

# WORLD HERITAGE AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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The 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage notes in its preface *“that the cultural heritage and the natural heritage are increasingly threatened with destruction not only by the traditional causes of decay, but also by **changing social and economic conditions which aggravate the situation** with even more formidable phenomena of damage or destruction”*. Furthermore, the Convention considers that *“deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world.”* Consequently, it considers that it is essential for this purpose *“to adopt new provisions in the form of a convention establishing an **effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value.**”*

The article 5 of the Convention requires that, in order to ensure that effective and active measures are taken for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory, *“each State Party to this Convention shall endeavour, in so far as possible, and as appropriate for each country: to adopt a general policy which aims **to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes**; to set up within its territories, where such services do not exist, one or more services for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage with an appropriate staff and possessing the means to discharge their functions.”* It will also be necessary to undertake research, and to take appropriate legal, administrative and financial measures, as well as establish training opportunities. We could say today that it is necessary to develop capacity building strategies, involving local communities, authorities and administrations.

Based on the proposals of consultative bodies, ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN, the World Heritage Committee first adopted the draft criteria for justification of the Outstanding Universal Value, OUV, in 1977. Over the years, the criteria have since been adjusted following accumulating experience with the nominations and relevant management requirements. By 2008, out of the six cultural criteria, criterion (iv), associated with typology of properties, has emerged as the most popular, reaching some 28%, followed by criteria (iii) dealing with cultural traditions, and (ii), exchange of influences. As a whole, the justification of OUV is focused on the identification of exceptional masterpieces of human creativity in the different cultural and environmental conditions. Community is present in criterion (iii),

which initially only referred to past cultures, but which was changed in 1996 as: “*bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a **civilisation which is living or which has disappeared***”. In addition, criterion (vi) is referred to sites that are “*directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works*”.

Both of these criteria have often been used for religions and indigenous belief systems, and the identify of people, as well as in the case of criterion (iii) for nomadism and transhumance. It is obvious that the aim of the World Heritage List has never been to inscribe persons or communities, but rather physical cultural expressions that are recognised as heritage.<sup>1</sup> In fact, we should understand the various UNESCO Conventions focusing on different aspects of our common heritage, whether physical or intangible, movable or immovable. It is significant that the Council of Europe Faro Convention, of 2005, does not categorise but refers to heritage in all its aspects as: “*resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time.*”<sup>2</sup>

From the late 1940s, one of the tasks of international organisations, such as UNESCO, was to assist countries to rebuild a new and hopefully more peaceful society. This also comprised developing a consistent theory and criteria for safeguarding and restoration of “*movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people*”, as it was expressed in The Hague Convention in 1954 (article 1). In 1972, the World Heritage Convention refers to **monuments or groups of buildings** that are of “*outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science*”, and to sites that of “*outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view*”. Normally, historic urban areas were defined as groups of buildings, while **sites** were: “*works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view*”.

From the 1970s, also due to the initiatives of the Council of Europe, increasing attention was given to historic towns, and the recognition of such areas as a heritage resource. The 1975 European Charter of the Architectural Heritage declared (article 1): “*The European architectural heritage consists not only of our most important monuments: it also includes the groups of lesser buildings in our old towns and characteristic villages in their natural or manmade settings.*” In 1976, UNESCO adopted the Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas, which continued on the same theme: “***Historic areas and their surroundings should be regarded as forming an irreplaceable universal heritage.***

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<sup>1</sup> Jokilehto, J., 2008, *The World Heritage List: What is OUV? ICOMOS Monuments and Sites XVI*, Munich

<sup>2</sup> Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, adopted in Faro, Portugal, 2005

*The governments and the citizens of the States in whose territory they are situated should deem it their duty to safeguard this heritage and **integrate it into the social life of our times.***" It is from this time that special efforts are made to develop methodologies that aim at recognising the conservation of the built heritage as part of the urban and territorial planning processes. These include the training programmes by ICCROM in the conservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings and urban areas, which are then taken as a model for regional and national capacity building.

In the 1990s, it becomes necessary to review the categories of properties eligible to the World Heritage List. As a result, in reference to the definition of 'sites' in the Convention as *combined works of nature and man*, the World Heritage Committee adopts the category of **Cultural Landscape**, which not only broadens the geographical identification of heritage areas, but also introduces the society in the World Heritage context. Until now, the main attention had been on individual monuments or on groups of buildings, recognised for the architectural or historical qualities, which were the responsibility of the Government or an authority. Now, the entire society was involved as an essential stakeholder in the management and safeguarding, as already anticipated in the 1976 UNESCO Recommendation. Consequently, there was need to develop appropriate planning and management instruments to safeguard the recognised heritage resource and the functions that were part of it. Attention gradually shifted from the identification of masterpieces to a more thematic approach, which also involved rural and vernacular heritage. Thus, there was shift from exceptional masterpieces to the common heritage of the people.

