also the interpretation can be form of visitor management that can reduce the negative impacts of visitors on the heritage (Annex 6).

### Be aware that it is a long-term process

There should be an understanding that heritage interpretation is a process that takes long time. It is not a short-term event with already determined outcome. It takes considerable amount of time to create partnerships, build trust between community and heritage practitioners, and to generate measurable outcome for the interpretation activities to become a norm in the community (Thompson and Wijesuriya, 2018). Developing capacities within institutions and communities, so that they can successfully manage interpretation themselves, also requires a long-term investment. It is also an on-going process that requires continuous interest and attention from all stakeholders involved in the process. In that context, younger generations should be involved in the heritage interpretation process through basic education (Annex 7). Then, they grow with a sense that the heritage is part of their lives. This is critically important because it enables younger generations to appreciate the value of maintaining heritage in its various tangible and intangible forms and build the culture of interpreting their heritage with their own value recognition in response to changing society in the future (Logan, 2013).

## 3. What are the roles of heritage practitioners and communities in heritage interpretation for sustainable development?

First of all, it is crucial to note that the roles of heritage practitioners and community are not separate from each other. Heritage practitioners are sometimes community members who should be closely engaged with the community and heritage to share the values the community recognise from their heritage sites. Likewise, communities are heritage practitioners because they are the knowledge holders who have the fundamental sources for heritage interpretation and may have already been involved in heritage interpretation process as practitioners.

Second, it is often seen that there are not many heritage people who have profound understanding in all three areas of heritage interpretation, sustainable development and the World Heritage system. In order to practice heritage interpretation with stronger sustainable development in practice, there should be practitioners who can integrate the three areas and apply to heritage interpretation practices so that more holistic approach can be taken. As mentioned above, this is not the roles that only heritage practitioners are responsible but community can also be the practitioners that connect the three together.

### **Roles of heritage practitioners**

It is important to note that even when taking people-centred approaches to heritage, there is still a significant role for heritage practitioners to play, although that role may need to be one of collaboration and facilitation. The heritage practitioners are still required to recognise that there are multiple community types that needs multiple ways to approach them. Facilitating dialogues with local community in their language and having agreed perspectives on sustainable development with local community is one of the crucial roles for the practitioners as well. Based on the dialogue, the practitioners should build a shared understanding of heritage values with local communities noting that the values are changeable, and thus, form a long-term trust-based relationship to make the interpretation be fostered with continuity.

Another thing that was pointed in the discussion was that there are cases where community is apt for commercialisation of their heritage in compensation of economic benefit where it could pose risk of losing the authenticity of the site. The heritage practitioners then need to mediate and sensitise the community to realise the value of their heritage and thus, the necessity of protection and their participation in heritage interpretation.

### **Roles of community**

Though the WHSD Policy does not address specific roles for communities and how they should be involved in heritage interpretation, communities should also be one of the acting bodies in heritage interpretation. This is particularly critical with regards to rights-holders. They should feel the responsibility as knowledge holders and share traditional knowledge that are critical for heritage interpretation that protects both the livelihood of the community and heritage. In that sense, the community should take themselves as site managers as well as heritage practitioners. Therefore, it is important that they raise their voices actively as site managers representing their own community and heritage and thus, strongly safeguard their ownership of heritage. They also need to have the perspective that heritage is not an object of past that is sometimes considered replaceable through development but is future itself that can stimulate economy and contribute to enhancing quality of life.

### **What about visitors?**

One idea that emerged after the roundtable discussions was that there are indeed numerous publications addressing the roles for heritage practitioners and often times communities. However, a lot less of visitors, which is assumed to be addressed more profoundly in cultural heritage tourism sector. Once a heritage site becomes a World Heritage property, then it tends to become a global tourist destination. Accordingly, the States Parties develop the heritage sites to a favourable condition to welcome tourists. However, the influx of visitors and tourists cause commercialisation and sometimes gentrification of the heritage site, destroying the livelihood of the local communities. This means, the visitorship is highly concerned in addressing heritage interpretation for sustainable development: whether their mindsets and the patterns of appreciating the heritage interpretation complies with the sustainable development. Though larger tourism industry is concerned with this matter and may not be addressed individually, there needs to be certain measures provided by either international bodies or at national levels that explain the roles of visitors in terms of visitor ethics. It would be even ideal to have a set of specific criteria that regulates excessive development, the benefits of which is leaned too much toward the tourists. In that context, Bhutan's tourism policy seems to be an ideal example, where the number of foreign tourists are strictly limited with "sustainable development fee" levied on them. Also, the tourists are required to accompany a Bhutanese guide throughout the tour. It is to encourage "high value, low volume" tourism, maximising economic benefit while limiting the impact on Bhutan's traditional culture and their livelihood(Robbins, 2022).

## **4. How can World Heritage system better support heritage interpretation for sustainable development?**

### **Where does the gap come from?**

The gaps between heritage interpretation in the World Heritage system and in practice come from the stage where the States Parties or the community bring the policy to national levels. The gaps may get larger in particular, when the States Parties put their heritage sites on the World Heritage process without discussion on the heritage values with local site managers or the community in the beginning stage.

Likewise, the same may happen between the national level and local heritage management system as they are often very different institutions with different interests and little communication. Take the example of one of the Royal Tombs of Joseon Dynasty(inscribed in 2009) in the Republic of Korea. Though the national government, Cultural Heritage Administration have had proper national legal framework preserving the World Heritage site compatible to the World Heritage's guidelines, the local authority approved the construction of an apartment complex in the area overlapping the buffer zone without reporting in advance to the Administration(Song, 2021).

There is also a gap between disciplines when heritage interpreters do not know World Heritage system. Interpretation can be used for various areas; value recognition including the OUV, disaster risk management or impact assessment which are connected to each other and crucial for building heritage management system. However, if interpreters are not aware of the World Heritage system, the interpretation may not be well integrated into the management system that supports the OUV. Vice versa, when the heritage people in the World Heritage system are not fully aware of the notion of interpretation, then they may tend to understand heritage sites only within the boundary that the World Heritage system would recognise (i.e., Outstanding Universal Value) while other local community held values are left unrecognised.

- **Involve community and traditional knowledge from the beginning and onward**
- **Promote heritage interpretation manuals and guidelines**
- **Share good practices of heritage interpretation with sustainable development approach**

### **Involve community and traditional knowledge from the beginning and onward**

Therefore, these gaps can be alleviated through involving the community from the very initial stage of heritage interpretation planning. This can contribute to building strong and healthy relationship with the community. Also, there needs to be an on-going effort and dialogues to continue community participation throughout the whole process of heritage interpretation(Court and Wijesuriya, 2015). This could begin with possibly from the stage of enlisting on the Tentative List, when the values of heritage are interpreted from the sites, and definitely during the nomination process.

In that process, transferring and sharing the traditional knowledge and sources are crucial. The traditional knowledge system that has passed down and developed over generations within the community is a fundamental source for not only recognising heritage values but also for building sustainable management system that would allow none of heritage itself and the community's livelihood to be compromised. Moreover, prioritising the traditional knowledge system in the process of interpretation and building

management system would enable the community to have a stronger sense of ownership and responsibility over their heritage sites.

### Promote heritage interpretation manuals and guidelines

As mentioned in the earlier chapter, the term 'interpretation' involves comprehensive activities in the process of sharing the heritage values recognised in multi-dimensions. However, the term 'interpretation' has long been viewed as secondary to the core tasks of heritage conservation(Silberman, 2012)

Therefore, it is necessary for the World Heritage framework to inform and promote what exactly 'heritage interpretation' is to not only the heritage practitioners and communities but also to the general public. It would be much clear if the term is explicitly mentioned in the Operational Guidelines and specific guidance is given on how to apply sustainable development approach. If replacing the older terms like 'presentation' with heritage 'interpretation' take a long-term effort and may risk it being too institutionalised, it would be still helpful to create a new heritage interpretation manual that helps understand how heritage can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. In the meantime, it would be also useful to refer to Table 1. in order to understand the work process of interpretation from the planning stage to delivery that can be developed to integrate the dimensions of sustainable development.

Dimensions of WHSD Policy	Interpretation Planning and Implementation... (short-term process of setting up interpretation)	Interpretation Delivery... (long-term management of interpretation)
Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can help care for heritage places, the existence of which contributes to combatting climate change and associated disaster risks, protect biodiversity, etc.</li> <li>• Can implement physical interpretation with environmentally sensitive materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can raise awareness of the natural and cultural values of the heritage place and foster greater appreciation and therefore protection</li> <li>• Can reinforce understanding that humans are connected to and dependent on their environment</li> </ul>
Inclusive Social Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can support inclusive governance structures at the heritage place</li> <li>• Can document and thereby help protect Traditional Knowledge Systems and intangible cultural heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can respectfully recognise local communities as knowledge bearers of Traditional Knowledge Systems and intangible cultural heritage</li> <li>• Can pay greater account to often unnoticed, but nonetheless significant, histories</li> </ul>
Inclusive Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can reinforce a network of places and people in the local area for achieving SDGs together and benefit sharing</li> <li>• Can create successful and diversified programmes that encourage increased income through ticket sales</li> <li>• Can encourage equitable business opportunities linked to interpretation experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can place an emphasis on specific local experiences which then require the involvement of local community members in personal interpretation</li> <li>• Can provide content specifically for local and regional audiences so that economic development is diversified and not only dependent on international visitors</li> </ul>
Fostering Peace and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can create networks of people and organisations willing to work together and create a peaceful society</li> <li>• Can provide participants with a safe forum for dialogue in which to discuss issues that go beyond the interpretation project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can promote cultural diversity and acceptance in order to reduce the potential for conflict</li> <li>• Can facilitate broad civic engagement in the promotion of human rights, social justice and lasting peace</li> </ul>

Table 1. Heritage interpretation process that could meet sustainable development dimensions in the WHSD Policy

In addition, there are a number of existing manuals and guidelines already accessible that can be utilised to facilitate understanding of heritage interpretation such as *Managing Cultural World Heritage Sites and Managing Natural World Heritage Sites* published by ICCROM with an updated version to be produced by the three Advisory Bodies in 2023. ICOMOS has recently published Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals(2021) to provide guidelines for achieving sustainable development in heritage sector though it is intended for ICOMOS members, heritage professionals and development actors(ICOMOS, 2022). Such guidelines will need to be shared among broader range of people, to general audiences to some degree for the connotation of heritage interpretation to be widely accepted. In addition, it would be more efficient if promoting the understanding of the term heritage interpretation is supported at national levels. For example, though it is a much earlier publication, the Department of Conservation of New Zealand published a guideline for interpretation called *Interpretation Handbook and Standard*(2005) which explains interpretation with easy-to-understand language covering from planning to implementing in detail including different interpretation strategies for target audiences(special needs visitors, children etc.). This type of effort can contribute to facilitate understanding on heritage interpretation among general people.

### Share good practices of heritage interpretation with sustainable development approach

It is also useful to share good practices of heritage interpretation with sustainable development approach that correspond to the WHSD Policy. It was suggested that establishing a mechanism to network among stakeholders to share strategies and know-hows of heritage interpretation for sustainable development would raise awareness on such approaches. It would also help develop better sustainable development approaches. This report paper thus, share good practices with respect to each dimension of WHSD Policy presented by the panellists at the Annex.

No.	Heritage Interpretation Practice for Sustainable Development	Site	Dimension under WHSD Policy
1	Ethics, Equity, and Sustainability in (World) Heritage Work: Examples from the U.S.	Steel mill factories at Sparrow Point, Baltimore, USA	Inclusive Social Development
2	Community engagement and SDGs in the management of the Petra World Heritage site in Jordan	Petra, Jordan*	
3	Community-Based World Heritage Site Management in George Town, Malaysia	Melaka and George Town, Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca Malaysia*	
4	Gaming in World Heritage Education	City of Bamberg, Germany*	
5	Multivocality, Contestations and social memory: interpretation of sites associated with liberation heritage in Africa	Robben Island, South Africa*	
6	Sustainable Tourism and Interpretation for World Heritage Sites, Jaipur	Jaipur City, Rajasthan India*	Inclusive Economic Development
7	Capacity Building in Disaster Risk Management of Southeast Asian Cultural Heritage	Disaster management programmes of SEAMEO SPAFA for heritage sites in Southeast Asia	Inclusive Social Development Environmental Sustainability

Table 2. Case studies on the heritage interpretation with sustainable development approaches \* UNESCO World Heritage site

## Inclusion and Equity

### 1. Why do we need heritage interpretation for sustainable development?

- What are the benefits of more inclusive heritage for society?
- What are the benefits of social inclusion for the heritage?

**Peter Larsen** One thing that struck me is the importance of maintaining credibility of international designations faced with fundamental challenges that are necessarily being addressed head on. In terms of building accountability downward and upward and reasserting of having equitable system is what we need.

**Michelle Stefano** The structural inequity still persists in our world underpin heritage for so long. Colonial, western, white Heritage making processes and theorisation. So, it is a tool to address those inequity in heritage itself, the work that we do; to shine the bright light on the disempowerment that is needed for the traditional historical heritage professionals who have enjoyed for so long the power and privilege of decision making, the authoritative voices. So, it is a tool to destroy and to eradicate the structural inequities in heritage itself and to address the 'now'. I think heritage interpretation has a great potential in being responsive to what is needed now in order to have a better tomorrow.

### 2. What are the ingredients of more inclusive approach?

- What change is needed to realise heritage for sustainable development?
- What are the contributing elements of heritage interpretation to sustainable development?

**Peter Larsen** More systematic engagement with inclusive, equity and human right is fundamental to make changes. In this respect, heritage interpretation plays a key role in terms of central narratives, values and ability to engage with wider socio-political contexts.

**Michelle Stefano** Here, I wish to emphasise the significance of time as an integral 'ingredient' for resilient and, thus, sustainable heritage work. While the need to address current problems and crises is increasingly urgent, counterintuitively it would be advantageous to slow down the pace of heritage efforts to better align with the time required for genuinely attempting ethical and equitable collaboration. As a concept and approach, 'slow heritage' entails the conscious creation of time and space by heritage actors and professionals for longer-term relationship building and collaborative decision-making. Healthy and lasting relationships are built on trust, which inevitably takes time, as does ensuring the inclusion of as many perspectives as possible. Here, professionals prioritise not their own aims, but first listening to and learning from community collaborators about how best to meet theirs. In playing a supportive role, professionals co-facilitate transparent dialogue on all stakeholder agendas, as well as mutually agreed-upon expectations, plans, and milestones. Ideally, heritage safeguarding approaches that are guided by community collaborators have greater flexibility and responsiveness to change, and a better chance of standing the test of our turbulent times.

### 3. Where and how can interpretation support that?

- What is heritage interpretation in practice? How is it different from theory?
- What are the challenges faced in practicing heritage interpretation?
- How should the outcomes be measured, monitored and evaluated?

**Peter Larsen** The challenge is creating more space for these new approaches out there that are about listening to difference and acknowledging one conversation, creating space for dissonance and disagreement. As Michelle said, there are different agendas and so on, so one challenge is breaking with that habit of only having space for consensual agenda not really leaving room for the inequality dissonance and so on.

**Michelle Stefano** It is necessary to let go of already an idea what is going to come out. For instance, the film of the mill story project, we didn't go in there will be a film. It was fortunate to be involved with communities as processes in and out of themselves that don't necessarily need to be product oriented. And, ego checking of the professionals, in thinking about authorships of the projects. That is difficult to divorce from. Trying to be very mindful of embracing the process of what emerges in heritage interpretation work.

#### 4. How can World Heritage framework support heritage interpretation for sustainable development?

- In the stage of interpretation planning and delivery, how often OG or WHSD Policy are referred?
- What else is needed in terms of guidelines and policy?

##### Peter Larsen

As discussed, the WHSD Policy remains a loosely implemented framework. Somewhat more attention to OGs, but this also depends in governance context where the WHC is arguably in crisis. Heritage interpretation can play an important leverage role in transforming practice – not least given its central role in shaping the understanding of values and practice.

##### Michelle Stefano

To truly root out the structural inequities that have underpinned heritage practice for centuries, consent should extend beyond obtaining signatures on a dotted line to being understood as an ongoing process that is essential to building relationships and trust with community collaborators. As such, it can be used as a mechanism for enhancing the resiliency of heritage approaches through continued, community feedback and guidance in steering approaches and planning every next step.

In this regard, ensuring the involvement of local communities is to work toward leveling the heritage playing field, where decision-making power is shared and processes, thereby, progress collaboratively. In essence, to build ethical and equitable collaboration requires a self-reflexive disempowerment of World Heritage actors and professionals, those who by default possess decision-making power and institutional/professional privileges as carried through the World Heritage system.

## Annex III-2

### Roundtable Panellist Opinion Note: Session 2

## Well-being of Local Community

#### 1. Why do we need heritage interpretation for sustainable development?

- What are the benefits of involving local community in the process of interpretation?
- What roles do local communities take in achieving sustainable development?

##### Ang Ming Chee

Too often, the nomination of World Heritage Site are results of experts and professionals, thus causing gaps in terms of heritage interpretation with the local people. Such gaps are causing issues and challenges in heritage maintenance and management. Therefore, it is important to involve the local people and understand their contexts and layers of diverse interpretation.

##### Shikha Jain

Interpretation of a heritage site can help in contributing substantially to sustainable development goals keeping the well-being of local community as a base for developing interpretive strategies. It is important to recognise the role of traditional knowledge systems and indigenous communities in interpretation of a historic site or city. It is the local citizens, families staying since centuries, craftspeople and other key members of the society who are the knowledge bearers and, can provide the genuine stories of the place.

Implementing Interpretation plan and strategies through the local community can ensure authentic information and long-term sustainability for implementing the plan if the community owns it and takes the responsibility of communicating it to all types of visitors.

**Hattaya Siriphatthanakun** To achieve in sustainable development, the value and significance of heritage should be clearly defined and committed by all stakeholders and involving parties. However, at present, in most heritage places the value justification and identification are done by heritage professionals and experts. The local community who live there and play a crucial role in taking care the heritage place should be provided more opportunities to define the value from their perspectives which will be included or accepted by other parties.

**Patricia Alberth** As humans we need to feel rooted in our culture, in our society. If we involve local community in heritage interpretation processes, we strengthen their identity and pride. This fosters community engagement and stewardship. Our understanding of local community needs to include businesses, too.

## 2. What are the ingredients for well-being of local community?

- What change is needed to realise heritage for sustainable development?
- What are the contributing elements of heritage interpretation to sustainable development?

**Ang Ming Chee** Be empathy and patient in listening to the issues and perspective of the local community. World Heritage Site management will be more effective if local communities and site managers are able to have trust and strong social capital. Voices of the silence groups must also be taken care off, as this group are the most vulnerable in compared to those more vocals.

**Shikha Jain** Involving local community with interpretation should be linked with their socio-economic improvement through means such as training of local guides for heritage walks, providing visitors direct access to craftspeople to buy crafts products from them, providing house owners support in ideal adaptive reuse of their properties. The approach to interpretation should be from the ground level bottom up rather than top down – this should be the basic approach for any practitioner.

**Hattaya Siriphatthanakun** In my understanding heritage interpretation is one of the tools or frameworks to bring the community into the value sharing process. At this stage, it is difficult to specify what is needed to foster community involvement because it is very contextual. Anyway, from experience in several heritage places in Southeast Asia, changing of heritage definition and conservation approach of heritage practitioners/experts perhaps can be the beginning of community involvement because heritage conservation as well as management are still conventional or leaded/defined by expert.

In addition, heritage interpretation will probably support the better quality of life of local people and community, not only through tourism but other economic activities, aka creative economy, that build on both tangible and intangible heritage. The perception that heritage is not only about the history but it is all about our future will probably help stimulate local economy which provide community's well-being, should be widely promoted.

**Patricia Alberth** Heritage interpretation needs to relate to the horizon of experience of the people.

In 2015, the municipal council of Bamberg passed a resolution to set up a World Heritage visitor centre in the River Regnitz across the iconic Old Town Hall at the heart of the city. The development of such a building is a lengthy process that raises both technical and conceptual questions. To involve local citizens in this process, the Bamberg World Heritage Office installed a temporary visitor centre – a World Heritage pop-up visitor centre – in an empty shop building on the "Obere Brücke" (Upper Bridge), immediately adjacent to the Old Town Hall, and opened it from 29 May to 2 June 2017. In the shop space covering 50 m2, the Bamberg World Heritage Office presented the planned content of the visitor centre and its new corporate design. In addition to a small exhibition, there was a seating area with a stage for presentations and a kids' corner with touch-and-feel boxes and paper and pencils. Two sets of seating were placed in front of the shop so that visitors could sit and chat. Brightly coloured floor stickers near the pop-up visitor centre drew attention to the location. The team from the Bamberg World Heritage Office and the designers from the agency "h neun Berlin" hosted the five-day event and were available to discuss the new exhibition concept. The World Heritage pop-up visitor centre's programme was structured with different formats tailored to different audiences including children and elderly.

## 3. Where and how can interpretation support that?

- What is heritage interpretation in practice? How is it different from theory?
- What are the challenges faced in practicing heritage interpretation?
- How should the outcomes be measured, monitored and evaluated?

**Ang Ming Chee** The public and majority reactions and buy in is the best way to understand if a heritage is interpreted properly. Oral history documentation can be an option to collect and accumulate the inputs from the public who are not within the major heritage system.

**Shikha Jain** The difference in practice and theory is essentially that one needs to customise the generic theoretical approach to bring it into actual practice on ground. It is the understanding of local lifestyle, beliefs and values that need to be finally integrated with communication of OUV for Interpretation of World Heritage Cities. One way of measuring the impact of interpretation could be the level, quantity and quality of local involvement in Implementing activities for an interpretation plan.

**Hattaya Siriphatthanakun** The heritage interpretation as a tool for achieving sustainable development should be recognised and promoted among heritage practitioners. Then it should also target the wider group of people. From my own experience due to my organisation's priority area, we have tried to pay more attention to younger generation by using basic education through the 21st century curriculum which includes global citizenship as a platform to introduce the heritage value to young people. It is expected that this will ensure that our heritage will be transmitted to future generation. For the outcomes of heritage interpretation, the key indicators and sustainability of the outcome should be defined. In fact, I am sure there are several approaches or methods to develop the evaluation plan for heritage interpretation.

**Patricia Alberth**

In order to present the knowledge concerning cultural heritage in an appealing way, interpretation mustn't be dominated by retired historians, but needs to be put in the hands of communication experts.

Surveys and guest books may provide a first impression with regard to the outcomes of heritage interpretation. Yet, they don't do justice to long-term effects.

#### 4. How can WH framework support heritage interpretation for sustainable development?

- In the stage of interpretation planning and delivery, how often OG or SDP are referred?
- What else is needed in terms of guidelines and policy?

**Ang Ming Chee**

The World Heritage framework must recognise the roles of World Heritage site manager as the main actor and problem solver in many issues, including heritage interpretation. Unfortunately, the Operational Guidelines or the Convention itself has yet able to acknowledge the contribution and the importance to establish a tenured site manager. The lack of resources and job security for the site manager will directly impact to the efficiency of problem solving and site management.

**Shikha Jain**

A toolkit or manual for heritage interpretation linking sustainable development under the World Heritage framework can be an important resource such as sustainable tourism toolkit. Since SDGs are a cross cutting theme across various heritage management aspects such as tourism, interpretation, conservation; it should be ensured that any such toolkit/policies guidelines for Interpretation align with the existing documents without overlaps.

**Hattaya Siriphatthanakun**

In my view, heritage interpretation and sustainable develop are related to value and significance of the heritage which are dynamic and changing. However, the value justification in the World Heritage framework is static and rigid. Within the 50 years of the convention, the properties which were inscribed in the early period may change or be changing due to the community involving in the properties. The convention and its OG or policy should recognise that the change could happen. While other values of the properties which are not included in the OUV should be reviewed and opened the floor for discussion to provide ways that those values will be also sustained.

**Patricia Alberth**

We need to think heritage across a wide interdisciplinary and intersectoral spectrum to contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development goals. At the same time our administrative and budgetary structures are organised in in a very sectorial manner. In general, sustainability is equated with environmental protection. Accordingly, SDG matters are assigned to environmental departments. Structural updates are needed. If international guidelines are established they need to be translated to national languages in order to be adopted by regional governments.

## Annex III-3

Roundtable Panellist Opinion Note: Session 3

### Revisiting the World Heritage framework

#### 1. How is heritage interpretation differently understood or addressed in World Heritage framework? And where do the difference come?

**Giovanni Boccardi**

A narrow definition of interpretation – possibly corresponding to the term "presentation" within the original text of the World Heritage Convention – limits this to making understandable to various audiences the meaning and values of a heritage property, with the understanding that those meaning and values were already defined under the "identification" stage of the heritage process. This is the predominant concept of interpretation within the heritage sector.

A more contemporary understanding of "interpretation" considers this as including as well the creation – or better the "co-creation" – of values within a continuous process of public engagement. While I sympathise with the ideals underpinning this broader notion of interpretation (respect for diversity, human rights, inclusiveness etc.), I think this brings with it a certain terminological confusion.

In my view, interpretation is part of the larger range of activities that fall under the responsibilities of the site manager of a heritage property. As such, it should be carried out with competence, professionalism and supported by a strong ethical standard, including consideration for diversity of perspectives across a wide range of stakeholders. Clearly, the meaning and values of a heritage property should reflect the widest range of perspectives and be culturally appropriate. This, however, results in my view from a wide set of policies and processes that occur before, during and after the actual interpretation of a property, intended as a specific activity, part of the daily responsibilities of the managing authority.

## 2. How can WH framework better support the role of professionals and local community in heritage interpretation?

### Giovanni Boccardi

The WHSD Policy contains various principles and recommendations that provide a strong basis for professionals responsible for heritage interpretation. Such principles imply, by definition, the full involvement and participation of local communities and other stakeholders.

In particular (as already mentioned in my paper):

Under the section on Inclusive Social Development, paragraph 18 emphasises the need to ensure that the conservation and management of World Heritage properties is based on recognition of cultural diversity, inclusion and equity, including by recognising, respecting and including "the values as well as cultural and environmental place-knowledge of local communities".

Paragraphs 20, 21, 22 and 23, by advocating for the respect of human rights, the rights of Indigenous Peoples and gender equality, implicitly calls for giving consideration to the diverse range of sensitivities and perspectives on heritage values, historical narratives and related attributes in identifying and conserving heritage.

Finally, under the Section on Peace and Security, prevention, direct reference is made (notably in paragraphs 29 and 30) to the need to adopting "cross-culturally sensitive approaches to the interpretation of World Heritage properties that are of significance to various local communities and other stakeholders, particularly when nominating or managing heritage places associated with conflicts". To this end, the Policy calls on States Parties to adopt "an inclusive approach to identifying, conserving and managing their own World Heritage properties that promote consensus and celebrate cultural diversity, as well as understanding of and respect for heritage belonging to others, particularly neighbouring States Parties".

In conclusion, the idea of a specific policy on WH Interpretation is worthy of consideration. However, my opinion is that the necessary policy framework is already in place and that it would be more useful to concentrate on a "how-to" guidance/handbook, laying out a sound methodology for the interpretation of heritage properties, comprised of relevant case studies.

Having said that, considering the strongly political nature of the World Heritage Convention and the close relation between an effective and appropriate heritage interpretation and the presence of a fair and inclusive system of governance, it is important to understand that no number of guidelines and manuals will be able to ensure the correct interpretation of a heritage site, in the absence of a conducive political environment.

### Ege Yildirim

There should be an enduring sense of urgency in what we do, regarding new approaches and transformative reforms in our World Heritage policy and practice. Because with climate change and all other disasters storming our world, we do not really have much time, and need to accelerate our actions and impactfulness, while keeping our sensitivities and focus on the ultimate ideals.

Agency is always a key factor. Mobilising people themselves and the diverse sizes and types of our groups, enabling people to rise to the occasion, is a great part of this transformative action, to render heritage interpretation more inclusive and make space for diverse voices. People do not always wait, or need to wait,

for states to make decisions, before making change directly on the ground.

The idea of "going back to the sun" can always help us refresh and reaffirm our purpose, i.e. remembering why the concept of "heritage" emerged, why we value and protect heritage, and seeing the overlaps with the motivations behind the "sustainable development" agenda emerged, e.g. for quality of life and well-being, and working on how these overlaps can be reflected in heritage interpretation schemes.

"Local knowledge" is behind many of the "community inclusion in heritage interpretation" debates. When experts shift from their authoritative/ didactic role to a new place of facilitating, it is often local knowledge that they help uncover and activate, which in turn supports the sense of dignity, local pride and empowerment in communities. Ensuring more local knowledge-equipped communities would also help combat exploitative and populist practices of powerful state and business actors in heritage, support accountability in governance processes that affect heritage interpretation, and thus achieve the diversity of voices we are seeking in interpretation.

The ICOMOS Policy Guidance on Heritage and the SDGs (2021) recommends a three-pronged approach (p.18). The 3rd principle needs to be recognised with a similar weight as the first two, on which heritage interpretation policies can also build their actions:

- integration of heritage as a positive contributor to development,
- protection of heritage from harm during development processes, and
- improvement of heritage practice for a better alignment with sustainable development objectives.

For a deeply impactful heritage interpretation practice, benefiting from the tools and techniques of the field of "social psychology" seems necessary. Achieving a nuanced and thoughtful approach to heritage interpretation is related to human cognition, perception and behavior, which go beyond the core scope of heritage.

## 3. How can heritage interpretation be more integrated in the Operational Guidelines and WHSD Policy? What are the steps toward it?

### Giovanni Boccardi

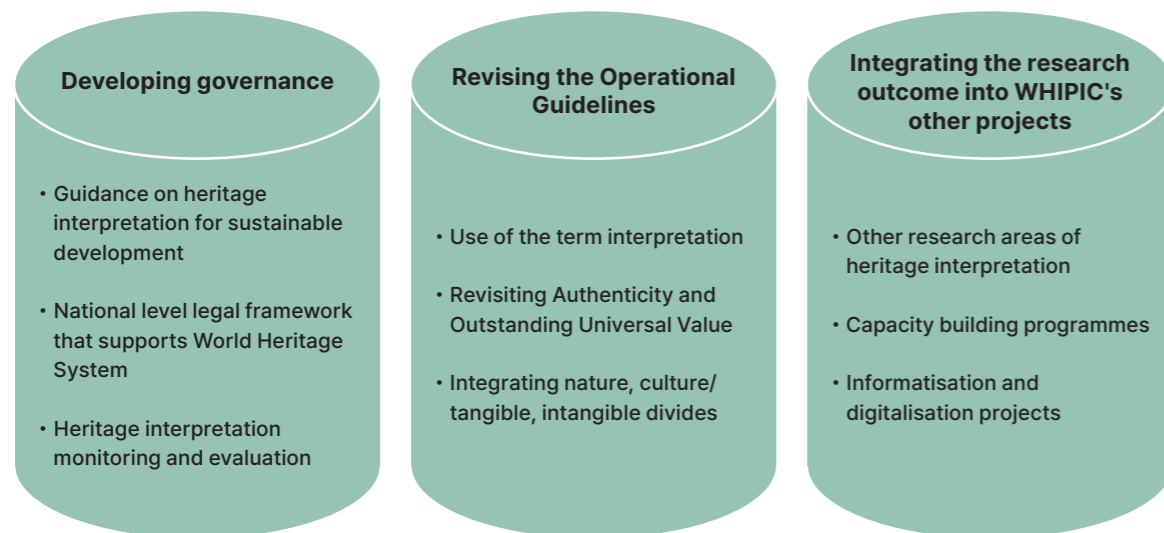
In the short term, I believe that the key principles are already in place, many of which are not just relevant to interpretation (see my comments to the first question), but to heritage identification and conservation in general. More guidance would be very helpful on specific interpretation approaches, including best practices from a wide range of cultural, political and geographical contexts.

Looking at the long-term, a radical reform of the Convention would be welcome, doing away with the notion of an eternal OUV - fixed once and for all. We must accept that changes are the drivers of history and have been in the past one of the main creators of what is today's heritage. What is important is that the changes we implement today to our environment - in the face of unprecedented challenges such as climate change and globalisation - contribute to sustainable development across all of its dimensions, including cultural continuity.



# IV. WHIPIC's Future Research Areas and Directions

Integrating heritage interpretation and sustainable development is never simple. Even considering these two within the World Heritage system is an even more complicated work which would require years to understand the whole mechanism. Though, the literature review and the summary of the roundtable discussion served as cornerstones that suggest future research areas and directions of the WHIPIC.



## 1. Developing governance that supports heritage interpretation for sustainable development

### Guidance on heritage interpretation for sustainable development

It may be challenging to build a rigid governance at an international level that requires the States Parties to implement heritage interpretation for sustainable development as the World Heritage framework do not have the power to force them to observe the Convention(Cameron, 1992). In order for the WHSD Policy to be applied to heritage interpretation practices, specific guidance will be needed not only for the States Parties and communities but also for Advisory Bodies(Boccardi and Scott, 2018). For example, regarding the issues of human rights of the indigenous people, there has been a consistent call for more specific policy

guidance on how their rights can be respected in the World Heritage system and that this can be possible through interpretation(Larsen, 2022). WHIPIC could build and provide more specific guidance that gives clear explanation about the definition and concept of heritage interpretation for sustainable development with more focus on ethical approach to heritage stakeholders. It would also need to give directions on how to identify the features of heritage and its community, build interpretation plans with sustainable development approaches, implement and monitor them so that all four dimensions in the WHSD policy are equally well addressed. This guidance would have to be created in a flexible way so that it could respond to diverse management systems found in the different countries and to the diverse range of natural and cultural heritage places with respect to the voices of community, the livelihood of which lies on the heritage sites.

### National level legal framework that supports World Heritage System

In the meantime, a proper national level governance should also be established with long-term and sufficient investment which could integrate the policy and guidance suggested at the international level. How heritage values are recognised and interpreted depends on the political and social hands of a State Party. In that vein, WHIPIC may examine how the World Heritage Convention and WHSD Policy, or the notion of heritage interpretation and sustainable development. To be specific, WHIPIC may focus on a certain region, and examine its domestic policy on heritage interpretation and management system whether they are compatible to the international policy and guidelines. Communities may be also interviewed to comprehend the understanding on the ideas of the Convention and the Policy. Then later, WHIPIC may expand its research region to broader Asian countries.

### Heritage interpretation monitoring and evaluation system

In addition, WHIPIC can focus on developing a proper monitoring and evaluation system for heritage interpretation with sustainable development approaches. WHIPIC may suggest definition of heritage interpretation, applicable indicators to assess the progress of heritage interpretation with sustainable development approach. This can be developed within the already existing mechanism of monitoring and reporting system in the Convention (Boccardi and Scott, 2018). Then, WHIPIC will need to make sure that the next projects reflect on the evaluation which will also need to take community as one of the major evaluators.

## 2. Revising the Operational Guidelines

### Use of the term 'interpretation'

As mentioned in the literature review, the term 'interpretation' is not mentioned in the World Heritage Convention. The closest meaning of interpretation is indicated with the word 'presentation'. The Operational Guidelines does not seem to have used the term 'interpretation' in the way this research paper or in the sustainable development approaches has perceived. In the Operational Guidelines, the term 'interpretation' is mentioned six times, most of them referring to the visitor centre infrastructures and language interpreting.

Though the World Heritage Convention cannot be updated or amended, the Operational Guidelines are periodically revised and there is greater flexibility for indicating how these older terms are more appropriately replaced by 'heritage interpretation'. In other places within the Operational Guidelines, new references to interpretation might be inserted. This could include:

- Management and protection: reference to heritage interpretation as a way of raising awareness of World Heritage among stakeholders with the aim of gaining support for its improved management and

conservation;

- Sustainable use: the way in which heritage interpretation can support efforts towards greater sustainability of heritage;
- Nomination: the consideration of heritage interpretation at the time of nomination can gain broader support for World Heritage, support its long-term management and conservation, as well as being part of strategies that bring benefits to communities from World Heritage;
- Awareness raising and educational activities: heritage interpretation is a more effective way of engaging stakeholders with heritage than some conventional educational approaches and can overcome problems of social and intellectual exclusion.

In order for this to sound more changeable and applicable, it would be also useful for WHIPIC to identify the areas where heritage interpretation can replace the existing terms. WHIPIC would also work with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies so that any revisions or new terminology is adopted in any other related documents that are based on the Operational Guidelines (Annex IV-2).

### Authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value

Recognising the gap between the World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines and how it is implemented in practice, the roundtable discussion has drawn up that involving community and using traditional knowledge systems in the whole process of the heritage interpretation is crucial. This should be integrated in the Operational Guidelines which will require considerable revision on the concept of authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value, which are the ones of the most controversial notions for having narrow, Eurocentric perspectives(Labadi, 2013). WHIPIC can also focus on the research on amending the Operational Guidelines that would contribute to resolving the problematic issues within the Convention through explicitly including holistic heritage interpretation that supports sustainable development in the World Heritage system.

It is imperative to begin the study with how authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value of heritage sites is perceived in different regions with diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds. Labadi(2013) has conducted an extensive research on how the definition was understood in States Parties and the consequences on the shifts in its definition based on the World Heritage policies and guidelines as well as numerous nomination dossiers. However, it seems also important to approach site managers and community on their awareness about the concepts and definition of authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value through ethnographic methodology. It will be a fundamental and critical key for suggesting directions on how the World Heritage Convention and the Operational Guidelines could be changed to better address its problem. It will be a fundamental and critical key for suggesting directions on how the World Heritage Convention and the Operational Guidelines could be changed to better address its problem.

Within this research it would be useful to understand more how the Outstanding Universal Value is connected to and supported by other conservation and heritage values. It is necessary to see how heritage values are recognised with different perspectives in different regions as sometimes the Outstanding Universal Value of the Convention may leave out the none-OUV values that are still important to community. In addition to that, how the values can continue to reside around the heritage sites through traditional knowledge system would be also critical area to examine(Annex IV-3). This would allow recommendations to be made on more holistic management that recognises that World Heritage cannot be managed in isolation because it is interdependent on its wider context. Heritage interpretation built based on these contemplations will help to reveal those connections between values and ensure that community-held values are integrated into management.

### Integrating nature, culture and tangible, intangible divides

The World Heritage system divides nature, culture and tangible and intangible heritage(Labadi, 2022). Though there have been attempts to integrate those divides such as creating Cultural Landscape in 1992 and The Nara Document on Authenticity in 1994, while adopting the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003, the World Heritage Convention's focus has been more on protecting the materialistic aspects of heritage sites. However, it is important to be aware that these natural, cultural and tangible, intangible heritage can not exist separately and keep on changing, creating new values. This may be another area WHIPIC can focus on to develop a holistic heritage interpretation approach that integrate these elements which would truly contribute to sustainable development.

### 3. Integrating the research to other WHIPIC projects

In order for the research outcomes to be utilised more meaningfully, the outcomes will need to be shared to other projects of WHIPIC, including capacity building and informatisation. Understanding how the languages and terminology of the World Heritage system are understood differently will be a fundamental ground for building strategy for future education and capacity building programmes.

In that context, along with those research outcomes, the *2011 World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy*(UNESCO, 2011) will be a great source to provide a framework for the development of effective initiatives to strengthen or develop capacities for the conservation and management of World Heritage in line with heritage interpretation that centres people and community. Extracted from the 2011 World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy, most of the actions identified below could usefully be promoted by WHIPIC in collaboration with other partners which will be of particular relevance to many potential WHIPIC activities.

Future Aspirations for Heritage Interpretation:	Ways to Achieve Those Aspirations:	Those Who Need to Be Involved:
Greater awareness of what heritage interpretation is and what it can contribute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness-raising activities</li> <li>• Creation of resources</li> <li>• Capacity building</li> </ul>	Heritage practitioners Institutions Communities
Heritage interpretation better integrated into World Heritage processes and management practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision of the Operational Guidelines</li> <li>• Creation of resources</li> <li>• Capacity building</li> </ul>	
Improved interpretation theory and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Capacity building</li> </ul>	

Furthermore, the results of this research project (and others) should be taken into consideration in the development of WHIPIC's own capacity building strategy, so that sustainable development perspectives are fully adopted into future activities.

## Prerequisites to Ensure that World Heritage Interpretation Addresses the Sustainable Development Goals

**Prof. Sophia Labadi**

Professor of Heritage, Kent University

In line with the objectives for this publication, this paper adopts a critical approach, by considering some of the most innovative projects on heritage interpretation for sustainable development and by analysing their points of failure, and what they teach us for revising the World Heritage system. This presentation is based on my latest book, *Rethinking Heritage for sustainable Development* published by UCL Press (Labadi, 2022), particularly the conclusions, recommendations and the different prerequisites identified. This paper will focus on 5 prerequisites, taken from the book:

- Integrate heritage into sustainable development challenges
- Consider heritage as dynamic
- Stop stereotyping locals
- Consider heritage in its multiple dimensions
- Disturb the (self-serving) logic of the international aid framework

### Presentation of the case studies

The reflections and recommendations presented below are based on various innovative interpretation efforts at World Heritage sites. The first one is the effort to tackle poverty reduction at the Island of Mozambique (Mozambique), a World Heritage site inscribed in 1991, through the development of pilot guided tours involving locals, particularly young people and women. The second case are the efforts to set up an interpretation centre in the Saloum Delta, a World Heritage site from Senegal, inscribed in 2011, and a community village (including an interpretation centre) in the Bassari Country, another World Heritage site from Senegal, inscribed in 2012. Importantly these two spaces were intended to encourage various socio-economic benefits, including but not limited to tourism.

More specifically, the interpretation centre in the Saloum Delta, located in Toubacouta was designed to

include a craft space with around thirty booths for artists and artisans to exhibit and sell their goods; a room for local women to process and sell local products (jams for example); a multimedia place and library for youth; a room for local groups (including musicians, singers and dancers) to rehearse; and a small museum where local tourism guides could take their visitors for a fee. Adopting an inclusive approach, the economic development of two promising sectors – fishing and cashew nuts – was to be driven by this interpretation centre. Meanwhile, the community village built in Bandafassi in the Bassari Country, planned to be managed entirely by locals, would provide accommodation for tourists in huts; a small exhibition would present local heritage, accompanied by ethno-cultural spaces reproducing the architectural techniques of each local minority; and local artists and artisans would have a dedicated space to sell their products. Crops would be grown in the garden by local villagers to strengthen their food security, and some of these products could then be sold to both tourists and locals. A community radio would also be located in this structure and would broadcast programmes for the different local ethnic groups. Hence these three cases, one in Mozambique and two in Senegal, aimed to use interpretation of heritage to address key challenges of the Sustainable Development Goals, including poverty reduction, food security and gender equality. These plans, particularly the interpretation centre and community village were highly innovative and ambitious and substantive international and national funds were dedicated to their construction.

However, these two spaces have not lived to their ambitious plans: the community village is empty and crumbling; the craft space in Toubacouta is empty, the room for local women used for other projects, local guides seldom take tourists to the interpretation centre, which is not used as a driver for regional economic growth. On the island of Mozambique, the guided tours have been stopped. The reasons for these failures are multiple and I provide in-depth analyses for them in the book *Rethinking Heritage for development* (Labadi, 2022). Here I want to focus on some of the pre-requisites I identified that are more macro level, but can be applied to interpretative efforts, and would be required to be implemented as a first step.

### Integrate heritage into sustainable development challenges

The fundamental shortcoming with the innovative use of interpretation centres for sustainable development is that it is quite removed from the usual tasks of heritage managers and interpretation officers. Heritage site managers, interpretation officers and other concerned stakeholders too often work only towards the protection, safeguarding and interpretation of official site values. This approach reflects Sustainable Development Goal 11.4, with its focus on the protection and safeguarding of the world's cultural and natural heritage. Sadly, this target does not mention that heritage can help to address the Sustainable Development Goals. The reasons for such a restricted understanding of heritage preservation as sustainable development are diverse. There seems to be a fear that associating sustainable development with heritage sites will allow any type of development, and there are indeed many examples of problematic development at heritage sites. Other reasons include a limited understanding of the contribution of heritage for sustainable development; the difficulty of implementing approaches linking heritage to sustainable development; siloed working practices and a shortage of staff, particularly those with wider experience beyond heritage management; and power relations limiting the implementation of projects on heritage for development.