## THE FIVE CS

At the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, the Committee met in Budapest, and adopted the 'Budapest Declaration on World Heritage', which invited all interested parties to cooperate and to promote the following objectives, which became known as the "Four Cs":<sup>3</sup>

- a) *strengthen the **Credibility** of the World Heritage List, as a representative and geographically balanced testimony of cultural and natural properties of outstanding universal value;*
- b) *ensure the effective **Conservation** of World Heritage properties;*
- c) *promote the development of effective **Capacity-Building** measures, including assistance for preparing the nomination of properties to the World Heritage List, for the understanding and implementation of the World Heritage Convention and related instruments;*
- d) *increase public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through **Communication.***

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<sup>3</sup> WHC-02/CONF.202/25, 1 August 2002

In 2007, meeting in Christchurch, New Zealand, the Committee adopted the “Fifth C” for “Communities”:<sup>4</sup> *“To enhance the role of the **Communities** in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention”*.

In the justification of the Fifth C, New Zealand noted that heritage protection without community involvement would be an invitation to failure. It was noted that *“Heritage protection, should, wherever possible, reconcile the needs of human communities, as humanity needs to be at the heart of conservation”*.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, in a nutshell, the strategy of World Heritage was now proposed to be based on “Five Cs”: Credibility, Conservation, Capacity Building, Communication, and Communities. How successful have these objectives been in each case is a question that can be answered through the analysis of the periodic reports. In a periodic reporting exercise, in Baku in 2013, the subject was to discuss the implementation of the “5Cs” strategic objectives in Central, South-East and Eastern European countries. Here it was observed that there was lack of integration of heritage issues into broader planning and development schemes. There were also problems in institutional memory, lack of documentation, systematisation and analysis of data, as well as lack of financial and human resources. The strategic objectives for “The 5Cs” included better understanding of the concept and principles of World Heritage, updating legal instruments to face today’s conservation challenges, to develop new approach by category of properties, and capacity building to understand, identify and empower communities. Specially for Community Involvement, the proposed objective was to recognise local community as a key factor in the identification and sustainable management of heritage, and should be involved in constructive dialogue in order to understand what is at stake, and to be able to get involved in decision-making processes.

In June 2012, a high-level United Nations conference in Rio de Janeiro, Rio+20, adopted a document called “The Future We Want”, which tackled global challenges. The Common Vision was that it was indispensable to work for sustainable development, and free humanity from poverty and hunger as a matter of urgency. Taking a similar theme to the World Heritage context, the conclusive conference of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Kyoto, in November 2012, adopted **The Kyoto Vision**. It was here noted that the World Heritage Convention, with its 190 States Parties, had emerged as one of the most powerful tools for heritage conservation. It involved *“a shared vision combining the protection of cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value in one single instrument”*. There were however enormous planetary challenges that needed to be faced in order to ensure sustainability in future evolution of the world. The Conference stressed particularly two issues: one concerned the problems of climate change, and the other the importance of the role of community in heritage management: *“Only through strengthened relationships between people and heritage, based on respect for cultural and biological diversity as a whole, integrating both*

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<sup>4</sup> WHC-07/31.COM/13B Paris, 23 May 2007

<sup>5</sup> WHC-07/31.COM/13B,

*tangible and intangible aspects and geared toward sustainable development, will the “future we want” become attainable.”* Attention was drawn to a multi-disciplinary and participatory approach to heritage conservation, integrating social, economic and environmental dimensions. An appeal was launched, e.g., to:

- Mobilize substantial financial resources for heritage conservation;
- Develop innovative responses and sharing of experiences;
- Share responsibilities for effectively addressing threats;
- Ensure the sustainability of local communities through other domains such as intangible cultural heritage and cultural and creative industries.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

When dealing with planning and management of the territory of a particular community, it will be necessary clearly define what is meant with ‘economy’ in this context. In its etymology, the word derives from: οἶκος (house) and νέμω (manage; distribute). Therefore: οἰκονομία: ‘household management’. It is the system established by a community to provide the desired quality of life. It consists of labour, production, trade distribution and consumption, based on existing and/or newly generated resources. The notion of economics is generally associated with the group of social sciences. Indeed, we can see the economy of a community as a cultural process, involving the inculcation of what is practised and learnt in the minds of the members of the community. In the process, the members of the community make selections aiming at the improvement of quality, identifying issues to be retained and others to be innovated. **Economy refers to a system within which a community arranges its resource management over time.** The etymology of the word ‘culture’, instead, can be referred to the Latin word: ‘colere’ (‘colo’), which means: cultivate, take care, pay respect to. Therefore, culture has a variety of meanings, which range from cultivation, such as agriculture, to maintenance, study and learning, as well as to worship and cult. Indeed, culture is the intrinsic driving force for establishing and improving the quality of life of a community. Culture generates the economic framework in a community, and then becomes the necessary reference for further cultural development over time. There is a close interaction between culture and economy. **Culture is the generator and a product of development within the evolving framework of the economy of a community.**