Possible solutions to this situation include clarifying the role of heritage as a potential solution to contemporary challenges beyond its mere conservation and management, using new and existing documents, including the 2021 ICOMOS Policy Guidance on Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2015 UNESCO Policy on World Heritage and Sustainable Development. The Operational Guidelines should also be revised to remove paragraph 6 which indicates that the mere protection and conservation of heritage 'constitute a significant contribution to sustainable development'. This document could include more precise references to this 2015 policy and the format for the nomination dossier could include a new section on how the nomination and interpretation of World Heritage properties address the

## Heritage is dynamic!

Heritage, as reflected in the three sites considered, is still too often understood as static and frozen in time, and interpretation is used to convey those ideas. One reason for this is that heritage must be considered 'authentic' (that is, in its 'original' design, materials, workmanship, and setting) if it is to have any value. However, most heritage properties have actually changed over time, often because of alterations in function or fashion or to improve people's living conditions. This consideration of heritage as frozen in time is problematic, because external circumstances are often overlooked, as is the case with climate change at some heritage sites. In Senegal, for instance, there has been a drop in rainfall of around 300mm and a 1.7°C rise in temperature over a 30-year period, as well as more intense rainfall of shorter duration (Amadou Thierno Gaye et al., (2015). Negative impacts are multiple, including the advance of the sea; coastal erosion; desertification; loss of mangroves; loss of arable land and pasture; and a reduction in the availability of water for irrigation. This has obvious impacts on heritage sites and these threats should be explained to the public. Besides, with this consideration of heritage as static and as belonging to the past, its potential contributions to sustainable development, including solutions to climate change, are often ignored or overlooked. For example, at the Sine Saloum Delta in Senegal, seashells had historically been used as barriers against the rising sea, until recently when they have been used as construction materials, demonstrating how solutions from heritage sites are not considered for current challenges. Besides, the interpretation for this site does not provide any information on the role of the seashells, whilst it aims to address key challenges.

What can be done about this? One suggestion would be to promote changing understandings of authenticity to States Parties and encourage the Advisory Bodies to ensure that such understanding is reflected in nomination dossiers. Paragraph 79 to 86 of the Operational Guidelines should be revised to explain better that authenticity should not be about explaining that the property is frozen in time, but how it has evolved in times to reflect various values that are universal and outstanding. Another possibility would be to remove the condition of authenticity. Another suggestion would be to ensure that sites are interpreted in a dynamic manner, and not as static and unchanging properties.

## Locals do not live in the past!

Communities living in and around heritage properties are often positively considered only when presented as 'authentic', or frozen in time. There are many examples of such archaic, simplified, and stereotyped understandings. One example is the treatment of ethnic minorities in the Bassari Country, Senegal, in the nomination dossier for the inscription of this property on the World Heritage list and its evaluation. The nomination dossier indicates 'that the populations of the area proudly defend their traditions, which means that architecture, natural resource management, and cultural practices are respected [...] that landscapes, masks, hairstyles, costumes, and all other physical manifestations of these cultural practices have not changed (...)' (République du Sénégal, 2011: 72). The evaluation by ICOMOS (2012) echoes these comments when it states that local ethnic minorities have lived away from 'modernity' (sic), with the sole exception of the adoption of 'Western' clothes (ICOMOS, 2012: 73). However, this static presentation is divorced from reality; the different ethnic minorities living in the Bassari Country have indeed changed, not least because they have had to go and work outside of their villages. Considering these stereotyping presentations, it is no wonder that the locals are not involved in the community village, which has remained empty and is slowly crumbling and becoming a ruin. It is obvious that local and national authorities did not actively involve local communities in the process.

One suggestion for change would be to set up a mechanism within the World Heritage processes, to ensure local participation and a move away from using documents on World Heritage properties (including interpretative ones) to stereotype locals and make racist comments. Considering that requests for local participations have been made for at least the past twenty years and are already included in the Operational Guidelines, it might be necessary to include more stringent mechanisms, including a change of tone in the Operational Guidelines. Rather than 'suggesting to' or 'encouraging' States Parties, the Operational Guidelines should request States Parties to involve local communities and rights holders, particularly in Paragraph 12; 40; 64; 111. The Advisory Bodies should also be requested to evaluate whether and how locals participated in nominating the property and how they would contribute the plans for its interpretation and management following inscription on the World Heritage List.

## Heritage should not be pigeonholed!

Heritage is still too often compartmentalised as tangible or intangible, natural or cultural. These categories were created in Europe and used to structure and support colonial systems. Unfortunately, the different UNESCO conventions and programmes that consider tangible and intangible heritage and nature and culture as separate have had the negative long-term effect of maintaining these inaccurate separations on the ground. Interpretive strategies too often compartmentalise heritage into these unhelpful categories of tangible and intangible; nature and culture. Only when heritage is interpreted in a more holistic manner that it will truly fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals. This is clear from the example of the Bassari Country in Senegal. The original plan for the community village and interpretation centre in Bandafassi was to ensure that a comprehensive understanding of the site would be used as a catalyst for sustainable development. This included support for the economic growth of fonio, the local couscous, whose associated manifestations were inscribed on Senegal's intangible heritage register in 2019, and which is more adaptable to climate change than other crops, as it can withstand both drought and heavy rain, thus having the potential to address SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). However, these remains as plans, and were never implemented, as the intangible elements of the Bassari country were not recognised when the site was inscribed on the World Heritage List. As a result, there is no concern for the fonio at the community village and interpretation centre. Besides, on the ground nature and culture are often intertwined and difficult to separate. The Saloum Delta is a perfect example of that. It was inscribed on the World Heritage List under criteria (iii) and (iv) for its exceptional shell mounds, some of which are funerary sites with baobab vegetation. Criterion (v) was also used to recognise a unique way of life centred on the gathering of shellfish and fishing, in a balanced interaction between humans and the fragile ecosystem. Whilst these are cultural heritage criteria, they also strongly demonstrate the interconnectedness of nature and culture, justifying the inscription of the site as a cultural landscape. However, the sole use of cultural heritage criteria for inscription, whilst the site was nominated under both cultural and natural heritage criteria, caused confusion on the ground. As a result of the inscription under cultural heritage criteria only, the interpretation centre focuses primarily on the cultural values. This example demonstrates how unpractical the divide between cultural and natural heritage is.

One suggestion for change would be to identify how the divide between nature and culture, and between tangible and intangible heritage, can be dissolved through measures such as revising the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention and the working practices of international, regional, and national NGOs and legal systems. These potentially would require some profound and systematic changes, including ensuring that criteria cannot be separated between 'natural heritage' or 'cultural'. This would also require a change in the working methods of the Advisory Bodies, to ensure that they truly bridge the culture and nature divide in all of their work.

## Disturb the (self-serving) logic of the international aid framework

A number of nomination dossiers and interpretive activities, particularly in the Global South, are funded by international aid. Whilst a heritage and culture-based approach to projects should take account of local specificities, wider issues of asymmetrical power relations between donors and receiving countries have not been successfully addressed. One reason for this is that the international aid system, despite reforms, still responds to self-serving logics where projects benefit donors, which tend to be Western powers instead of targeted communities (see in particular Labadi, 2019). This trend is quite clear in the case of the project on using heritage for poverty reduction on the Island of Mozambique. The consultant who led the project was an international civil servant. In addition, the major part of the funding from Spain was also used to cover the costs of UN organisations or consultants, or pay for national civil servants to attend meetings, some of whom did not make a significant contribution to the success of the events. Besides, the proposal for guided tours was proposed by the international community through a project funded by the Government of Spain, and it followed a blue print that was implemented in an identical manner in very different World Heritage sites all over Africa and the Middle East. In other words, this project did not match the needs to local communities, nor the reality on the ground; but it was imposed from above, as international tourism is widely believed as contributing to poverty reduction. Yet, the guided tours developed did not correspond to the low levels of tourism at the Island of Mozambique, among other issues.

One suggestion for change would be that any project on interpretation and sustainable development are based on local needs. On the Island of Mozambique, for instance, a university has recently opened. Why not provide goods and services for students, rather than focusing on tourism development? Interpretation projects could be based on fulfilling those local needs, through interpretation of buildings used for students, for instance. To address these issues, the Operational Guidelines would also need to be revised. In particular, paragraph 15 would need to be revised to include that States Parties 'have the responsibility to contribute to and comply with the sustainable development objectives which are aligned with some local communities' needs and aspirations'. Paragraph 112 would also need to be revised as follows: 'Management of the wider setting is related to its role in supporting the Outstanding Universal Value. Its effective management may also contribute to sustainable development through harnessing the reciprocal benefits for heritage and society, particularly for local communities'.

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# Annex IV-2

## World Heritage Interpretation in a Sustainable Development Context: Ideas for Silo-Breaking

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### Introduction

Amidst the increasingly central debates around World Heritage and sustainable development taking place in the World Heritage expert and policy-making community, heritage interpretation is rising to the occasion as a potentially powerful and critical tool to address current challenges in the World Heritage system. This paper hopes to contribute to the debate steered by WHIPIC's Research Project on World Heritage interpretation policy by drawing on the author's experiences as a specialist in heritage site management and community development, the former Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Focal Point of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

### Review of the basic documents

The ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites<sup>1</sup> helpfully provides the distinct definitions of "interpretation" ("...activities intended to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding of a cultural heritage site...") and "presentation" ("the carefully planned communication of interpretive content through the arrangement of interpretive information, physical access, and interpretive infrastructure at a cultural heritage site..."). While the latter, as an older and more conventional concept, features in the original WH Convention Text of 1972, the former does not, its absence possibly compensated by the references to public awareness and understanding of heritage, but in today's context warranting a more explicit expression and stronger elaboration in the basic documents of the WH system, which in turn

<sup>1</sup> Available at [http://cip.icomos.org/downloads/ICOMOS\\_Interpretation\\_Charter\\_ENG\\_04\\_10\\_08.pdf](http://cip.icomos.org/downloads/ICOMOS_Interpretation_Charter_ENG_04_10_08.pdf)

act as the springboard and legitimate instruments of action by its key protagonists (the Committee, the States Parties and non-state actors).

As we understand how exactly heritage interpretation could, and should, sit within the World Heritage system, the implications are for a new World Heritage interpretation policy to be crafted and adopted, and accompanying revisions in the Operational Guidelines, grounded in new readings of the Convention text and requirements for implementing the Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage (WHSD Policy for short) of 2015.

A brief review of the World Heritage Convention text reminds us that, as stated in the Preamble, World Heritage is grounded in solidarity, international responsibility and assistance, to overcome resource and capacity shortages of countries in safeguarding precious cultural and natural heritage resources from factors endangering their Outstanding Universal Value. The Sustainable Development Goals, as a global solidarity tool, greatly resonate with these grounding principles. The Convention text is largely accepted as not open to amendment, and fortunately its visionary scope still remains relevant and provides an enabling framework within which the evolving needs of WH and society can be addressed. If there were a chance for amendment, however, the phrase "identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations" of the cultural and natural heritage, found in Articles 4 and 5, could be updated as "identification, protection, conservation, interpretation and transmission to future generations". Under the assumption of keeping the text, the terms "presentation" and "transmission", as well as references to "public awareness and understanding", "training" and "education", could be explained (and interpreted) in the Operational Guidelines to encompass and imply "interpretation."

Looking at the evolution of terminology directly related to sustainable development in the World Heritage system, a milestone is observed to be Article 6 of the Operational Guidelines, which came into force in 2005: "Since the adoption of the Convention in 1972, the international community has embraced the concept of "sustainable development". The protection and conservation of the natural and cultural heritage constitute a significant contribution to sustainable development."

The most important milestone is undoubtedly the adoption of the WHSD Policy in 2015, which sets out by "recognising that the [World Heritage Convention] is an integral part of UNESCO's overarching mandate to foster equitable sustainable development and to promote peace and security, and with a view to ensuring policy coherence with the UN sustainable development agenda."

States Parties are called to task in the WHSD Policy to "ensure an appropriate and equitable balance between conservation, sustainability and development, so that World Heritage properties can be protected through appropriate activities contributing to the social and economic development and the quality of life of our communities." Here, an element of caution is advisable regarding this wording of "balance", which has a fundamental risk of misinterpretation, as if one must choose between levels of conservation and sustainability (or sustainable development), and as if it is an "either or" situation or a "zero sum game". In the last few years of Committee meetings, it has been possible to listen to State Party delegations defend OUV-adverse projects within their World Heritage sites in the State of Conservation discussions, asking "but what about sustainable development?" The blanket application of the term Sustainable Development to various circumstances as convenient opens the way for misguided implementation of the WHSD Policy, which should instead be applied with the necessary nuances, customised for each case, but following the principle that OUV protection is indeed an act of sustainability, which goes hand in hand with other "members of the family of sustainability actions" as defined in the 17 Global Goals. Thus, it may be recommended to amend, or reinterpret in the Operational Guidelines, this phrase as:

"ensure an appropriate and equitable balance between conservation of OUV and other aspects of sustainable development, and address OUV within its role and relationships with the full spectrum of sustainability considerations."

Another noteworthy concern is related to the reference to economic growth, a rather burning issue of debate in the sustainable development community. One of the main sections of the WHSD Policy, in alignment with the three established dimensions of Sustainable Development, is dedicated to Inclusive Economic Development, under which is defined the action of "ensuring growth, employment, income and livelihoods." It has by now been clearly argued, including through many sessions within the UN High-Level Political Forum<sup>2</sup>, that the concept of growth is problematic, needing to be decoupled from the concept of development, which in turn needs other metrics beyond Gross Domestic Product (GDP), in particular more qualitative measurements beside the quantitative. This is a point where the interpretation of heritage values can address, as an inclusive, people-centred and human rights-based approach to defining significance is likely to be more successful in recognising and formulating these values as a vector of sustainability, and their qualitative characteristics as a strength in achieving inclusive socio-economic development.

Moving on to focus on the Operational Guidelines, a very recent update to document, made in accordance with Decision 43 COM 11A (2019), includes bold and progressive amendments, in numerous paragraphs, related to topics including Sustainable Development<sup>3</sup>. To highlight a few paragraphs in the 2021 edition reflecting these changes:

- Paragraph 12: "States Parties to the Convention are encouraged to adopt a human-rights based approach, and ensure gender-balanced participation of a wide variety of stakeholders and rights-holders, including site managers, local and regional governments, local communities, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other interested parties and partners in the identification, nomination, management and protection processes of World Heritage properties."
- Paragraph 14bis: "States Parties are encouraged to mainstream into their programmes and activities related to the World Heritage Convention the principles of the relevant policies adopted by the World Heritage Committee, the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention and the UNESCO Governing Bodies, such as the Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention and the UNESCO policy on engaging with indigenous peoples, as well as other related policies and documents, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and international human rights standards."

An explicit section, or set of explicit paragraphs, dedicated to 'interpretation' could be further added to the Operational Guidelines in its upcoming editions (as it does not as yet feature much in this document, either), with appropriate cross-references to the associated concepts mentioned earlier. In particular, the recent additions in emphasis to sustainable development could act as a basis on which to build up the guidelines for interpretation. Numerous paragraphs in the Operational Guidelines could also be updated with an added interpretation perspective, based on the latest thinking on interpretation, i.e. its dynamic, inclusive and innovative aspects. Some more obvious possibilities include:

- Paragraphs 7, 15 (a, d, g): Rephrasing the overall set of actions undertaken for heritage as: "identification, interpretation, [terms such as understanding/ appreciation/ celebration], protection, conservation, ~~presentation~~ sustainable use and transmission to future generations";
- Paragraph 15m: "use inclusive interpretation, education and information programmes to strengthen appreciation and respect by their peoples of the cultural and natural heritage defined in Articles 1 and 2 of the *Convention*, and to keep the public informed of the dangers threatening this heritage";
- Paragraph 111: "In recognising the diversity mentioned above, common elements of an effective management system could include: (...) c) a cycle of value-based interpretation, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and feedback";

<sup>2</sup> See for example, the HLPF 2019 side event "SDG 8, Leave No One Behind: The 2030 GDP Target - Vulnerable People and the Regions Where They Live": <https://www.icomos.org/en/focus/un-sustainable-development-goals/59520-icomos-documents-for-the-high-level-political-forum-2019>

<sup>3</sup> Available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7353/>

- Paragraph 218: The Secretariat provides assistance to States Parties in developing activities aimed at raising public awareness of the *Convention*, and active co-creation of knowledge and understanding regarding the values of World Heritage and dangers threatening it";
- Paragraph 211: "The objectives [on encouraging support for the WH Convention] are: (...) d) to increase equitable, inclusive and effective participation of local and national populations, including indigenous peoples, in the identification, interpretation, protection and presentation of heritage".

## Some ideas for further elaborating heritage interpretation within the World Heritage and sustainable development context

Interpretation is not a narrow, technical activity, but a holistic approach and fundamental element of heritage protection. Interpretation is related to the creation of significance (OUV) – or, as the processes become more inclusive, its co-creation – not only communicating it, but also discovering, identifying, defining and formulating it. A shared or openly communicated set of values also helps to bring people and communities closer together, in mutual understanding and celebration. When approaching interpretation as a tool of sustainability in WH processes, the equation seems to have two main elements:

- interpretation as an inclusive practice, thus a vector of sustainability +
- interpretation as a fundamental part of the cycle of World Heritage processes.

The position taken in ICOMOS' recent Policy Guidance on Heritage and the SDGs<sup>4</sup> suggests the same: "Strengthening the dimensions of sustainable development is an essential part of the World Heritage cycle. It needs to go hand-in-hand with defining the OUV, from the beginning of the nomination process—where vast amounts of resources are deployed by States Parties—through to conservation, management, and monitoring."

The Policy Guidance also features specific references to interpretation:

- Policy Statement for SDG 5 (Gender Equality): "Harness the potential of heritage to achieve gender equality, eradicate bias and violence based on sexual orientation, and empower all genders, recognising that heritage is constantly changing and evolving. (...) Involve all genders equally in all aspects of heritage: identifying, interpreting, conserving, managing, and transmitting to future generations".
- Baseline for SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth): "The social, cultural, and natural capital of heritage places play an important role in attracting creative industries, businesses, inhabitants, and visitors, fostering economic growth and prosperity. These include, but are not limited to: (...) interpretation, and education."

Since interpretation often touches on politically sensitive matters, some critical questions need to be addressed with courage, sincerity and finesse, if we are to achieve the transition to a dialogical and dynamic conception of World Heritage and OUV for the future. These may include:

- The balance between international, national and sub-national power dynamics, i.e. sovereignty and equity among nations, as well as empowerment of local groups, identities and voices;
- Supporting States Parties in more widely accepting to share their domain of decision-making, allowing mechanisms for local government, and for community actors to have formal, empowered roles in interpretation processes;

- The balance between accuracy, consistency and diversity, flexibility in formulating heritage narratives (in the transition from expert to facilitator, experts may also need to position themselves as community members);
- The importance of interpretation as an element of site management, which is itself grounded in strategic planning and its essential methodologies of adapting to changing circumstances and favouring dynamic process over static outcomes;
- Implications and consequences of interpretation, such as on decisions for budgeting, conservation and other physical interventions, and the cause and effect relationships within broader socio-economic value chains;
- The role of new societal trends such as digital technologies, youth and gender empowerment, decolonisation and repatriation;
- The need for customised approaches to take into account differing cultural and governance contexts of nations, where the methods of reconciling official and alternative discourses, and state authority with civic voices, will need to differ to achieve realistic outcomes.

As we work toward a World Heritage interpretation policy, which may complement the WHSD Policy, it would be advisable to make it a concise and versatile document. The adoption of such as policy can pave the way for proposals to be presented to the World Heritage Committee, through negotiations on acceptable and meaningful ways to integrate inclusive and dynamic heritage interpretation processes into the World Heritage mechanisms. Here, it is a deliberate choice to use "processes" rather than "plans", in recognition of its fluid nature, beyond the one-time drafting of interpretation plans.

As the legal instruments are not sufficient for achieving real outcomes by themselves, the application of these mechanisms needs to be accompanied on a continuing support system of community-based practices on the ground. The accountability of the World Heritage Committee decisions and their application at national and local levels can be strengthened through the introduction of new, community-led nomination processes, of more specific requirements for communication, dialogue and collaboration between national governments and local communities, and of a method for rendering Statements of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUVs) more dynamic, perhaps through periodic revisions. All of the above steps would benefit from a close examination of 'what works' and 'what does not', benefiting from peer-learning and using online databases of good practice.

<sup>4</sup> Labadi, S., Giliberto, F., Rosetti, I., Shetabi, L., Yildirim, E. (2021). Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals: Policy Guidance for Heritage and Development Actors. Paris: ICOMOS: [https://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/2453/1/ICOMOS\\_SDGs\\_Policy\\_Guidance\\_2021.pdf](https://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/2453/1/ICOMOS_SDGs_Policy_Guidance_2021.pdf)

# Annex IV-3

## Is There a Conventional/Non European Wisdom of Heritage Interpretation?

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### 1. The ways non-European countries consider the values of their own heritage and their perception of heritage conservation and interpretation.

#### Diversity of Values

The notion of values and interpretation are relatively new to the heritage discourse. Although 'values' were discussed by people like Riegel in the 19th century, it began to influence conservation and management practice of heritage only since 1970's with the introduction of the Outstanding Universal Value and the discussions led by the Burra charter. I consider this as the transition period (1970-1990) of moving from fabric focus (pre-1970) to people focus (post 1990 to date) approaches to conservation and management of heritage (diagram).

Today, the notion of value being 'why something is important and to whom', both European and non-European societies are free to assess the values of their own heritage. It can be a participatory process. Many non-European countries are yet to adopt the values led approach to identification, conservation, and management of heritage. However, non-European countries are compelled to familiarise with the elaboration of the 'Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)' and its long-term sustenance all of which are defined at global level and to abide by a common set of criteria/principles defined for the purpose. Some of these are being

criticised for being overly Eurocentric, but it is mandatory for both European and non-European countries to follow these guidelines. These were based mainly on the modern conservation principles developed in the West since mid-19th century, but their validity and global application are being questioned by some of those who developed them. Rapporteur of the Venice Charter Raymond Lemaire 1993 just before the Nara meeting said, "The congress participants in 1964 did not realise the complexity of international preservation. ...as 95% of us were Europeans." Another member of the drafting group Gertrude Tripp in 1990 said "... However, today I can confess: there was much that we simply did not know."

This is what made former president ICOMOS has this to say when he referred to the Nara Document on Authenticity: "The Eurocentric doctrinal foundation that had been developed for over two centuries to sustain its focus on materiality was effectively challenged in the Nara document, which recognised for the first time that authenticity is a relative concept that depends on its socio-economic context." (Gustavo Araoz, President of ICOMOS). On the other hand, World Heritage discourse has grown extensively over the last 50 years and has embraced many new paradigms such as communities and traditional knowledge systems. Introduction of the WHSD policy is a major milestone in this context.

Perhaps, the values approach may provide opportunities to overcome some of the concerns of the non-European societies at national levels, but how they can be transmitted to the World Heritage discourse could be the attention of meetings such as this. In assessing values, we may wish to consider some context dependent specificities of different countries and regions. I can elaborate a few of them.

It is a known fact that the western society consider time as a linear concept (Paul Philippot) whereas for some of the non-European countries, it is cyclical or circular. This is particularly important since we in the heritage sector deal with the past. Hinduism views the concept of time in a different way, and there is a cosmic perspective to it. Hindus believe the process of creation moves in cycles.... In Buddhist world view, the time is cyclical: Buddhists view of 'samsara' or the wheel of life which consists of birth, life and death occurs in cycles. Similarly, the 'past' is in the present in other societies as well: "to (American) Indians, for whom time is often not the linear concept it is to most Americans"; to the Zunis, the present does not have to look like the past because the past lives on in the everyday actions of the Zuni people. (Roger Anyon, USA, 1991). For Maori community in New Zealand, the past is viewed as part of the 'living present' (Hiring Matunga, NZ).

As veteran orientalist Coomaraswamy has asserted, "Art is nothing tangible. The art remains in the artist and is the knowledge by which things are made." This questions the strong focus on materiality of heritage and the reasons for respecting intangibles.

Overlooking the intangible and intellectual dimensions of heritage and the traditional knowledge systems by early approaches have been mentioned as a shortcoming. Traditional knowledge systems provide the intellectual basis for assessing values and conservation and interpretation. One example could be the way people perceived their heritage when they are decayed.

- **Agamas** are well structured and traditionally communicated Wisdom in Indian society. They discuss all aspects of temple activity from the selection of a site for construction to consecration.
- The theory of *Kumbhabhishekam* (reconsecration) is an accepted norm in Hindu religious tenets, as continuity of worship is a core principle.
- According to the Agamas, **a ruined temple retains its sanctity**, not only does it continue to exist, but, through **renovation (*Jirnoddharana*) and reconsecration**, it can become a place of worship once more.
- The word, *Jirnoddharana* is a compound word, which comprises of *Jirna* which in Sanskrit mean, withered or decayed, and *uddharana*, which means to restore to its original form.

The values of heritage sites, approaches to conservation and interpretation are all embedded in this



intellectual heritage. These definitions/ views may contradict with the western view of restoration/ reconstruction but are very useful principles that were overlooked in the modern conservation discourse. Another book, *Mayamatha* has a chapter on renovation (conservation).

Some of the special characteristics and the values intrinsic or attributed may also be worthy of special attention. Sacredness for instance is a key value attached to many sites in the region. Continuity and community associations are some of the characteristics that may require special attention in assessing values. Concepts like merit making in Buddhism are processes that may be recognised in this part of the world.

As you can imagine, this is not an exhaustive study but to emphasise that they have serious implications on the way we approach conservation and interpretation. How much they can be transmitted to WH is a different question.

### **Conservation as Interpretation**

Recognition of diverse values and their attributes lead to a diverse range of 'conservation' and interpretations. Here too, there were certain regionally developed cultural practices worthy of recognition. I argue that the interpretation was an integral part of conservation or rather conservation itself is interpretation. Let me give you several examples.

Stupas in Sri Lanka were restored by the people/ supported by the rulers for two millennia. What is presented is the restoration of a ruined stupa originally built in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD by the community in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century without the support (in fact with objections) from heritage practitioners. It is also a classic interpretation of a religious symbolism: Buddhists believe that 'A cetiya (stupa) should be treated as a living Buddha. All the respect and honour that one pays to the Buddha should be paid to the cetiya as well', hence requiring continuous restoration. Such acts in the past were guided by written principles, specialist craftsmen, practitioners (conservators) all of which were supervised by subject related ministers.

Principles of restoration in Sri Lanka existed in 1945 has suggest that 'restoration of ancient shrines has to be carried out without hurting the religious susceptibilities of the people that intervention by the Department (heritage authority) does not affect their vested interests and traditional rights...(Paranavitana 1945)'. This is in contrast to the principle in Venice charter of 1964 of which aim of restoration is 'to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument (Venice Charter)'. Continuous reconstruction of stupas as a part of "merit making" in Buddhism was already acknowledged in the Bagan Nomination in Myanmar. This undoubtedly questions the applicability or the validity of the arguments on authenticity in World Heritage Context.

Conservation and interpretation of sacred sites require special attention. Sacredness attracts a diverse range of visitors but are dominated by the pilgrims. It is believed that the 'concept of sacred implies restrictions and prohibitions on human behavior - if something is sacred then certain rules must be observed in relation to it'. This has implications on how to conserve and interpret sacred sites and more importantly for whom the priorities be given? How do you interpret for pilgrims who outnumber the ordinary tourists? These have been elaborated in the publication 'Asian Buddhist Heritage: Conserving the Sacred'.

Lumbini and Bodhgaya are two of the four places of pilgrimages which was advocated by the lord Buddha. Lumbini attracts the largest pilgrim community from Sri Lanka, next to Indians. It's a place my mother wished she could visit. My wife who is a medical doctor visited and considered it as a lifetime spiritual experience and my daughter who is a scientist wishes to visit the place one day. It is the spirituality of the place that matters and not the ruins or the shape or colour of the buildings that were constructed at various stages in

history. How do you interpret these places and for whom are question in front of us?

A few more examples with recent works, which were influenced by local and regional values systems are given below.

### **Temple of the Tooth Relic**

When the terrorists bombed the Temple of the Tooth Relic, we were concerned about leaving damaged parts of the temple as they can create hatred towards those who were involved in bombing. As a result, the Temple and its sculptures and paintings were completely restored without leaving any traces of damages. Any traces of atrocities could disturb the sacred atmosphere of the pilgrims entering the temple. Philosophy to LET GO was adopted reminding the world of the teachings of the lord Buddha: In Pali, *Na hi verena verani-sammantidha kudacanam: Avereba ca sammanti- esa dhammo sanantano meaning* 'in this world hatred never ceases by hatred; it ceases by love alone. This is an eternal law'.

### **Samadui Buddha Statue**

Samadhi Buddha in Anuradhapura is one of the most advanced creations and an interpretation of Buddhist philosophy and one of most respected objects of worship. Sri Javaharlal Nehru who visited the place had retained a photograph of the statue while he was in Dehradun prison and occasionally used to be reminded of the qualities of the Lord Buddha for peace of mind. When its nose was damaged, there was no hesitation of the Sri Lankan authorities to restore it as it would help to interpret the qualities of the statue. This is also underpinned by the philosophy behind such statues as Coomaraswamy has stated 'Buddha statues were made not because there was a demand for art but because there was a need of an icon to worship'. It is clearly stated in the literature that you do not worship a broken statue until its restored.

### **Reconstruction of wooden buildings**

I consider Japanese reconstruction of wooden buildings is not only a conservation effort but also an in-depth interpretation of the heritage.

### **Continuity and community**

Non-western paradigms such as continuity and community were the basis for our programme on living heritage that was further expanded to people- centered approaches to conservation of cultural and natural heritage. This approach promotes the placing of people at the heart of the heritage discourse and consider the reciprocal benefit of conservation for both heritage and people.

### **Traditional Knowledge Systems (TKS)**

The TKS overlooked were recorded in a recent publication which was part of a project funded by Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea. Sarah and myself are in the process of extracting how different aspects of TKS contributes to different dimensions of sustainable development, social, economic and environmental and peace and security. For instance, its contributions to the quality of life are part of an ongoing study as can be seen in the diagram below (under construction):

Sustainable development dimension	Indicators of Quality of Life by World Health Organization	Examples of TKS	Examples of sites
Inclusive Social development	Physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure, social belonging, religious beliefs	Rituals, traditional transmission of knowledge, collective work, intangibles, traditions	
Inclusive Economic Development	Wealth, employment	Self-employment, own wealth generation	
Environmental Sustainability	Environment	Respect, services, care	Subak System of the Trihitakarana (Indonesia)
Fostering Peace and Security	Safety, security and freedom	Interactions, resilience, peace building	

In addition to the knowledge tested and accumulated with people/ in literature and practices, TKS can be used for interpretation at site level. These few examples may contradict with the western view of conservation/restoration/ reconstruction which is still struggling to be defined but can be very useful tools for interpretation if studied further. Indeed, my work on this subject suggests that all what we do are reconstruction, and the term restoration is only an academic concept!

## 2. How the World Heritage framework (WHC/OG) should be changed to embrace wider range of perspectives and perceptions of heritage value and means of interpretation

My next task is not an easy one. Through the adoption of the WHSD Policy, UNESCO has changed the history of conservation. We are glad that the principal author of the policy is with us today. At ICCROM, the Sustainable Development paradigm was introduced to the ITUC programme in 1997. It was continued with the Living Heritage Sites programme mentioned earlier in 2003. Giovanni joined us since 2007 when we introduced the subject in our international course on Conservation of Built Heritage which was conducted by him. It was one of the most popular subjects and highly graded by the participants indicating its need at international level. All these activities and his own personal and academic interest led to the development the WHSD policy and we are happy to have contributed to the discussion. It was not an easy task. When the proposal was presented by Giovanni at the Committee, Advisory Bodies collectively make a supporting statement which at the time became my task. I am aware, how difficult it was to arrive at consensus on the common statement among the members of the Advisory bodies. Let me take this opportunity to record my appreciation to Giovanni and thank WHIPIC for inviting him to this gathering.

As you are aware, the Operational Guidelines has been changed already to integrate the WHSD Policy into different sections starting from the Tentative List to Nominations to Management and monitoring. Based on what has been resented throughout this series of discussions and the comprehensive literature review by Sarah, perhaps Giovanni would be able to guide us how we can integrate sustainable development into the aspects of interpretations. In doing so, we should try to integrate some of the regional specific value systems and conservation concepts into the operational guidelines. Already, operational guidelines acknowledge the use of traditional management systems for sustaining OUV. TKS is also referred in the resource manual on

Managing Cultural World Heritage which I had the privilege of leading. Perhaps, what we can emphasise is the need to respect all values in managing World Heritage in a stronger manner so that local values can be integrated.

## 3. The role of, and future directions for WHIPIC, as an institute dedicated to the interpretation and presentation of World Heritage

Before we start the discussion on changes to the Operational Guidelines which is a complex process, we must conduct more research. In this context, I congratulate WHIPIC for the initiative taken to develop a research programme with this event. New research may focus on:

- The conventional wisdom on heritage interpretation
- Different types of audiences we should aim interpretation
- Interpretation of sacred sites for pilgrims
- Contribution of traditional knowledge system for sustainable development
- Integration of the research results to interpretation of World Heritage sites and other heritage sites

## V. Conclusion

The research on the interpretation policy this year focused on heritage interpretation and sustainable development in the World Heritage system; how these two are addressed in the policy and applied in practice, what the roles of heritage practitioners and community are; and how the World Heritage system can support better practice of heritage interpretation with sustainable development approach.

The literature review explored the linkages between heritage interpretation, sustainable development and the World Heritage system, focusing on the Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspectives into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention. Through the literature review, it was considered important to connect heritage interpretation and sustainable development in a way that heritage interpretation can contribute to sustainable development and thus, to the contemporary society as well as protecting the heritage sites. The review also recognised that it is necessary to look into how heritage interpretation for sustainable development has been practiced and how it is different from that addressed in the World Heritage policies.

The roundtable discussions were consequently arranged to share good practices of heritage interpretation for sustainable development and to hear from site managers and practitioners what should be acquired to minimise the gap between the policy and practice and what is needed in the World Heritage system to better support the heritage interpretation for sustainable development.

The research saw meaningful lessons that there are still numerous areas in heritage interpretation that needs attention from not only heritage practitioners but also from community. We also recognised once again that changes in the current system of World Heritage for it to be more inclusive and that this may be the areas where heritage interpretation with focus on sustainable development can be one of the solutions. As an international institute dedicated for heritage interpretation and presentation, there is much work for WHIPIC to do in order to ensure that sustainable development perspectives are better integrated into World Heritage management, thanks to the contribution of heritage interpretation. By investing in this area, WHIPIC would be contributing to ensuring better heritage protection, as well as greater benefits gained by communities.

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**Research on  
the World Heritage Convention  
and Interpretation Policy**

**Report Paper**  
**: Annex**

# Annex 1

## Ethics, Equity, and Sustainability in (World) Heritage Work: Examples from the U.S.

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Figure 1. UMBC. Steel mill at Sparrow Point, Baltimore, USA. <https://millstories.umbc.edu/sparrows-point/>

## Introduction

If there is one, overarching aim of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as advanced through the 2015 United Nations *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, it is to improve the livelihoods of billions of people across the world. To achieve this aim, the seventeen SDGs and corresponding 'targets' serve to spotlight interlocking facets of human life – the economic, political, social, and ecological conditions needed for bolstering wellbeing and opportunities to flourish. As the *2030 Agenda* states: "We envisage a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination; of respect for race, ethnicity and cultural diversity; and of equal opportunity permitting the full realisation of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity" (UN 2015, 4). Indeed, the SDGs could be read as a call for the removal of certain economic, political, and social barriers impeding so many in their pursuit of rightfully fulfilling lives. In fact, particular SDGs call explicit attention to income and gender 'inequalities,' which have detrimentally impacted generations, and are deep-seated problems to eradicate (see UN 2015, 14).

In upholding human rights, and in underlining specific, marginalising inequities affecting countless people, it can be said that principles of ethics and equity are reflected in the SDGs. Yet, other SDGs are arguably related to symptoms – e.g., poverty, hunger, health disparities, and pollution – of root problems that are less explicitly acknowledged and discussed. For example, "Reduced Inequalities" (SDG 10), which mainly addresses the widening, global wealth gap, notes that the "social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status" should be promoted in States. Moreover, in attempting to "ensure equal opportunity" and a reduction of "inequalities of outcome," discriminatory laws need to also be eliminated (UN 2015, 21). What is not directly discussed, however, are the centuries-long, structurally-rooted – and often colonial in origin – reasons why economic, political, and social injustices, as well as systemic (and legal) discrimination, exist today. In other words, to ethically and equitably reach a sustainable future, and to truly *transform* our world, the legacies of White supremacy and structural racism – and relatedly, unfettered and inhumane profit-seeking capitalism, including the increasing privatisation of life-sustaining resources and public goods – must be explicitly named and urgently addressed.

With respect to the heritage sector and its contributions to a more just and sustainable future, my focus here, the *2030 Agenda* is drawn on in a number of ways. For instance, SDG 11, "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable," recommends that efforts "to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage" should be strengthened, an obvious reference to the 1972 *Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage* of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and, thereby, the resultant World Heritage (WH) framework (UN 2015, 22). In addition, throughout the *2030 Agenda*, the protection of cultural and natural diversity is recognised as essential to sustainable development, and that sustainable tourism should be turned to for promoting "local culture and products," objectives that strongly resonate with heritage work of all kinds (SDG 8; UN 2015, 20).

Nonetheless, it is UNESCO's 2015 *Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention* that intimately connects the SDGs and heritage sector. In justifying the policy, it is declared that the "conservation and management of World Heritage properties should therefore contribute to reducing inequalities, as well as its *structural causes*, including discrimination and exclusion" (UNESCO 2015a, 2; emphasis mine). Here, it is evident that principles concerning ethics and equity are applied to WH goals, and that 'reducing' longstanding 'structural causes' of present injustices

<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this paper are mine, and do not reflect those of the Library of Congress.

falls under the purview of the heritage sector, and within the scope of concerns of heritage actors and professionals.

Accordingly, I argue that for the heritage sector to contribute to sustainability in all its facets, heritage efforts themselves must be built to be sustainable, as well as resilient. On resilience, ethnomusicologist Jeff Todd Titon (2015, 179) explains: “Advocates of resilience emphasise that whereas sustainability is a goal, resilience is a strategy [...] In popular usage, resilience sometimes means resistance; but more precisely, resilience means the ability to bounce back.” As such, I explore relationships between the *2030 Agenda* and aforementioned WH policy, examining how ethics and equity – as interwoven principles – are reflected in guidelines, and where they can be prioritised to build inclusive, community-centered approaches. From there, I examine heritage safeguarding and dissemination efforts with which I am involved, offering a closer look into ethical and equitable heritage practice geared toward community-led collaboration, and challenges that remain.

## Ethics and equity in World Heritage

In the World Heritage framework, the SDGs have been largely applied to the interrelated areas of sustainable ecological, social, and economic development (UNESCO, 2015a). Significantly, principles of ethics and equity come into play with the policy’s emphasis on ensuring community – and specifically Indigenous peoples’ – participation in all processes, from World Heritage nomination through to developing promotional schemes, of which they are considered as key beneficiaries. In particular, “recognising rights and fully involving indigenous peoples and local communities” is “at the heart of sustainable development,” a priority elevated by the sections on “Sustainable Social Inclusion” and “Respecting, Consulting, and Involving Indigenous and Local Communities” (UNESCO, 2015a, 5-8). Reading between these lines, a certain recognition of the persistent legacies of Western, colonial heritage practice is arguably present. That is, to stress the inclusion of local and Indigenous communities, the opposite reality is cast in high relief: the unethical, inequitable, and extractive practices that outright shunned their participation for so long.

Indeed, ‘social inclusion,’ or ‘community participation,’ as described in the somewhat similar UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) framework<sup>2</sup>, should be a foundational building block of approaches, integrated into all processes concerning the life of a World Heritage property – from nomination and conservation, to management and public promotion. ‘Social inclusion’ is where ethical and equitable heritage practice takes shape, a ground zero for putting what would otherwise be lofty, abstract ideals into actual, actionable steps. In this regard, ensuring the involvement of local communities is to level the heritage playing field, where decision-making power is shared and processes, thereby, progress collaboratively. In essence, to build ethical and equitable collaboration requires a self-reflexive disempowerment of WH actors and professionals<sup>3</sup>, those who by default possess decision-making power and institutional/professional privileges as carried through the World Heritage system.

As argued elsewhere (Stefano, 2022), a fundamental component of building ethical and equitable collaboration is consent. Consent is a vehicle for establishing stakeholder permission and terms of involvement, and serves as an all-important acknowledgement of authority, especially with respect to local communities whose heritage is under focus. In recent years, to foster Indigenous peoples’ participation

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<sup>2</sup> As developed worldwide through the implementation of UNESCO’s 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*.

<sup>3</sup> See Baron 2010 for a discussion of professional ‘disempowerment’ in the context of U.S. public folklore practice.

in World Heritage nominations, the phrase “free, prior and informed consent” (FPIC) was introduced into the framework. In 2015, the Convention’s *Operational Guidelines* (OG) was amended to: “States Parties are encouraged to prepare nominations with the widest possible participation of stakeholders and shall demonstrate, as appropriate, that the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples has been obtained, through, inter alia, making the nominations publicly available in appropriate languages and public consultations and hearings” (UNESCO 2021; 2015b).

Although gaining community consent remains encouraged, to promote inclusion and enhance sustainability of World Heritage-related efforts, it may help to require it, as is the case during nomination activities in the ICH framework (which also inspired the addition of FPIC to the WH OG; UNESCO 2015b). At the least, however, consent should be approached as a sustained process that ensures continued community involvement and negotiation throughout World Heritage processes – to increase community access to decision-making ‘tables.’ In other words, to truly root out the structural inequities that have underpinned heritage practice for centuries, consent should extend beyond obtaining signatures on a dotted line to being understood as an ongoing process that is essential to building relationships and trust with community collaborators. As such, it can be used as a mechanism for enhancing the *resiliency* of heritage approaches through continued, community feedback and guidance in steering approaches and planning every next step.

## Fostering collaboration in heritage work

As a U.S.-based public folklorist, my work predominantly focuses on supporting culture keepers, artists, and communities in the safeguarding and promotion of their ‘folklife,’ or living cultural heritage (increasingly termed ‘ICH’ globally). Common areas of activity include ethnographic research and documentation (and archives stewardship), grants administration for supporting culture keepers, and ranging programmes geared toward raising public awareness of the importance and diversity of people’s traditions and practices, such as through festivals, exhibitions, and films, to name a few. Since its development into a distinct discipline and profession over half a century ago, public folklorists have striven to expand the representation and inclusion of diverse communities – in terms of race, gender and sexuality, ethnicity, class/occupation, geography, and intersections thereof – in the arts, culture, and heritage sectors. Moreover, ensuring equitable access to resources, such as grant funding, is reflected in the longstanding disciplinary prioritisation of supporting marginalised and oppressed communities and helping to uplift their cultures (Kodish, 2011).

With living heritage, issues relating to ethics also come sharply to the fore, as it is people who *embody*, pass on, and change it. As such, community ownership of and authority over their culture is actively respected through collaborative approaches to safeguarding, where professionals play supportive roles in programmes and projects guided by community partners to meet, first and foremost, community goals (Baron, 2010; cadaval et al., 2016; Stefano and Murphy, 2016). At a basic level, community ownership is honored through both formalised permission and ongoing consent and negotiation processes, such as with respect to limiting access to cultural information and materials in documentation and preservation activities, a key area of consideration where I work, at the American Folklife Center (AFC), home to one of the largest ethnographic archives in the world.

For example, at the AFC, I am currently helping to steer its newest grant programme, the Community Collections Grants, which serve to support community-led cultural research, documentation, and preservation projects in source contexts, with the materials generated from projects to be also preserved in the AFC’s archives. As part of the Mellon Foundation-funded Library of Congress *Of the People* initiative, the programme addresses inequities in heritage and archival representation by removing barriers to cultural preservation for communities who wish to document and safeguard their own cultural expressions on their terms. Grant recipients’ projects are based across mainland U.S. and territories – from Puerto Rico, Chicago,

and Hawaii, to the Federated States of Micronesia. Documented cultural practices range from music and dance, to textile weaving traditions and foodways, among others. Project teams exercise control over the documentation donated to the AFC to become archival collections, as discussed with AFC staff on limiting access to materials deemed culturally or politically sensitive (Library of Congress, 2022).

With respect to collaborative projects, another example concerns Mill Stories<sup>4</sup>, which began prior to my joining the AFC. In general, the project has sought to safeguard the living heritage of the former Sparrows Point Steel Mill, Baltimore, Maryland, which after 125 years, shuttered its doors in 2012. Once one of the largest steel mills in the world, its closure was a devastating blow for its community of thousands of workers, including retirees, whose health care, pensions, and livelihoods were dependent on its running. In direct response to its shutdown, Mill Stories developed in late 2012 to document, safeguard, and amplify the mill's living heritage from the perspectives of its workers, especially since plans for razing its immense complex of buildings were already being made. At the project's heart are filmed interviews with over thirty-five steelworkers who share their stories and memories of Sparrows Point, as well as the reasons why it should not be forgotten. Over time, it became clear that a longer film was emerging and by 2014, *Remembering Sparrows Point* was being screened in community gatherings and public events in Maryland and beyond (see [www.millstories.org](http://www.millstories.org)).

In their interviews, project participants discuss their experiences of labor strikes, union activities, as well as their fights for Civil Rights and desegregation, Women's equality, and safety measures and employee benefits. Their stories of discrimination, struggle, and resilience shine much-needed light on workers' experiences, and serve to humanise the devastating impacts deindustrialisation, so often depicted in mainstream media through only statistics. In this light, the project has helped to disrupt mainstream and over-simplified perceptions of the steelmaking workforce by ensuring that the stories of diverse community members – in terms of race and gender – were represented and included. For instance, several women workers, particularly Black women, share their experiences of fighting for equal rights and establishing the Women of Steel group in the union, as well as the challenges they faced in balancing work and raising families, some as single mothers (Stefano, 2018). It can be said that the project is biased; the majority of participants were union members, with a number in high-level positions, including women. Yet, participants sought to stress the importance of labor organising, and how unions are instrumental in the fight against profit-seeking forces and corporate greed, issues that impact countless workers across the world.

To support the project's sustainability and foster as close as possible collaboration with participants, gaining their consent was approached on an ongoing basis. Ideally, participants would be involved with editing the project's products, such as the film, which was too logistically challenging to facilitate. Instead, over years, community screenings of individual interviews and, later, draft versions of the film were organised in union halls and local museums as opportunities for feedback and community guidance. The events, typically including steelworker-led discussions and story sharing, served as chances to check in together on how the project is going, as well as to bolster senses of ownership and control over Mill Stories by community members. At present, the project continues to be drawn on for local, community-based exhibitions and programmes that serve as reunions for former workers, and to keep Sparrows Point history and living heritage alive.

## Resilient ways forward

Perhaps, for the heritage sector, the most basic – and yet important – contributions of the SDGs relate to time, as two sides of the same coin. First, they serve to reframe heritage work on a longer basis, where longer-term goals are integrated into the initiatives and projects – large and small – that comprise worldwide heritage activity. Although it can be said that for as long as 'heritage' has existed, so too has the longer-term

goal of 'forever preservation,' a cornerstone of heritage-making through to today. Yet, it cannot be denied that the community-oriented efforts discussed here are typically undertaken over shorter timelines, driven by shorter-term goals, such as successfully nominating heritage for UNESCO recognition. At times, such goals are prioritised over longer-term ones that would support ecological, social, and economic sustainability for years to come. In part, one-off and short-lived heritage efforts reflect the limited investment of funding and other resources – such as from government, university, and/or private entities – that are needed to support sustainability. Indeed, sustainable heritage practice dictates that increased resources are committed over longer periods of time, to strengthen the resiliency of safeguarding measures, and to give desired impacts a better chance at lasting. Heritage actors, particularly those with access to high-level decision-making on resource allocation, can advocate for funding schemes and resources that span multi-year periods, and that are dedicated to resilience over the long haul.

Equally, the SDGs bring a needed, contemporary orientation to heritage: that is, to strive for a more just and livable future, heritage infrastructures – such as the World Heritage framework, and related, on-the-ground efforts – ought to be leveraged to call attention to and address the mounting challenges of the present. And, as echoed in the *2030 Agenda* and related World Heritage policy, structural causes for the persistent injustices of today must first be rooted out of heritage practice itself. In turn, ethical and equitable approaches are called on to build collaborations with stakeholders who, for centuries, have been marginalised from heritage activity in all forms. Coupled to a longer-term vision, the essentiality of relationship and trust building in heritage efforts comes sharply into view, where collaboration and decision-making prioritise community needs.

As a final note, I wish to emphasise the significance of time as an integral 'ingredient' for resilient and, thus, sustainable heritage work. While the need to address current problems and crises is increasingly urgent, counterintuitively it would be advantageous to slow down the pace of heritage efforts to better align with the time required for genuinely attempting ethical and equitable collaboration. As a concept and approach, 'slow heritage'<sup>5</sup> entails the conscious creation of time and space by heritage actors and professionals for longer-term relationship building and collaborative decision-making. Healthy and lasting relationships are built on trust, which inevitably takes time, as does ensuring the inclusion of as many perspectives as possible. Here, professionals prioritise not their own aims, but first listening to and learning from community collaborators about how best to meet theirs. In playing a supportive role, professionals co-facilitate transparent dialogue on all stakeholder agendas, as well as mutually agreed-upon expectations, plans, and milestones. Ideally, heritage safeguarding approaches that are guided by community collaborators have greater flexibility and responsiveness to change, and a better chance of standing the test of our turbulent times.

<sup>4</sup> Co-facilitated with William Shewbridge, University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

<sup>5</sup> I draw inspiration from the call for "slow archives" work by Christen and Anderson (2019, 87), who state that "slowing down is about focusing differently, listening carefully, and acting ethically."



# Annex 2

## Community engagement and Sustainable Development Goals in the management of the Petra World Heritage Site in Jordan

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### Introduction

The ways in which cultural heritage can be a driver for development, sustainability and resilience remains the focus of much debate (Logan and Larsen, 2018). Cultural heritage can be a driver for local social and economic development, but this development also needs to be sustainable and equitable for its benefits to support site protection. When communities and their lived-in environment are safeguarded, there will be greater willingness to protect cultural heritage.

The focus of the case study is an Integrated Management Plan (IMP) supported by the UNESCO Amman office for the World Heritage Site of Petra in Jordan in 2018. As a UN agency, UNESCO recognises the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and made sure that they were fully integrated into the IMP. The Petra IMP is unique in that it has been prepared and developed through an integrated and participatory process engaging a wide range of stakeholders (Orbaşlı and Cesaro, 2020), and also fully integrates resilience and sustainability concerns and sustainable development goals. This paper provides an overview of the ways in which the SDGs informed the management planning process and were addressed in the outcomes and proposals of the IMP, and the participatory methodology adopted in the preparation of the IMP in order to achieve this. This case study will demonstrate how practices of cultural heritage protection, management and stewardship at a major WHS can also contribute to SDGs.

### The Petra World Heritage Site

Petra has been a World Heritage Site since 1983, but excavations and tourism interest in the site has a history that dates back to the nineteenth century. Spread out over a diverse geological terrain of 264 square kilometres it is one of the largest WHS. Petra is best known as the rock-cut capital city of the Nabateans as

a major caravan centre for the incense trade of Arabia, but continued to be occupied during the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic periods. Petra is half-built, half-carved into the rock, and is surrounded by mountains traversed by passages and gorges. A highly sophisticated water management system allowed extensive settlement of this arid area (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/326>). Today, set in a red sandstone landscape, it is one of the world's richest and largest archaeological sites and a major visitor attraction (Figure 1).

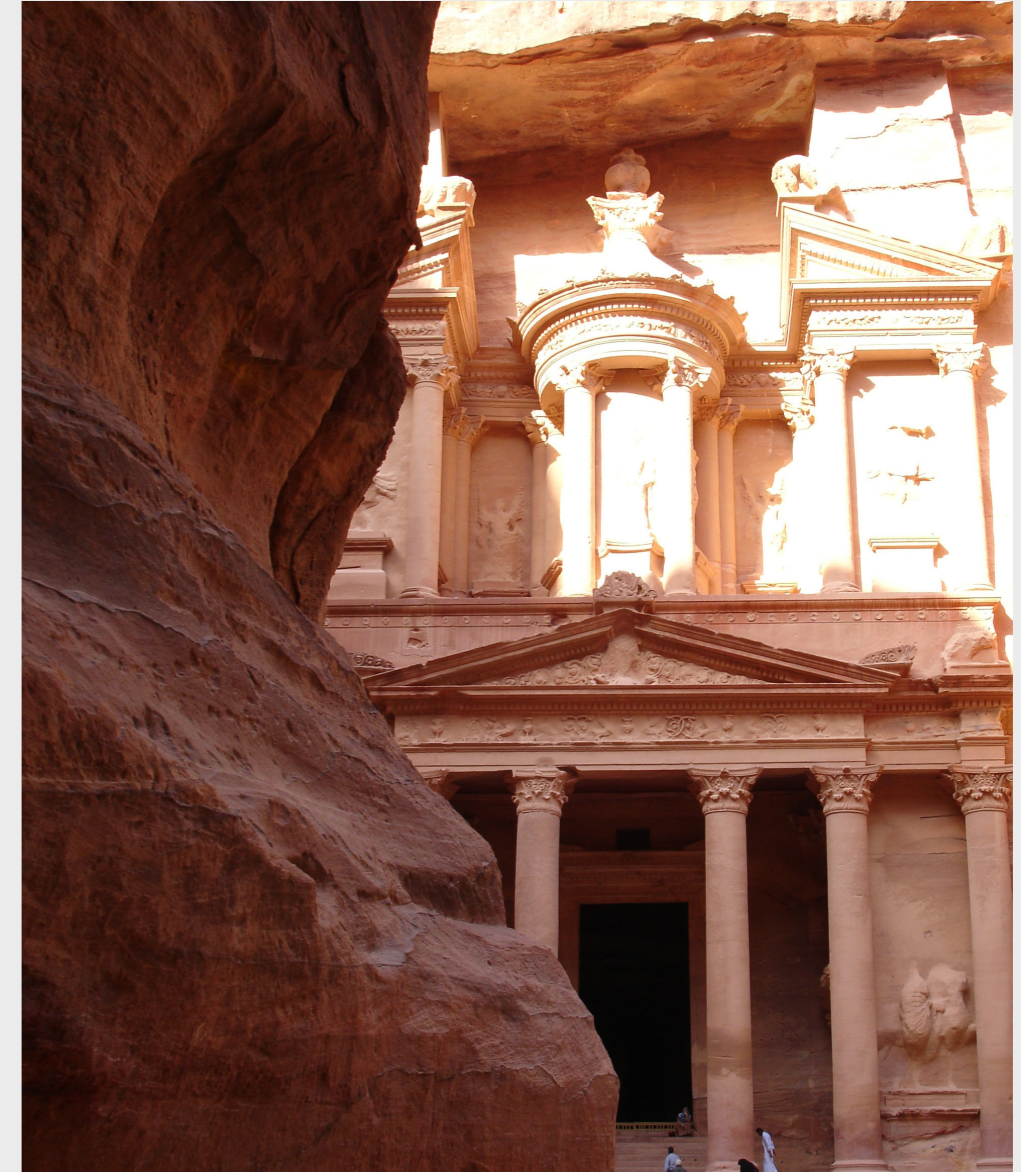


Figure 1. An iconic image of the Treasury building seen from the Siq has become the symbol of the site and is the major attraction for visitors (photograph by Aylin Orbaşlı, 2006)

The sandstone into which the rock tombs have been carved and from which most of the site's monuments have been constructed is fragile. Regular flash flooding through the valley accelerates the deterioration of the sand stone structures, including through salts lodged in the ground, and causes rock falls (Cultech, 2012) (Figure 2). Extensive urban development, growing tourism and the pressure on infrastructure and services has increased the frequency and magnitude of floods and presents a risk to local communities and visitors alike (Paolini et al. 2012). The political instability of the wider region results in fluctuations in tourist arrivals, but at peak the site can receive up to 2 million visitors a year. The site has inadequate infrastructure to cope with such numbers, especially as most visitors concentrate around several must see attractions rather than disperse over the larger site (Figure 3).



**Figure 2.** The sandstone is very susceptible to weathering and stone erosion is compounded by flood waters (photograph by Aylin Orbaşlı, 2016)



**Figure 3.** Most tourists congregate around the Treasury building and only a very few disperse beyond the central sites (photograph by Aylin Orbaşlı, 2016)

Petra is located in an economically depressed area of Jordan and at some distance from the capital Amman and major centres of economic activity. Three tribal communities live on the edge of the site, and depend on it as a major source of income, with three other communities located on the periphery. The town of Wadi Musa is the main visitor entrance to the site and has become a hub for many of the tourism businesses and hotels (Figure 4). The Bdoul community, who once resided within the caves in the site are now re-housed in the purpose built but cramped settlement of Umm Sayhoun after they were removed from the site. This community is occupied with many of the services within the site and remains the most economically dependent on it. The Amareen tribe compete with the other two communities for a share in tourism business and revenues (Figure 5). Overall, education opportunities are limited and low amongst the communities and women are generally underrepresented in the tourism economy (Ceasaro et al, 2022).



**Figure 4.** Wadi Musa is where most tourist services are located (photograph by Aylin Orbaşlı, 2016)



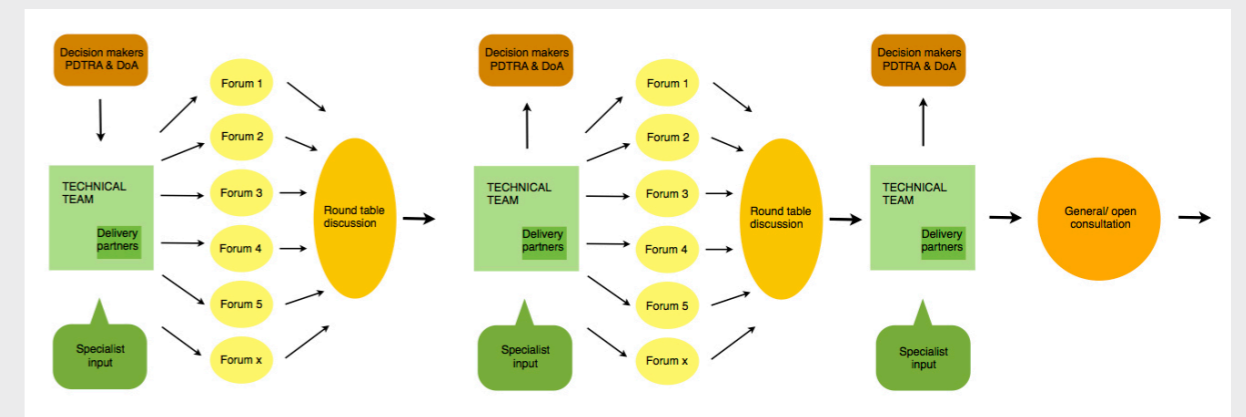
**Figure 5.** The Amareen community have been given tourism concessions at Little Petra, but at some distance from the main entrance this part of the site receives limited visitors (photograph by Aylin Orbaşlı, 2015)

Centuries long practices have generated a chasm between academic 'knowledge holders' defining and shaping the conservation and interpretation of the site and the local communities who are used as service providers, but whose 'knowledge' is rarely called upon, consulted or integrated into the site management and interpretation.

## A participatory approach to the IMP

In summary, Petra is a complex site with complex problems and a large number of interest groups competing to have an influence on the site and/or deriving benefit from it (Orbaşlı and Cesaro, 2020). A participatory approach was also a way in which common ground could be reached amongst the diverse values held by and interests of the stakeholders (Blake et al., 2008; Cave and Neguisse, 2017). For the participation of such a large group of stakeholders to be effective it had to be broken down into smaller manageable groups, whilst communication across the groups, especially regarding cross-cutting issues was maintained. This was achieved by adapting a methodology from urban regeneration practice, whereby the stakeholder consultation was undertaken by the formation of subject focused groups (Orbaşlı and Cesaro, 2020). In total 14 groups (forum) were set up, including ones dedicated to local community partnerships, education and visitor services, interpretation and museums. Overlaps of interest amongst the groups and several members participating in more than one group strengthened the dialogue amongst the groups. Furthermore, those attending the meetings were encouraged to communicate emerging messages to their own communities of interest, ensuring further dialogue and engagement (UNESCO Amman Office, 2019).

A total of seven cycles of meetings, spaced approximately two months apart, were held for each forum. At each meeting new questions were presented, discussed and responses agreed. Meetings were held in locations convenient to the participants and each forum was chaired by someone who would be respected and trusted by the attendees. At the end of each cycle of meetings, the forum chairpersons attended a round table session that facilitated discussions of a cross cutting nature and established consensus amongst the different stakeholder viewpoints and priorities. While the final decision making remained with the officially appointed steering committee, the decisions were guided by the outcomes of the round table (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Chart depicting the consultation procedure adopted for the Integrated Management Plan (UNESCO Amman Office, 2019)

Alongside officials and professionals, the process engaged with a much wider group of local participants that represented local businesses, community interests and social concerns. Overall, the IMP process brought together over 200 stakeholders representing very different interests and perspectives in relation to the site. By starting to break down the barriers between traditionally established professional, administrator and community groups the process was not only able to identify a wide range of issues and concerns, but also establish the root causes and connectivity amongst issues. This created the framework that established causal and dependency relationships amongst cultural and natural attributes of the site and the local community's well-being and subsequently the future sustainability of an entire eco-system with its natural, socio-cultural, economic dependencies.

The length of the management planning process over an 18-month period and a cyclical pattern of meetings

enabled stakeholders to genuinely participate, gain sufficient confidence to express their views and begin to feel that their voice was being heard. Additionally, the professional team overseeing the process were able to reach out to under-represented groups, including women, within each of the communities. Through their participation, many local participants became more aware of the mutual dependence of site preservation and community livelihoods. Furthermore, the appointment of the chair of the community forum group, as a local Commissioner not only enabled the community voice to continue to be heard, but also demonstrated the value of participation (Cesaro et al., 2022).

## Addressing SDGs in policies

The ways in which cultural heritage can actively contribute to equitable and sustainable development is being established and exemplified in multiple contexts (Logan and Larsen, 2018; UNESCO, 2019), including for World Heritage Sites (Rebanks, 2009; Galla, 2012). Although most studies have focused on the economic benefits cultural heritage delivers through tourism, there is now an increasing recognition that historic and archaeological sites facilitate social and economic development in multiple and often more grounded ways beyond tourism (Orbaşlı, 2013). In Petra, it was also important to look beyond tourism, especially given its volatile nature as was illustrated once again in the recent pandemic. Critically, the IMP was deliberately planned to reach out beyond target 11.4.

The IMP particularly focused on SDGs linked to social equity and wellbeing and those concerning environmental protection as these emerged as critical underlying concerns for the site and its communities. While some SDG targets were addressed explicitly in the IMP policies and action plan, others could only be considered implicitly. The actions delivering on SDG targets ranged from short term reactive actions, medium term development actions and long term aspirational actions. Some of the ways in which the SDGs were addressed in the IMP policies and recommendations are discussed below.

### Social equity and wellbeing

A number of social issues directly linked to site management majorly concerned the Bdoul community of Umm Sayhoun. They include the illegal sale antiquities to tourists, including by children, children working on the site in other capacities such as leading the donkeys rented to tourists and unlicensed businesses appearing within the site boundaries as the community fights to make a living from the site in the absence of other livelihood options (Figures 7 and 8).

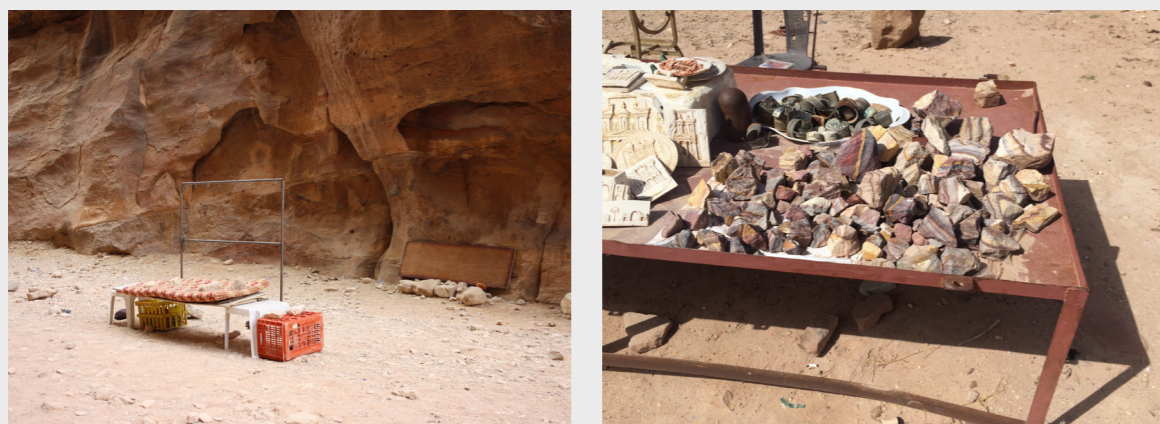


Figure 7 and 8. Rudimentary and unlicensed stores set up within the site by the Bdoul community and make-shift stalls selling stones chipped from the site, often handled by children (photographs by Aylin Orbaşlı, 2016)

Children's presence on the site have further consequences, as it means they are dropping out of education, and as youth ending up in low level jobs at the site, perpetuating a cycle of poverty.

Resolving some fundamental social and educational needs could therefore improve the site's protection as well as strengthen the community's long term resilience (SDH goal 14). For example, improving local education and school attendance not only reduces children's presence on site (linked to child labour), but also improves their future prospects and capacity to care for and safeguard the site. Solutions identified to address site based issues can also lead to practices that contribute to SDGs. The IMP specifically identified actions in collaboration with NGO and government sector partners to develop incentives to keep children in school, and other policies focused on improving the provision of training programmes that specifically supported youth and underrepresented groups such as women (SDG goal 5).

### Ethical economic development

In an environment where both local and outsider investor perspectives view the WHS purely as a source of income, the site as a cultural heritage asset needs to be protected from over exploitation. This is best achieved by on the one hand ensuring more equitable access to benefits and on the other diversifying economic opportunities in the region to improve resilience and reduce dependence on tourism and the site.

The IMP support rights to economic resources related to the site to underrepresented groups (SDG goal 1), including improving access to education and training opportunities. In conservation and interpretation. A recent training programme for site maintenance and conservation support work for example recruits both male and female participants. In another scheme expanding walking trails across the site supports the expansion of tourism to a wider geography and creates opportunities for work as trail guides to members of these communities (Figure 9).



Figure 9. A new trail from Beida area with a local trail guide (photograph by Aylin Orbaşlı, 2015)

Other recommendations include support for local businesses and entrepreneurs and perks for local businesses and start up, such as priority allocation of investment spaces. This also ensures that local products or foodstuffs that have additional appeal to visitors are produced and associated with the site (SDG goal 8). Longer term plans to improve transportation infrastructure is also intended to support better visitor

distribution across the wider site and access for more distant communities to centres of education and employment.

### Environmental protection

The biodiversity and geodiversity of the site is acknowledged, alongside its fragility under pressure from growing populations and visitor numbers. The protection of the WHS is only possible through the protection of the wider environment and shared natural and cultural goals (Borges et al., 2011). For example, the reduction of flooding is only possible through taking precautions upstream, planting more trees to reduce soil erosion and debris being carried with flood waters, and developing parks in the valley systems that will absorb and slow the flow of water. All these interventions by extension support flood risk management in Wadi Musa and surrounding settlements, reduce climate change risks and enhance quality of life through improved environment and amenities (SDG goals 11 and 13).

### Ecologically sound development

A growing interest in eco-tourism and designation of eco-tourism development zones in the WHS buffer zone generates an opportunity to promote environmentally considerate practices across the WHS and its various operational units. Overlaying heritage management with other tools, such as eco-tourism destination standards highlights how shared objectives can support multiple goals from heritage conservation and interpretation through to social wellbeing and economic development. Eco tourism guidelines clearly includes protection and promotion of cultural heritage and cultural heritage management similarly needs to include environmental considerations.

The promotion of renewable energy, sustainable use of resources and reduction of plastics for example not only deliver environmental benefits but directly support site management, by reducing impacts of heavy and/or polluting infrastructure and waste at sites (SDG goal 7). Waste removal and access to recycling plants can be quite difficult, especially at remote sites. Meanwhile new environmental practices produce new economic activity.

## Conclusion

The Petra experience has not only demonstrated how SDGs can become integral to heritage management, but also how a participatory process can be instrumental to achieving SDG targets. The time taken to clearly identify base causes to a number of issues has also supported a more targeted approach. The integrated and participatory method enabled better understanding of social concerns and their connectivity and implications to cultural heritage and the future of the World Heritage Site. The sustainability of the site is also the sustainability of the communities and a complex ecology.

Ambitious social and environmental goals can be only achieved when the cultural heritage site is considered in its wider geographical, environmental and social context. The importance of the eco-system that frames the site and which the site is an integral part of is fundamental to how the site is protected as are actions that are taken within the site itself. Both the natural environment and cultural heritage share a social element and become socially defined places or entities. It is through this social interface that heritage management occurs and is therefore also this point of contact through which SDG goals can be delivered.

In the case of many management plans, it will not be possible to undertake such an integrative and

participatory consultation processes as has been outlined here for Petra. Nonetheless, the Petra example is proving that approaches born out of collaboration can deliver more sustainable results and an increased awareness and appreciation of the site's values amongst local stakeholders (Cesaro et al, 2022). SDGs are not necessarily the diver of heritage management or interpretation policies, but they generate the framework for various partnerships. However, going forward it is important to explicitly address and consider SDG targets, rather than leave to implicit action.

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# Annex 3

## Community-Based World Heritage Site Management in George Town, Malaysia

**Dr. Ang Ming Chee**

General Manager, George Town World Heritage Incorporated



Figure 1. George Town World Heritage city in Malaysia. George Town World Heritage Incorporated

George Town Heritage City together with the Historic City of Melaka, was named as a UNESCO World Heritage Site “Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca” on 7 July 2008. The George Town Heritage City consisted a land area of 259.42 hectares, which includes 109.38 hectares of the properties, and 150 hectares of the buffer zone. There are 82 category I heritage buildings and 3771 category II heritage buildings protected within the world heritage site.

To be able to efficiently manage and protect this site, my office, George Town World Heritage Incorporated (GTWHI) was established in 2010 as the Site Manager for George Town Heritage City. We have 36 staff serving the community in George Town through an average of 60 projects annually. We serve our mission through programmes and operation strategies that aims to protect the integrity and authenticity of our Outstanding Universal Value, which includes:

Criterion (ii): Melaka and George Town represent exceptional examples of multi-cultural trading towns in East and Southeast Asia, forged from the mercantile and exchanges of Malay, Chinese, and Indian cultures and three successive European colonial powers for almost 500 years, each with its imprints on the architecture and urban form, technology and monumental art. Both towns show different stages of development and the successive changes over a long span of time and are thus complementary.

Criterion (iii): Melaka and George Town are living testimony to the multi-cultural heritage and tradition of Asia, and European colonial influences. This multi-cultural tangible and intangible heritage is expressed in the great variety of religious buildings of different faiths, ethnic quarters, the many languages, worship and religious festivals, dances, costumes, art and music, food, and daily life.

Criterion (iv): Melaka and George Town reflect a mixture of influences which have created a unique architecture, culture and townscape without parallel anywhere in East and South Asia. In particular, they demonstrate an exceptional range of shophouses and townhouses. These buildings show many different types and stages of development of the building type, some originating in the Dutch or Portuguese periods. Together with my team, we conducted various activities based on the community-based approach, with the aim that all our projects can empower the local people. When I mention local people, it means the people who live inside the World Heritage Site, the people who work inside the World Heritage Site (like myself, that travels everyday into the World Heritage Site but I live about 5km away from my office), and the people who use the World Heritage Site (such as going to the markets, going to places of worship, sightseeing, or just driving pass the area). We try to ensure that resources in George Town can be available, accessible and affordable for everyone, with priority to the local people within our World Heritage Site, followed by the people of Penang, and other Malaysians. We often conduct the projects through the people, public, private and professional (4P) partnership, which is more efficient and cost effective.

One of the examples I will be sharing with you today is the George Town Heritage Celebrations, a project that received active participation and a great sense of ownership from the local community. This year marks the 14th year of the celebrations. I am happy to share that the celebrations seem to work very well for George Town, as it has been successful in promoting the understanding of our heritage, enhancing the local community's ability in interpreting their cultural assets, and encouraging involvement from youths and the younger generation in sharing and experiencing their own and others cultural heritage within a few nights. It is an event which is greatly anticipated and well received every year, thanks to the passion and warmth from the people.

The celebrations normally take about seven months of preparation for a three days programme, involving 20 programme partners, 60 project staff and some 400 volunteers. We engaged representatives from local communities in identifying and mapping cultural heritage activities to be shared with the public, and we also invited the youth as volunteers so that they can experience and connect with the communities (in particular with communities and cultures out of their comfort zone).



Figure 2. George Town Heritage Celebration. George Town World Heritage Incorporated

More importantly, we also see that the George Town Heritage Celebrations can contribute directly to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This includes Sustainable Development Goals 5 on gender equality, where men and women have equal rights and access to be a performer, a participant, or the project team. As we all know, many traditional performances and activities may have certain gender restrictions in the past. However, I have noticed that such taboos have eased gradually over the years, such as observed that females are allowed to be drummers in the lion dance performance.

Furthermore, we were the first agency in the state that promoted the availability of clean water and sanitation under Sustainable Development Goals 6. During our event days, clean and safe drinking water are provided for free through the water dispensers located at strategic locations throughout the event site. We have a strong campaign encouraging public to bring their own water bottle where they can refill and rehydrate during our event. Public toilets are also provided which are regularly cleaned. For us who live with an average climate of 33 degree Celsius, such elements are important for the public to enjoy the cultural heritage activities while having easy access to drinking water and clean toilets.

To reduce inequalities as mentioned in Sustainable Development Goals 10, we also spent lots of efforts in reducing the gaps, particularly in sharing information with audiences from different cultural and language background. Extra efforts were made for all programmes and publicity materials to be available in the four main languages of Malaysia, which are Malay, English, Mandarin and Tamil. These posters are also sent to schools and colleges in Penang as our strategy to encourage their participations. The results were encouraging as we see many young people came to our events last July.

I personally am very committed to do more on achieving Sustainable Development Goals 13 on Climate Action, and therefore have been giving difficult tasks to my team. We try to proactively reduce the carbon foot print by encouraging our team to order vegan catering, walk more and use less cars. Almost 90% of all

items and decorations used during our events are recyclable or reusable, including the seating mats, pillows, decorations, and the stage. These little actions not only help saving the earth, but also helps us to reduce the production cost.

Above all, events such as the George Town Heritage Celebrations is a place for us to celebrate our similarities and understand diversities. We have been getting strong support from our local communities from different religion-, linguistic-, social- and cultural- background to make this city a peaceful and comfortable city for the locals.

Therefore, I strongly believe that it is through such partnership of the state (the policy makers), the professional (site managers), and the public that can be the good example how a world heritage city can be peaceful place for all.

I would like to conclude my presentation by highlighting that the cultural heritage that we have today, be it the tangible buildings, or the living heritage that we have inherited from our forefathers, should be regarded as important legacies for the next generations. Therefore, let's put our efforts together to make sure that these values are safeguarded while we explore the opportunities in tourism.

# Annex 4

## Gaming in World Heritage Education

**Ms. Patricia Alberth**

World Heritage Manager, City of Bamberg

### Gaming on the rise

According to the *2021 Annual Report of the German Games Industry*, more than half of Germans regularly play computer and video games. In total 58 per cent, regardless of gender, use a PC, console or smartphone, to immerse themselves in digital worlds.

Many successful games such as the Civilization series or Assassin's Creed place historical environments and characters at the centre of the action. Conversely, digital games have found their way into museums and into knowledge transfer in the sense of so-called game-based learning. By means of playful components, content is presented in an entertaining way and deepened through active application.

### Serious games not all that serious

The technical term for these playful components is serious games. They are based on the assumption that people learn more easily and more sustainably through practical experience. The enjoyment of the game supports the absorption of information - sometimes without the players noticing the knowledge being imparted. This also opens up new possibilities for addressing target groups. While conventional museums and exhibitions appeal especially to people with higher educational qualifications, gaming approaches allow low-threshold access to rather complex topics. Even in the World Heritage sector has started making use of this, as the example of the World Heritage Visitor Centre in Bamberg (Germany) shows.

### World Heritage as a place of learning

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, warmly welcomes the establishment of visitor centres at World Heritage sites as a contribution to inform the public about the heritage of humanity. UNESCO recommends a concept that takes into account the needs of all people, an

approach to education that is suitable for regular museum-goers as well as children and people with physical disabilities, and that can be used by a variety of groups of people.

The City of Bamberg has met this demand with an accessible exhibition in an inviting design that serves different channels of perception: in addition to audio stations, films and touch panels, digital games invite visitors to get to know the site. These games relate to aspects of the World Heritage site that - like gardening or renovating a house - that refer to the horizon of experience of many visitors. This way it is easy to relate to the rather abstract topic of heritage.

### World Heritage site "Town of Bamberg"



Figure 1. Town of Bamberg, Germany © Pressestelle Stadt Bamberg([whc.unesco.org/en/documents/123948](https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/123948))

In 1993, the "Town of Bamberg" was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The excellently preserved historic town includes the three urban districts City on the Hills, the Island and the Market Gardeners' District. All three districts belong to the 142-hectare UNESCO World Heritage site and represent in a unique way the central European town with a basically early medieval plan and many surviving ecclesiastical and secular buildings of the medieval period. Bamberg's earliest map dates from 1602. The cartographic record by Petrus Zweidler still provides orientation today, as many buildings, streets and squares are still standing.

When Henry II, Duke of Bavaria, became King of Germany in 1007 he made Bamberg the seat of a bishopric, intended to become a "second Rome". Of particular interest is the way in which the present town illustrates the link between agriculture (market gardens and vineyards) and the urban distribution centre.

From the 10th century onwards, Bamberg became an important link with the Slav peoples, especially those of Poland and Pomerania. During its period of greatest prosperity, from the 12th century onwards, the architecture of this town strongly influenced northern Germany and Hungary. In the late 18th century, Bamberg was the centre of the Enlightenment in southern Germany, with eminent philosophers and writers such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and E.T.A. Hoffmann living there.

Located in the Lower Mills District opposite the Old Town Hall, the centre provides an overview of the UNESCO World Heritage site "Town of Bamberg". With this concept, it does not replace a classic museum with an in-depth collection, but raises awareness about the outstanding universal value (OUV) of the place. The house serves as a "reading aid" for the actual exhibit: the Town of Bamberg. Since its opening in 2019, more than 70,000 guests have visited the exhibition. A special highlight are four interactions stations that playfully introduce visitors to the World Heritage.



Figure 2. World Heritage Visitor Centre of Bamberg, Germany (<https://en.bamberg.info/>)

## Baroque-O-Mat

Bamberg's splendid appearance dates back to the baroqueisation in the 18th century under Bishop Lothar Franz von Schönborn. Through tax concessions, he promoted the construction of new baroque buildings and the upgrading of existing buildings with baroque architectural elements. The historic townscape was largely spared the destruction of World War II, so that even today one can still make one's way around it with the oldest surviving city map dating from 1602 by land surveyor Petrus Zweidler.

In the World Heritage Visitor Centre, the baroqueisation is replayed on the Baroque-O-Mat: Using drag and drop, a simple one-storey medieval building can be transformed into a baroque palace on the screen. Baroque building elements - pilasters, sculptures or a curved staircase - are dragged onto the original façade. A picture gallery permanently presents the finished baroqueised buildings. After having played with the Baroque-O-Mat during their walk through the city, visitors perceive the baroqueised building elements more consciously.



Figure 3. Baroque-O-Mat (drawing by Franziska Boger)



Figure 4. Plant-O-Mat. Zentrum Welterbe Bamberg (<https://www.graphscape.de/blog/zentrum-welterbe-bamberg/>)

## Plant-O-Mat

In Bamberg, the medieval structures of the house gardens have been preserved in a unique way in the city monument. Even today, commercial horticulture is practised on some of these areas. It is not for nothing that the people of Bamberg are nicknamed "onion treaders". In the past, gardeners used to tie wooden planks under their feet to trample the onion greens so that the energy of growth could benefit the bulb.

The Plant-O-Mat, which is particularly popular with children, teaches them what needs to be considered when growing onions. When creating a digital onion bed, decisions have to be made: At what point do I plant my onions? What distances do I leave between the plants? How much do I water them? The visitors get feedback on the success of their gardening and, ideally, learn to appreciate the knowledge and skills that are needed for gardening.

## Monument-O-Mat

Bamberg's more than 1,000 monuments are not only beautiful to look at, they also conceal interesting and eventful stories behind their walls. Based on the monument inventory of the Bavarian State Office for the Preservation of Monuments, the Schutzgemeinschaft Bamberg e.V. has put this information and stories on a georeferenced city map freely accessible at [www.denkmal-bamberg.de](http://www.denkmal-bamberg.de). It can be used during a stroll through the city or at the World Heritage Visitor Centre at the Monument-O-Mat to click through the architectural history of the municipality.



Figure 5. Monument-O-Mat (drawing by Franziska Boger)





Figure 6. Bamberg-O-Mat. Zentrum Welterbe Bamberg(<https://www.graphscape.de/blog/zentrum-welterbe-bamberg/>)

## Bamberg-O-Mat

There is much to discover in the World Heritage City of Bamberg - even for those who are at home in the city. Everyone knows some of the historic places like the Town Hall or the Cathedral. Others are real insider tips. The Bamberg-O-Mat asks about weather, interests and footwear and uses the information to tailor a personalised route recommendation. The route that answers the question "What World Heritage type am I?" can be printed on a city map accompanied with some explanations or it can be downloaded using a QR code. Families out and about in sunny weather will certainly find a shady playground on their route, while a culture lover with limited mobility will be more likely to be sent to a museum and a church in the flat Island District. The programme varies between one and five hours and includes insider tips such as a rest under the large black walnut tree in the courtyard of the former Jesuit College.

## The Visitor Centre during the Covid-19 pandemic

On 17 March, the German Government decided to close the majority of shops, cultural, sports and leisure venues in an attempt to contain the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. Bamberg with its 78.000 inhabitants came to a standstill and the flow of tourists dried up. While Bamberg records about 800,000 overnight stays in normal years, this number decreased by half in 2020 and 2021 due to several lockdowns. Also the Visitor Centre also remained closed for several months.

In the meantime, a combination of Corona-related hygiene measures has been established: The wearing of a mask is obligatory as well as the observance of safety distances. This is supported by limiting the number of guests. Disinfection facilities are available.

Unsurprisingly, the number of foreign visitors dropped sharply during the pandemic, while more people from the region were attracted to the exhibition. It was during the lockdowns that the local population got to see the many benefits of their city: beauty, safety and short distances, just to mention a few. The people's interest in their place of residence can be excellently met in the World Heritage Visitor Centre – ideally in combination with a walking tour through the old town.

## Gaming in World Heritage Education - one building block out of many

Bamberg's motivation was to create a place with the World Heritage Visitor Centre that people would enjoy visiting and leave wiser. A place that increases appreciation for Bamberg's Old Town and encourages people to engage with the place. Communicating knowledge about World Heritage and its conservation is one of the central tasks, to which the States Parties to the 1972 World Heritage Convention have committed themselves. The enthusiastic entries of children and adults in the guest book of the permanent exhibition confirm that the chosen approach works very well.

Digital gaming components in the World Heritage Visitor Centre complement the educational strategy of the World Heritage City of Bamberg. They are based on professionally prepared historical knowledge and work on the basis of Bamberg's rich past. The aim is not to convey comprehensive knowledge, but to highlight individual narratives, such as the baroqueisation of Bamberg around 1700, which help to understand today's cityscape. Through humour like the Bamberg-O-Mat, which asks "High heel or hiking shoe?" and by making everyday references, as in the case of the Plant-O-Mat, which asks at what time of year the bulbs should be planted visitors feel personally addressed. This approach is linked to catchy graphic elements such as candy-coloured facades or fresh onions.

School cooperation in the field of World Heritage Education in the form of guided tours, restoration projects or quiz games have been established in Bamberg for many years. The World Heritage exhibition with its digital components has enriched this cooperation by a new facet. During a class visit to the exhibition, the gaming components are usually only introduced shortly. That is why many pupils come back with their families and then try everything out at their leisure. The fact that the exhibition is free of charge makes this option all the more attractive. These family visits often lead to intergenerational conversations about the history of the city and one's own family. What more can a World Heritage exhibition achieve?

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# Annex 5

## Multivocality, Contestations and Social Memory: Interpretation of Sites Associated with Liberation Heritage in Africa

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The interpretation and memorialisation of sites of memory associated with liberation heritage in Africa remains a contested space with multiple voices that desire to be included in such processes. Such sites include Robben Island World Heritage Site (RIWHS) located in Cape Town, South Africa, and many other national commemorative liberation heritage places such as the Freedom Park, Hector Peterson Memorial, Constitutional Hill (South Africa), National Heroes Acre (Zimbabwe), Chimoio graves (Mozambique) among many others. Memorialisation is viewed as the all the processes and forms of collective remembrance which may include but not limited to memorials, museums, monuments, statues, literal works, exhibitions and other places of memory (Bickford, 2014). These processes and forms are the means and ways by which the past and present experiences can be confronted (Bickford, 2014). Who tells the story and how they tell the story, is important in avoiding one side glorification as opposed to inclusive and holistic memorialisation of the past in the present. There is need to create an inclusive and enabling environment for memorialisation at liberation heritage sites in Africa. This will facilitate the interpretation of the “past atrocity, which can be highly contested” (Bickford, 2014) in an inclusive and holistic manner. However, this does not completely eliminate the multivocality and contestations as interpretation remains a function of research and societal values as expressed through time, which sometimes is influenced by factors beyond the scope of heritage management. Multivocality and contestations associated with social memory of liberation heritage sites now inscribed on the world heritage list is discussed to highlight how *Heritage Interpretation Practice* (HIP) is critical in influencing *Heritage Interpretation Theory* (HIT) at World Heritage sites. The paper argues for more empirical approaches than academic debates. A common English saying states that “practicing makes it perfect”.



Figure 1. Robben Island Museum. Nurunnaby Chowdhury(Hasive), via Wikimedia Commons

### Africa, Colonialism and heritage interpretation approaches

It is common knowledge that Africa was colonised and western philosophies of heritage, including what should be interpreted, was introduced. The past of Africa, despite the pre-colonial experiences, was identified, interpreted and memorialised using the western eyes. Pre-colonial Africa was characterised by community driven approaches, which were inclusive and did not separate nature and culture. They were the creators and the interpreters of their past, which makes them pioneers heritage creation and interpretation, a function which was overtaken by experts birthed in the colonial period. The colonial period introduced western notions of monumentality, separation of nature and culture, as well as memorialisation of the places and icons of the colonial masters in Africa. Hence, the monumentalisation of battle fields and places, historic buildings and statues associated with the victories of colonisers in much part of Africa, while the pre-colonial achievements of Africa were left in the shadows of colonial heritage. Where pre-colonial sites such as Great Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe) and Victoria Falls (Zambia and Zimbabwe) which were associated with indigenous and descendant communities of the region, were reduced to scientific interpretation. For instance, colonisers did not believe indigenous communities had the skill and capability of developing a site like Great Zimbabwe, hence attributed to the Phoenicians. These heritage interpretation philosophies were extended into the post-colonial Africa, largely due to the fact that reviewing of legislations and policy framework has remained slow in Africa. However, the post-colonial period has witnessed renewed effort to decolonise the past, redress historical narratives, promote inclusive and holistic interpretations to foster national identities, nation building and reconstruction of the distorted past, as well as promoting restorative justices for the benefit of local communities. In South Africa, the HIP is inextricably aligned to the post-apartheid dream of a “rainbow nation” which is non-racial while promoting reconciliation, nation building, social cohesion and development of democratic nation. This included re-writing the distorted history of South Africa as part of the broad decolonisation of the past in the present moments of a newly born democratic nation of South Africa. It is

in this context that post-apartheid heritage institutions such as Robben Island Museum, responsible for the RIWHS, were established to change the complexion and orientation of the heritage landscape of South Africa. This HIP has remained constrained by politics and politicisation of heritage landscapes associated with social memory relating to the painful past under the apartheid regime and its suppressive state sponsored machinery that side-lined the majority using racial profiling favouring the white minority in South Africa.

## Heritage Interpretation Theory (HIT)

A lot of theory on heritage interpretation is abound and many writings are available but there are fewer deductions from empirical or practice perspectives such as sites of memory in Africa. While theory on interpretation has advanced notions of inclusivity and holistic approaches, the translation of this in practice has remained unmonitored at many heritage sites. The academia has consistently argued shifting from exclusionary to inclusive interpretation approaches, yet empirical experience has not been effectively evaluated to inform theoretical discussions in HIT. There is need for leaning more on empirical perspectives to inform new approaches in HIT including establishing Heritage Interpretation Incubation Hubs that are anchored on furthering praxis or Heritage Interpretation Practice (HIP), being the practical approaches on interpretation and memorialisation of heritage sites. These are the practices on the ground at heritage sites, which may be pioneering some notions not covered by the HIT. Pharmaceuticals have become indispensable from the daily needs of the society because they have made it their business to know the challenges of society and how they can provide a solution, whether its temporary or permanent. Heritage space is still dominated by experts and expertism, at the exclusion of all other role players, yet they are the creators and beneficiaries at the same time!

## Heritage Interpretation Practice (HIP)

Interpretation and memorialisation of sites of memory is a function of time, space and role players. Inherently, sites of memory are contested spaces because of the different role players who desire to have their own version of their memories interpreted and memorialised. It is evident that Heritage Interpretation Practice (HIP) is informed by national and local aspirations of local communities associated with such social memory. However, power relations between the national and local aspirations influence the nature and type of interpretation practice, including its level of support from the varied publics. HIP is now embracing notions of inclusivity and holistic approach, equality and equity, and allowing multivocality to inform interpretation as informed by local factors at the site. The HIP in Africa is riddled with challenges that are shaping HIT such as the #RhodesMustFall (South Africa) which challenged the apartheid dominated heritage landscape of South Africa further sustaining inequalities in the lives of ordinary South Africans, including access to education by black students. They challenged the existence of colonial symbols and statues in public spaces in a democratic nation, and questioned why the national government was not addressing heritage landscapes by recognising the heritages and symbols of the majority. Africa is not immune to this as in Zimbabwe, pressure groups demanded the removal of the remains of John Cecil Rhodes from Matobos, western Zimbabwe. They consider his burial as a desecration of the sacred landscape and its memories for the local communities. Similarly, some demanded that Rhodes statue at Victoria Falls be removed from the landscape. Sadly, and unavoidable, history cannot be changed or washed away, but rather addressed using inclusive and holistic interpretation approaches.

In the present, the HIP has to negotiate with challenging views, contradictions and contestations relating to the interpretation and memorialisation of the liberation heritage of Africa. That liberation struggle had

multiple players with different strategies and philosophical approaches but all were connected by a common enemy, the colonial or apartheid system. These multiple plays were only separated by who supported them and the opportunities they had to action what they believed could bring democracy and majority rule favouring the masses. The masses are the very people who hold mixed perceptions about the past, but what is common among them is how they contributed to the victory, what they lost, the betrayals resulting in loss of lives, the opportunities for development they missed and many other unexplained emotions about the past. The regional (Africa) and international solidarity and support extended to the actors and the masses in South Africa brings to the fore how HIP has not only become important at national, but also at the regional and global levels where peace, unity and restorative justice has to be negotiated without going back to where the African nations are coming from: the colonial period and the marginalisation of the majority in their own countries. The question is whose story should be told and why? Is there any opportunity for inclusive and holistic HIP? In South Africa, the unifying moment among the multiple players, was the Reunion of all Ex Political Prisoners (EPPs) on Robben Island which gave birth to the Island as a national heritage site, and subsequently a World Heritage site. Theoretically, HIP is easier philosophised or theorised but becomes a complex when its translated into practice as will be demonstrated by the case of RIWHS. It is time practice informs theoretical discussions on how HIP should be implemented at sites of memory.

## Robben Island World Heritage Site (RIWHS): contested interpretation space

RIWHS, transformed from a Maximum Security Prison (MSP), become a national and WHS with local, national, regional and global recognition for the “triumph of human spirit against great adversity” which transcends the multiple and multi-layered values of the island now considered as a cultural landscape. Robben Island was inscribed as a World Heritage site in 1999 under the category of cultural landscape using criterion (iii) and (iv). The symbolic value of Robben Island lies in its sombre history, as a place for banishment or imprisonment for those considered socially and politically undesirable by the apartheid Government (RIM 1998). Of particular interest among the multiple stakeholders of RIWHS, and in the context of the island as a World Heritage site, is the Ex Political Prisoners (EPPs) who defied the stronghold of apartheid, an atrocious racial segregation-based governance system officially dismantled in 1994 through a democratic election. The first prison to be established was for common law prisoners followed by the maximum security prison for political prisoners, among them the late and first President of a Democratic South Africa, Nelson Mandela (Tarvinga 2017). Ex-Political Prisoners, are the most popularised significance- based stakeholders of the RIWHS. Members of different political formations served their sentences at Robben Island for fighting against apartheid; a racially segregated and repressive governance system that empowered the minority (white community) to rule the majority (black community). These parties include African National Congress (ANC), Pan African Congress (PAC), Black Conscious Movement (BCM), Unity Movement, Indian Congress, Communist Party, and SWAPO (Namibia). In this context the political landscape of RIWHS serves as a lens through which to explore elements of the layered history of the site, which are banishment, hardship, isolation and imprisonment interwoven with resistance, resilience, tolerance and the triumph of the human spirit (RIM 2007:2). While research on the former political prisoners has focussed on their individual and collective experiences on the Island, very little research has been undertaken to investigate how they have integrated back into their communities after many years of absence.

The ideals of equality and human rights, access to wealth, freedom, development and reconciliation envisioned during imprisonment period was expected to translate into reality upon attainment of democracy in 1994. Ex-Political Prisoners have a long-life relationship with the Island, and therefore understanding how they have integrated back into the communities they left for many years is important in keeping their legacy and ideals alive. The interpretation of their experiences at Robben Island was premised on a collective narrative of their experiences, while placing all the stories within the political narrative into the shadows of

this main stream tourism narrative and approach. Nelson Mandela was at the centre of this narrative yet he was not the first nor the last political prisoner at Robben Island. This does not reduce his leadership role, including leading South Africa into a democratic transition by demanding the unconditional release of other political prisoners and becoming the 1st black president. There has been a growing demand to broaden the interpretation of the island to include all other layers, as well as the stories within the story of the political imprisonment at Robben Island. Many parts of the island remained in accessible to the public who are chaperoned through guided tours rather experiencing the island for themselves. The only privilege of the tour is being in the presence of Prison Guides who are former political prisoners, a distinct feature of RI interpretation. The point is that the Robben island story has many unexplored and untold stories, therefore leading to the need for an inclusive and holistic interpretation of the island as a cultural landscape with multiple and overlaid values driven by multiple role players. This has resulted in a broad-based Interpretation and Memorialisation Programme (IMP) being launched in consultation with multiple stakeholders including the EPPs themselves. The IMP is premised on promoting increased access to RI narrative using inclusive and holistic approaches, while covering all the multiple and multi-layered values of the cultural landscape. This includes transforming the boating experience with upgraded videos and tapping into the digital arena, which includes the Robben Island App and virtual tour, as well as the Digitisation and Digitalisation Project at Mayibuye Archives. The IMP has also advanced the notion of specialised walking tours around the island, while restoring the environment is characterised by planting indigenous trees to replace the rooikrans considered as invasive species. This shortened version of how RIWHS is transforming her interpretation, now together with all possible stakeholders, including the Namibians, has brought to the fore some HIP experiences, which are beneficial to future discussions.

## HIP overarching pointers

The empirical experiences of RIWHS brings out the following cardinal pointers for consideration in bring HIT and HIP closer at World Heritage sites:

- a. There is need to localise WHS as heritage is first and foremost local before it becomes global. There is need for practical approaches inculcating this notion to avoid appropriation of HIP in favour of the Convention. For instance, RIWHS is not only about the political imprisonment of the EPPs, there are other local values that would make HIP inclusive and holistic once they considered and integrated into the current memorialisation programme. These demands linking international, national and local aspirations in HIP at World Heritage sites, including embracing Indigenous perspectives.
- b. Social inclusivity and equity are important in HIP yet it remains elusive due to the political nature of the sites of memory, in particular those associated with liberation heritage. There are external factors beyond the mandate of heritage institutions, for instance the glaring and unfulfilled socio-economic needs of role players that have a way of linking themselves to the interpretation and supposed role of places like RIWHS in the present. This means a more pragmatic and broad-based approach is need to address both the internal and external factors challenging HIP, including harnessing on the diversity of the associated stakeholders.
- c. Good governance and stakeholder involvement at heritage sites: acknowledging the multiplicity of knowledge sources, creators and enablers shaping the shifting priorities of HIP in Africa, it is evident that the exclusionary governance approach of State Based Management Systems (SBMS) and UNESCO at WHS is expiring. Previously side-lined knowledge sources, creators and enablers are gradually finding their voices and alternative platforms to express themselves, which induces a response from the authorised governors of heritage. Sustaining the exclusionary approach in era characterised by waves of democracy in Africa does not illustrate good governance at all. What it

means, is that all affected and interested stakeholders should be involved in the governance of WHS. The shifting HIP demands inclusive governance management at WHS. For instance, the alternative voices of young people, who are the future leaders of Africa, are becoming more intensified and their ideas, views and aspirations can no longer be ignored anymore. Equally, local communities, are persistently demanding to be equal decision makers together with SBMS at WHS. They are using land claims, spirituality of their ancestral landscapes and demand for access to sites for cultural practices to push for inclusive governance. On the other hand, the development partners are aggressively supporting national governments in meeting their development targets and are demanding a holistic response from heritage. Only dialogue, shared values and decision-making systems are going to introduce good governance and practices in this complex and shifting landscape at WHS. Priorities are continuously changing so should be the governance approach at WHS to avoid repeating mistakes of the past. The exclusionary approach cannot be perpetuated without risking HIP.

- d. Research remains fundamental to building inclusive and holistic narratives enabling effective HIP, including unearthing and unravelling the stories within stories related to sites of memory. Decolonisation, with its varying and misconstrued definitions, has a role to play in exploring alternative knowledge sources and production systems. Co creation of knowledge with other stakeholders, in particular local communities is of importance in linking both HIT and HIP, as well as connecting both with community aspirations.
- e. Digitisation and Digitalisation has become a buzz phrase across the world because of its potential in making HIP accessible to wider and broader publics. This needs to embraced fully knowing that there is trap of further worsening or limiting access by those not privileged in resources to access technology and sustain data bundles, as well as being not strategically positioned in smart development centres where this technology is a life style. HIP has to navigate this digital space with innovation to allow local communities to become part of global digital communities as equal societies rather beneficiaries of unsustainable donations. This includes addressing the challenges of facilitating heritage institutions themselves: lack of capital to reach digital maturity, digitise collections and sites, building the capacity of traditionally handicapped human resources, keeping abreast with the fast-paces ICT associated with possibly the 5th Industrial Revolution. Linked to this is dealing with the rights and intellectual property rights of knowledge producers and associated role players.
- f. The role of higher learning institutions in transforming curriculums on HIP should inculcate practical perspectives to avoid producing future practitioners that are exceptional in class but seriously challenged by practice. In the same breadth, UNESCO has emerged as a big influencer of curricula development and change within the education and heritage sectors, with heritage education programmes gaining recognition from the 1970s (Zazu, 2016). Emphasis has been more on learning about other civilised cultures until recently, when Africa nations started pushing for decolonised heritage curriculums (since the 1980s). Africa desires to produce knowledge, teach and raise awareness about her own history, cultures, heritages and experiences that have an equal ability to influence global discussions. Where formal education systems are slow to adapt to this emerging education landscape, student movements (e.g., #Rhodesmustfall initiated by students at University of Cape Town, South Africa highlighting issues of heritage, inequality to education and access to resources for students), African discussions on heritage and education, and "Black Lives Matter" movements (started in USA following persistent persecution and killings of innocent blacks and have become normal across the globe) are become preferred public approaches the draw attention of both education and heritage sectors to the shifting Heritage Education Landscape of Africa. This brings to the form notions of Community Education Service Learning approaches for the benefit of both academic and community, towards inculcating responsible citizenry in solving common challenges for the common good. Curators, communities and other stakeholders are supposed to be co-lecturers at Universities. The point is that Universities have to decolonise themselves by being inclusive and

involving the very same industries and communities that will absorb their graduates. This approach has been well nuanced in some faculties, while in heritage studies this is dependent on the lecturer. A deliberate and practical approach is needed to link the HIT and HIP at academic institutions.

## Conclusion

This contribution contends that multivocality and contestations have their roots in how heritage in Africa has evolved, especially under the exclusionary colonial framework, which has been slow to dismantle in Africa. Both multivocality and contestations are considered as opportunities of transforming the interpretation of heritage sites while avoiding the trap of single or mono perspectives in a fast changing socio-economic and operating environment of heritage sites in Africa. Multivocality and contestations denotes the power in an inclusive and holistic narrative of a memory beheld by multiple role players. This does not mean one stop solution, but rather an adaptive and pragmatic approach in HIP which considers the social, political and economic setting of the heritage site. It gives room to collaboration, co-creation and producing narratives and interpretation frameworks at heritage sites. We also rarely ask knowledge creators and other multiple voices to be part of the unpacking this multivocality: the begging question is what is being decolonised and who needs to be decolonised here? Different players bring multivocality in expressing and defining African heritages! We should not be afraid to allow this!

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# Annex 6

## Sustainable Tourism and Interpretation for World Heritage Sites, Jaipur

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Figure 1. Sireh Deori Bazaar with Hawa Mahal Jaipur

## Introduction: UNESCO recognition for Jaipur

Jaipur City located in the Rajasthan State of India has achieved two urban level UNESCO designations as a World Heritage City (2019) and as UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Arts (2015) besides inscription of two cultural world heritage sites, the Jantar Mantar (2010) and the Amber Fort as part of the serial property of the Hill Fort of Rajasthan in (2013). This paper specifically focuses on the Interpretation and Outreach activities associated with these UNESCO inscriptions since 2010.



Figure 2. Aerial view of Jantar Mantar World Heritage Site inside Walled city of Jaipur

Jantar Mantar, the astronomical observatory that also determined the planning of Jaipur city is located in the centre of the city. It was the first site to be inscribed in Jaipur in 2010 and, its interpretation plan was prepared and implemented between 2012-2020. Subsequently with Jaipur being recognised as UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Arts in 2015 and, its inscription as a World Heritage City in 2019 there were several outreach activities carried out in the city related to the presentation and promotion of its tangible and intangible heritage including the crafts and craftspeople. Since 2019, as per its commitment to the World Heritage Committee, the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan is preparing a Tourism and Interpretation Plan for Jaipur. This initiative was taken forward by DRONAH during the lockdown period in COVID with support from the Department of Tourism through various online activities and internship programme.

The Interpretation Plans for the World Heritage Site of Jantar Mantar (2012 onward) and for Jaipur City (2019 onward) refer to various relevant charters and guidelines. The Burra Charter (ICOMOS Australia, 1999) defines interpretation as “all the ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place” (Article 1.17). It also states that “the cultural significance of many places is not readily apparent, and should be explained by interpretation. Interpretation should enhance understanding and enjoyment, and be culturally appropriate” (Article 25). More recently the ICOMOS Charter for Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites (Canada, 2008) distinguishes the concept of interpretation and the concept of presentation giving two different definitions of them. According to the ICOMOS Canada Charter, interpretation “refers to the full range of potential activities intended to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding of cultural heritage property” while presentation “denotes the carefully planned communication of interpretive content through the arrangement of interpretive information, physical access, and interpretive infrastructure at a cultural heritage property. It can be conveyed through a variety of technical means...” Hence, the concept



Figure 3. City Palace and aerial view of Jaipur

of presentation expressed in the ICOMOS charter has been translated into the concept of a Message-Media matrix for the Interpretation plan where the communication of themes of messages through media interpretation gives the modes through which the message has to be conveyed.

## Interpretation plan for World Heritage Site in Jaipur: Linking with sustainable tourism and reuse

The Interpretation, Use and Visitor Management Plan for Jantar Mantar Jaipur is a secondary composite plan for the property under the purview of the overall Jantar Mantar Management Plan (2014-2020). It takes into account the international references and charters which refer to the interpretation and presentation of historic sites. The plan builds upon the policy framework for access, interpretation, outreach, land-use of buffer zone and collections outlined in the Management Plan document. The Vision Statement for Interpretation, Use and Visitor Management Plan mention that “The Outstanding Universal Value of Jantar Mantar, Jaipur shall be communicated to invite and inspire the widest range of visitors and scholars across the world, to engage with astronomical instruments and to pass on to the next generations the significance of Jantar Mantar as an icon of the integration between astronomy and society and its contribution to architecture, urban planning, political history and cultural distinctiveness of the city of Jaipur.”

The Message-Media is one of the main output of the interpretation plan, addressing three main aspects, namely: 1. What messages should the property impart? 2. Who are the messages for? 3. How to communicate the messages in the best possible manner? The essential components of the approach used for the Interpretation of the property (Assessment and Proposals) include:

- Pre-visit: of -site access to interpretation of the property (interpretive media available of -site, for instance, the website);
- On-site experience directly linked with the property's interpretive media;
- Buffer-zone and surrounding analysed through linking interpretation;
- Repeat visit as adaptive interpretation.



Figure 4. Blue Pottery Craft of Jaipur

The input for physical access is directly linked to the use of the property and the visitor management. A number of outlined activities under this plan have been implemented since 2012 and, more recently these are linked with community and crafts walks in the city since 2015.

The Interpretation Plan for Jaipur City is linked with the Tourism Sector Plan within the context of a larger Special Area Heritage Plan being developed by the Government of Rajasthan involving various organisations including DRONAH and INTACH for the long-term development of heritage, cultural, and urban assets that exist within the context of Jaipur. The Tourism Sector Plan aims to increase the overall effective management capacity of private, public, and third sector organisations that engage directly with the tourism industry within the city and state while providing suggestions for possible effective interventions at every level to ensure the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry within the city. The plan seeks to conserve local heritage and crafts practices in the city and aims to promote inclusive development across heritage industries, while taking into consideration the accommodation of visitor needs, both domestic and foreign. There is ample opportunity for the private and public sectors to effectively engage in tourism development, as there is an overall lack in service provision throughout the Walled City as well as the buffer zone which needs immediate addressing. Industries with expansion potential include the food service industry, the creation and operation of heritage homes and haveli hotels, as well as the effective provision of tourist services such as ATMs, public restroom facilities, interpretation centers, integrated ticketing systems, etc. Despite the challenges facing the city today, increased understanding of the current context of the city and in-depth research into the needs of visitors and capacity of existing services can contribute to the effective management of tourism throughout the city. With special consideration into the needs of a living community, a series of intervention suggestions are provided, alongside preliminary research into the contemporary context that makes up Jaipur's complex socio-economic system and development needs.

A central vision statement and a series of objectives are needed in order to promote a more sustainable and inclusive environment that effectively capitalises on the existing heritage resources and tourism economy that are pervasive throughout Jaipur. The Tourism Sector Plan aims to unify the tourism industry and its associated stakeholders in order to promote a more sustainable and prosperous Jaipur. As such, a central vision statement will guide all participants towards a central goal. The vision statement needs to evolve to reflect the ever-changing needs of the city, as well as local communities. Therefore, an inaugural vision statement has been provided below as the primary guiding statement:

*"To create a future in which tourism promotes socio-economic development and conservation without sacrificing the historic and cultural fabric that makes Jaipur unique".*

Heritage in Jaipur has the potential to supplement income through adaptive reuse, increased footfall, and visitor dispersal, which have the ability to capture the economic benefits of existing resources within the

city walls. By setting a precedent for capturing alternative sources of income, the metropolitan government, NGOs, and community members can promote the conservation and preservation of heritage structures throughout the city. Further, by promoting the benefits of heritage conservation, leadership within the city can preserve the unique intangible cultural assets that make Jaipur a unique global visitor destination, such as the promotion of crafts industries, indigenous artforms, and daily cultural practices. By including heritage as a partner in economic development, Jaipur can capitalise on its unique history, and promote a future in which heritage is celebrated. There are 7 main objectives within the Tourism Sector Plan, they consist of the following goals and objectives:

- To unify tourism sector stakeholders around a central guiding plan
- To identify where knowledge gaps exist
- To suggest future studies and changes to existing data gathering mechanisms
- To promote economic engagement among craftspeople
- To engage in activities that promote increased cultural engagement among visitors
- To incorporate interpretation at all levels of the visitor experience
- To encourage participation at all levels of policy making, including community input

The tangible and intangible heritage characteristics that make Jaipur unique are irreplaceable, and therefore special consideration needs to be made to promote, educate, and conserve these attributes for future generations. Therefore, a selection of features and messages are provided below outlining the OUV of each nomination criterion.

## Interventions that promote sustainable tourism

The Jaipur metropolitan area has implemented a number of successful interpretation activities at a number of sites throughout the historic centre. Most notably is the city's use of heritage and nature trails, a calendar of events that accommodates the many different cultural and religious festivals, and the recent addition of two monument interpretation centres. Further development of these facilities would prove beneficial, as sites lack the necessary interpretation infrastructure needed to educate visitors throughout sites. Further, intangible crafts are neglected when compared to physical sites such as monuments, temples, and markets. Therefore, special considerations need to be made in order to increase accessibility to crafts production, festivals and fairs, and the arts. A number of proposed interventions are provided below:



Figure 5. Flower vendors in Jaipur City

## 1. Adaptive Reuse

Adaptive reuse should be brought to the forefront of the Tourism Sector Plan, as the conservation of heritage structures within the historic city core has been unable to keep up with the rate of rapid urbanisation and development taking place within the urban fabric. Therefore, in order to better preserve the built heritage of Jaipur, mechanisms need to be put in place to better outline the benefits of conserving the architectural and aesthetic value as well as the intangible emotional connections heritage structures have throughout the city.

## 2. Museums and Interpretation

A current lack of interpretation centres prevents visitors from understating the historic, cultural, and artistic importance of Jaipur's many monuments, public buildings, heritage structures, chowkris, and cultural practices. Therefore, it is necessary to implement interpretation strategies and museum facilities at every level of the visitor experience as well as standardising the ways in which information is presented and disseminated during a visit. By managing the ways in which the city, its facilities, and heritage managers present information, visitors can leave Jaipur with a stronger appreciation for the city's outstanding universal value, as well as the intrinsic value that the city has for local communities, throughout Rajasthan, and across the nation. Museum facilities act as excellent mediums, as they simultaneously act as visitor destinations, visitor infrastructure centres, and interpretation centres.

## 3. Heritage Walks

Heritage walks have been utilised by academic institutions, non-profit organisations, and enterprising local communities as a method of giving visitors unprecedented access to sites throughout the city. Their successful implementation has shown that there is ample demand for similar services. These types of interpretations can be further utilised in order to expand visitorship to less frequented localities, can promote an understanding of local artistic traditions, can promote an improved understanding of the historic fabric of the city, and can increase economic engagement in areas that lie outside visitor thoroughfares. By introducing quality standardisation and certifications, heritage walks can become a reliable way to improve city-wide interpretation.

## 4. Calendar of Events

Standardising the information available on a centralised calendar can help in advertising events, festivals, and festivities taking place throughout the city and year. By centralising a database of events, including small scale events with partnership organisations, visitors can better plan visits, including promoting visitorship during off-peak periods. Further, by increasing the availability of information regarding event types, lengths, locations, etc. visitors can better accommodate cultural events into their itineraries.

## 5. Conservation and Heritage Monitoring

Conservation and heritage monitoring are important, as Jaipur's unique character stems from its rich artistic and architectural heritage. Therefore, special considerations should be made in order to conserve the historic fabric of the historic Walled City. As such, financial resources should be made available, and taskforces created in order to promote the benefits of conservation and manage the deterioration and destruction of Jaipur's most precious resources. The future of sustainable tourism city depends highly on the city's ability to preserve its existing resources for future generations.

## 6. Heritage Homes and Heritage Accommodation

Increasing the number of heritage home accommodations available has the ability to increase income potential among families with the space and means to undertake conversion schemes. In order to promote these activities, the city should provide the necessary resources needed to assist with permitting, increase access to consultations, and provide subsidies where appropriate. Increased access to multiple income generating mechanisms can promote conservation among property owners, further promoting the value of heritage conservation among local communities.

## 7. Community Consultations and Economic Engagement

Including the local community in policy formulation and city development schemes can create a sense of ownership that promotes further protection of heritage resources throughout the city. In doing so, the local community is utilised as a necessary partner in tourism development, increasing their overall stake in the economic wellbeing of the tourism industry and the physical health of the built environment. Further, increased economic engagement has the ability to propagate self-motivated conservation initiatives. Finally, increased engagement among community members promotes a healthy dialogue in which gaps in service provision or opportunities for engagement can be identified for future endeavours.

## 8. Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability has become one of the most important considerations going forward. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals recognises the importance of implementing environment-forward policies and programmes that support biodiversity and the maintenance of fragile ecosystems. By promoting eco-tourism, Jaipur can secure additional funding sources that promote healthy environments and conserve natural resources for future generations.

## 9. Urban Environmental Improvement

Improvements in the urban fabric need to be made, in order to promote a wider visitor footfall outside of usual visitor avenues. Currently, visitors are dissuaded from exploring the wider historic city by a lack of street sanitation, poor street quality, perceived visitor safety, and a lack of public street lighting. Improvements in the urban environmental fabric will encourage increased movement, and an expansion of the economic impact of tourism to venues that have been unaffected by the substantial growth in visitorship. Not only will this improve the visitor experience, but will improve the overall liveability of the city for contemporary residents.

## Achieving sustainable tourism for Jaipur and alignment with UNESCO Creative City Proposals

In keeping with the goals outlined in the UNESCO Creative City Proposals, 5 key points have been extracted in order to help achieve sustainable tourism for the city of Jaipur. These include implementing a participatory approach, creating programming and policies and are forward looking, as well as ensuring the city's long-term commitment to the principles that ensure the survivability of Jaipur's unique heritage, inclusion of sustainable action plans, and a commitment to exchanges and national and international level cooperation (UNESCO Creative Cities Network Report, 2021).



As a centre for crafts and folk arts, Jaipur offers a thriving economic environment based on tourism as well as trade and commerce. Crafts one of the leading industries in Jaipur contributes significantly to the local economy. It is for this reason that even crafts which were not established during the eighteenth century in Jaipur have found their way to the city as recently as the 1960s. Jaipur is unique among other creative cities of crafts not only because of the large number of crafts being practiced actively but also because crafts as utilitarian products are an intrinsic part of the daily lives of locals and domestic visitors. Jaipur has 53460 crafts units with a total of 174972 artisans and craftspeople.

While informal training of entrepreneurs continues in Jaipur through master crafts persons and guild systems, there are formal educational institutes for degree programmes. The Rajasthan School of Arts was institutionalised by the Government in 1988 to provide Bachelor and Master degree in visual arts. IICD in Jaipur is a unique institution that synergises traditional knowledge and craft skills with contemporary needs to evolve methodologies relevant to modern India. It provides undergraduate and postgraduate programmes addressing a range of crafts. It also has special programmes and incentives to encourage children of traditional artists and crafts persons. Institute of Gems and Jewellery provides programmes on Jewellery design. Jawahar Kala Kendra started by the government have allocated spaces to organise short term training programmes in arts and crafts which are used by NGOs to host programmes.

While the World Heritage tag for Jaipur presented an additional commitment of mapping and protecting all crafts streets in the walled city as significant attributes contributing to its Outstanding Universal Value, the Municipal Corporation was already committed to enhancing and upgrading these crafts streets as part of aligning the creative city projects to sustainable planning.

Jaipur Municipal Corporation is developing Heritage Walks in specific streets of Jaipur to provide direct access to local crafts persons and their work space. Chowkri Modikhana Heritage Walk showcasing thatheras (brass utensil craftsmen) and lac bangle making is one such initiative. The walk is being conducted since 2005. Jaipur Municipal Corporation upgraded the walk area in 2014-15 thus improving the living environment for artisans and extended it further under the Smart City program in 2019-20. These works could be monitored through the Heritage Cell of Municipal Corporation to ensure appropriate conservation as per commitment for World Heritage. Furthermore, the Municipal Corporation is committed to enhancing more crafts streets such as the Khazanewalon ka Raasta including havelis and houses of stone craftspeople to be undertaken in the next phase of works under Creative City Projects (2021-24).

Besides this, adaptive reuse of historic buildings such as the Rajasthan School of Arts into a Crafts Museum under Smart City Projects are good examples of collective safeguarding of the tangible-intangible or the living heritage of the city.

Developing major crafts streets of Jaipur as special heritage walks to promote direct access to artists and craftspeople in the walled city along with conservation and up-gradation of these historic settlements and traditional industries aims to establish Jaipur Crafts City as a role model of sustainability. The project will directly benefit artisans living and working in the area, local residents and visitors to Jaipur. It will enhance the overall living environment of the artisans and will give direct access for sales of crafts products once the heritage walks are promoted through tourism. Up-gradation of services in these areas have improved the general living conditions for craftspeople while regular heritage walks by a wide range of visitors provides greater accessibility for direct sales. This when replicated in other crafts streets of Jaipur will greatly enhance socio-economic sustainability for the city.

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# Annex 7

## Capacity Building in Disaster Risk Management of Southeast Asian Cultural Heritage

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### Background

Due to the location of Southeast Asia where is situated in the tropical area between Indian and Pacific Ocean, the region has been influenced by natural hazards in various aspects such as settlement character, living tradition, architecture, urban transformation, and ect. since the emergence of civilisation due to human instinct and intelligence in adapting to the natural settings. However, in the recent period, it is obvious that natural hazards have more negatively, severely and frequently affected the region. Furthermore, since most countries in Southeast Asia are being developed, human-induced actions that cause or accelerate disasters should be seriously taken into account. Certainly, it is undeniable that damages and loss of lives are the most important concern when these hazards occur and become disasters, cultural heritage should not be ignored or forgotten.

While Southeast Asian region is home to numerous and invaluable cultural heritage, tangibly and intangibly, it is evident that its heritage has been dramatically affected by disasters caused by various natural hazards and catalysed by various vulnerabilities. In 2005, Prambanan and Borobudur, the World Heritage properties of Indonesia, were damaged by a tremendous earthquake. Followed by cyclone Nagis which severely affected Myanmar in 2008. Then Typhoon Kesana hit Vat Phou, Champasak, one of the two world cultural heritage of Lao PDR. While heritage in the Philippines have been deadly impacted by several disasters such as Typhoon Yolanda which destroyed a number of heritage places in Bohol.

Learning from Japan, especially Tohoku Earthquake which caused a gigantic Tsunami in 2011 and experiencing the 4-month-flooding in the central plain of Thailand where the Historic City of Ayutthaya

is located at the same year, Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SEAMEO SPAFA) realised that the awareness and understanding in the impacts of those disasters to heritage in Southeast Asia should be raised up while knowledge in planning disaster risk management of cultural heritage should also be strengthened. As a result, in 2016 the training workshop on this matter for Southeast Asian heritage professionals which is a collaboration of SEAMEO SPAFA, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Properties (ICCROM) based in Rome, Italy and the Institute of Disaster Risk Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage, Ritsumeikan University (R-DMUCH), Kyoto, Japan was initiated.

The project began with a consultative meeting among the three partners, representative from relevant organisations including UNESCO Bangkok Office, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center and heritage experts from Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand. The meeting identified the issues concerning the impacts of disasters to heritage in Southeast Asia, regional needs and a framework and timeline of capacity building activities. As a result of, a series of capacity building activities including three training workshops was proposed to SEAMEO SPAFA 7th Five-Year Development Plan (2017/2018 -2021/2022). On the other hand, in response to Southeast Asian Education Agenda: 7 Priority Areas launched by SEAMEO Secretariat, another project targeting other groups of beneficiaries and expecting different outcomes was also carried out. In addition, SEAMEO SPAFA has provided technical support on disaster risk management of cultural heritage as requested by its member countries.

### Training workshops on disaster risk management of Southeast Asian cultural heritage

As mentioned above, the main capacity building project initiated by SEAMEO SPAFA on disaster risk management of cultural heritage comprises three training workshops. Although the fundamental content of this training is disaster risk management planning, the theme of each training workshop are varied due to the typology of heritage places and the issues relating to the places, stages of disaster risk management cycle and the focused hazards. Around 25 -30 beneficiaries of this training are mid-career heritage professionals or practitioners from eleven countries in Southeast Asia. Remarkably, the number of participants is limited to two persons from each country. While there can be up to ten participants from the host country in return for their hosting efforts.

#### Post-disaster recovery for the living archaeological urban complex

According to the Chauk earthquake in Myanmar in 2016, Bagan, one of the most renowned archaeological complexes in the world, which was under the World Heritage Nomination process beginning in 2017, was affected by the earthquake. The earthquake addressed the impact of disaster caused by natural hazard as well as recalled the disastrous Gorkha earthquake in Nepal that made Kathmandu Valley tremendously damaged. Then with the invitation of Myanmar expert in 2016 Consultative Meeting, SEAMEO SPAFA developed the training workshop on disaster risk management of cultural heritage with the theme titling "Post-Disaster Recovery for the Living Archaeological Urban Complex" held in Bagan, Myanmar from 14 to 20 March 2018 as the first training workshop of the series.

Regarding the situation after the earthquake, the post-disaster mitigation measures were focused so that the recent experience from Myanmar can be shared and learnt. While various globally discussed issues in heritage conservation that can be identified in Bagan, such as living heritage, value-based management, archaeological heritage management, urban conservation and intangible aspects of cultural heritage were included in the course contents.

### **Understanding people, nature and culture: heritage management for building resilience of traditional living settlement(4 February - 3 June 2021)**

Referring to consultative meeting in 2016, Kampong Ayer, the water village, located at the heart of Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital city of Brunei Darussalam was chosen to be a venue of the second training. Initially it was planned to be held from 17 to 27 March 2020 at Brunei Darussalam. Unfortunately, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the training was postponed and then rescheduled to be organised in 2021. This training workshop also was converted to be a virtual activity. As such, course contents and learning/teaching method were reinvented. Instead of being a 10-day training workshop as planned, the online course composes of 16 interactive sessions once a week, starting from 4 February to 3 June 2021, the pre-session self-learning through VDO of lectures as well as recommended reading materials and the post-session assignments with personal consultation.

In terms of the theme: Understanding People, Nature and Culture: Heritage Management for Building Resilience of Traditional Living Settlements, the training aims to adopt place-based in heritage management and to elevate resilience for heritage settlements in Southeast Asia through disaster risk management and climate change adaptation. On the other hand, as a collaboration with ICCROM-IUCN World Heritage Leadership Programme, this capacity-building activity demonstrates the contribution of World Heritage Properties to the improvement of culture-nature integration practice of heritage conservation, sustainable development and networking among involving organisations and partners.

In addition, it should be remarked that Kampong Ayer, Brunei Darussalam was selected to be the venue of this training when the course was planned to be in-person training because this traditional water settlement shows its resilient existence that lasts over 700 years. Even though it is situated in the urbanised city centre and architectural appearance of some houses is changed to fit the modern lifestyle, the natural settings especially mangrove around the village are still intact. Thus, we can learn from the village and its people on the traditional knowledge and its adaptation to any changes happening over the span of time so Kampong Ayer can last long and be sustainable.

### **Urban resilience in time of changes**

The third and the last activity of the training workshop is schedule to be held in Thailand in 2023 and will resume to be in-person training. At this moment the actual theme and course content are being discussed and developed. Considering the recent occurrence in historic cities in the Southeast Asian region, the damages and impacts from disasters caused by both natural hazards especially flood and human-induced activities such as fire are obviously seen more frequently and severely. The reason is probably that unwell-planned changes always happen in developing countries, such as the increasing construction projects, urbanisation, city expansion, demography, and ect. Thus, the issues concerning changes in historic cities, urban conservation and management, people participation and climate adaptation will be brought up in the training.

### **School-based approach in promoting disaster risk management in Southeast Asia**

Besides the initiative targeting mid-career professionals, as a specialist institution of Southeast Asian Ministers of Education, other groups of beneficiaries were also projected. The research project entitling "School-based Approach in Promoting Disaster Risk Management in Southeast Asia" focused on school communities including students, teachers and school staff, parents, and communities around schools. It aims

to provide school communities the fundamental knowledge and awareness on the importance of heritage in their community and how their heritage has been affected by disasters. The output of this project was to produce educational materials based on the result of this project. This project was divided into three phases starting from desk-based review on the existing studies and information. The second phase comprises two activities carried on in Brunei Darussalam in collaboration with SEAMEO VOTTECH, the SEAMEO's specialist centre in vocational and technical education based in the country. The first activity is a consultative meeting among the experts in heritage conservation, education and disaster risk management from various SEAMEO centres located around the region and other relating organisations. The meeting aims to share and exchange experience and knowledge across sectors so as to seek for an effective educational material to be developed later on. Another activity is an experimental workshop with school communities in Kampong Ayer, Brunei Darussalam. The participatory learning method was adapted to raise awareness of participants who were educators, teachers, students and community leaders. The main targeted participants were teachers and educators as they were an agent to build or change a mindset of young people like students.

As a result, for the third phase, with a tremendous support of the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), Korea, an educational material which is a teaching manual namely "Living with Water, Heritage & Risks: An Educator's Toolkit for Global Citizenship" was produced. This manual can be used by not only educators but anyone. Further, according to its effectiveness, a year later the toolkit was translated from English to local languages of Southeast Asian countries including Thai, Myanmar, Vietnamese, Bahasa Malaysia and Cambodian and can be downloaded from SEAMEO SPAFA Journal Website<sup>1</sup>. Through basic education, it is expected that the toolkit will provide the fundamental knowledge and awareness on heritage and disasters for young generation who will bring a brighter future of humankind when they grow up.

### **Technical support in disaster risk management**

Apart from capacity-building activities, SEAMEO SPAFA has given support to its member countries in developing disaster risk management plan and related activities. For the Megalithic Jar Sites in Xiengkhuang – Plain of Jars, Lao PDR, during the nomination process, the Government of Lao PDR was requested to include disaster risk management plan into its management system. In consequences, SEAMEO SPAFA Governing Board Member from Laos sent a request for technical support on developing the plan. The request was approved by all Governing Board Members from other ten countries. The correspondence from SEAMEO SPAFA was included into the additional supportive information of the nomination dossier.

After the inscription, disaster risk management plan for the Plain of Jars was established in the form of Statement of Practice (SOP). It is a collaboration between the Government of Laos PDR, UNESCO Bangkok and SEAMEO SPAFA. SOP was adapted from a standard template of disaster risk management plan of cultural heritage because it was considered to be implemented by local staff and communities who live around the Plain of Jars where is in a far rural area of the country. Therefore, the Statement addresses more on mitigation measures and emergency responses that can be done by local staff and communities.

For Bagan in Myanmar, another World Cultural Heritage of Southeast Asia, besides engaging a number of Myanmar professional in the Training Workshop in 2018, SEAMEO SPAFA always provides technical support through its expert in related activities such as the Workshop on Disaster Risk Management for Cultural Heritage Sites in ASEAN+3 Countries, Bagan Ancient City, Myanmar, convened from 22 to 27 October

<sup>1</sup> Accessible from <https://publications.spafajournal.org/index.php/spafapub/catalog/book/36>

2017. Furthermore, SEAMEO SPAFA joined the Technical Coordination on Safeguarding Bagan and Bagan International Coordinating Committee Meeting (BICC) as a founding member. The meeting attempts to support Myanmar in managing and conserving Bagan as well as provide a consultation of the recovery projects proposed by international community.

## Challenges: planning for next disasters

Based on its experience in capacity-building programmes and projects, it can be obviously seen that most requests for the support came after heritage sites were affected by disasters. Nearly all requests relate to the World Heritage Properties which are considered highly significant and in the eyes of the world. In some other cases, not only technical supports but other kinds of resources were also asked. Unfortunately, without a clear and well-prepared plan to cope with the damages and impacts from disasters, it is still difficult to decide how the contribution will be used and for what. Therefore, the main expected outcome of the training workshop on disaster risk management of cultural heritage is that participants can develop disaster risk management plan for their heritage place. Ideally with the plan in hand, a proper decision-making during emergency period and post-disaster recovery measures should be done. However, in reality to establish disaster risk management plan for heritage seems to less possible without a support from policy level. It is even more difficult for heritage sites that have never been affected by disaster in a recent time. While the enthusiasm to develop disaster management plan or system hardly lasts longer than one or two years.

## Integrated disaster risk management to the World Heritage management framework

In connection to the challenge mentioned above, under the World Heritage nomination process, the state parties are encouraged to integrate disaster risk management into the management plan or system of the proposed properties. Certainly, the capacity-building programme of SEAMEO SPAFA has been concentrated on disaster risk management of cultural heritage. All resource persons always address that the separation of disaster risk management and overall management plan/system should not be encouraged. In addition, it seems that the nomination dossier format concerning natural disasters and threats in relation to management section as well as terminology should be reviewed in order to integrate disaster risk management into overall management plan or system.

## Local people and community participation in Southeast Asia

It can be said that in Southeast Asia, engaging local people and communities in heritage conservation has been rarely aware by both governmental section and private sectors or communities themselves. For years, the bottom-up heritage management has been promoted rather than the top-down system and discussed among involving organisations. However, the management approach is tightened with the governing regime of each respective country. Considering the situation in this region in the past few years as well as the governing regime of some countries, people and community participation could be done in limited ways. The level of participation mainly is only public informing or hearing while the decision making still belongs to governmental sectors. In some circumstances, local people and community may take part in heritage management and conservation more than just being informed but under a framework set by governmental sectors.

For disaster risk management, there have been several attempts to engage local peoples or communities as a research or experimental project. The opinions of these people seem to be hardly taken into consideration by in-charge organisation. Even though, most participants of SEAMEO SPAFA's capacity-building programme are officials or governmental staff, the framework and people participatory approach has been promoted through various occasions during the training. Since these participants will be able to provide a strong impact to encourage and support more and real participation of local people and communities, it is anticipated that in the future local people and communities will be given an opportunity to make decision on their own heritage. This occurrence can be implied to disaster risk management as it is part of management system. However, it may not be clearly seen the problems that there is a lack of people participation in disaster risk management of cultural because in Southeast Asia, it is not included in heritage management system. Furthermore, most heritage places including World Cultural Heritage properties have never implemented their plan if there are any.

## Sustainable development and disasters in practice

On one hand, as a result of the current state of local people and community participation discussed earlier, the sustainability of Southeast Asian heritage could not be possible in a near future. Moreover, the understanding in the role of heritage professionals and organisations in sustainable development probably needs to be explored. On the other hand, the interrelation between sustainable development and disaster risk management of cultural heritage should be clarified and promoted among heritage professionals and organisation in the region. For example, traditional knowledge in dealing with disasters may be applied or adapted to make our world resilient and sustainable.

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