Even though the World Heritage Operational Guidelines have required the establishment of protective buffer zones to World Heritage areas, these are not necessarily a sufficient means to guarantee the control of undesired development. With the increasing number of historic urban areas and cultural landscapes being inscribed, it is understood that the context is a key issue in management. In 2005, the ICOMOS Xi’an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting or Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas, acknowledged *“the contribution of setting to the significance of heritage monuments and sites”*. In fact, the setting is not only the physical and environmental context. It is also the social, cultural and economic context in today’s globalised society. This has become evident in various case studies, including

Vienna, Cologne, Liverpool, others, of which some are in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

It is in this regard that UNESCO adopted the 2011 Recommendation on **Historic Urban Landscapes**, HUL, recognising the dynamic nature of living cities and noting that: *“rapid and frequently uncontrolled development is transforming urban areas and their settings, which may cause fragmentation and deterioration to urban heritage with deep impacts on community values, throughout the world.”* Consequently, the Recommendation stresses that it is not enough and not even possible to preserve and manage World Heritage areas without considering the development within their contexts. The question is not just about avoiding negative visual impacts from non-protected areas, but also guaranteeing that the social and economic developments of the territory do not undermine the qualities that are recognised for their outstanding universal value. It is indeed noted that: *“The historic urban landscape approach aims at preserving the quality of the human environment, enhancing the productive and sustainable use of urban spaces while recognizing their dynamic character, and promoting social and functional diversity. It integrates the goals of urban heritage conservation and those of social and economic development.”* The Recommendation also notes that the HUL approach implies the application of specific planning and management instruments, including civic engagement tools, knowledge and planning tools, regulatory systems, as well as financial tools. All this must be integrated with capacity building, research, information and communication, involving the communities, decision-makers, professionals and managers.

Historic urban centres are built for a traditional economic system different from the modern globalised context. Such historic areas contain a memory of local traditions, which is seldom directly compatible with modern economic priorities. It does not mean that traditional areas would not have a role in modern world. However, such areas are easily crashed by misunderstood or unbalanced developments even when these may have been intended for purposes of “regeneration”. As has been shown in many countries, large-scale shopping malls, uncontrolled tourism, and even small-scale bed-and-breakfast initiatives can become destructive if not understood in the overall economic context. In this regard, the Historic Urban Landscape Approach, promoted by UNESCO’s 2011 Recommendation is important because it will encourage the analysis of the contextual significance and vulnerability of the different parts of a territory, aiming to introduce appropriate control mechanisms into planning norms and regulations.

There are essentially two levels of operation in historic urban areas, which need to be distinguished: 1) the urban/territorial level, and 2) the architectural level. These two levels are joined in a constructive dialogue as a basic reference for any action to be taken.

- 1) **The Territorial Level** of an urban ensemble within its Historic Urban Landscape context: At this level, the scope is to look at all the elements that contribute to its significance as an historic urbanised territory. This involves identifying and understanding its urban morphology and typology, i.e. the different types of

structures and open areas that form the urban area, and their mutual relationships. It also means identifying the relevant territorial setting necessary for its economic and social development and/or eventual environmental protective measures. At this level, it is necessary to develop a vision and objectives of action, and to integrate the safeguarding criteria in relevant planning norms and guidelines.

- 2) **The Architectural Level** in an historic town: This means identifying the significance of the individual components in the urban fabric, and defining relevant conservation policies within urban planning context already defined at the urban level. The operations and treatments depend on the significance and condition of the individual structures. They can range from professional conservative restoration and/or rehabilitation to transformation, rebuilding, or even demolition.

The historic town is represented by the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) that consists not only of the built and urbanised areas, but also of the surrounding territories, the agricultural fields, the forests, the mountains. It is within this whole HUL that the economic and urban development of the town need to be discussed. This is particularly important in a country like Georgia, where farming and agriculture have great potential also internationally. Of course, the references need to be seen even further. For example, cultural tourism is necessarily planned while considering a network of potential sites and services in the entire region. The analyses of the building typology and urban morphology will contribute to the identification of the significant elements that together form the historic urban area as it represents a particular period. It will be important to distinguish these different periods, including not only the previous centuries, but also the different periods in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Here the question is about all buildings and structures that date from the period concerned, and that consequently form the urban fabric at that time.

Based on the above considerations regarding the integrity and the extent of the historic town in a specific period, and the current condition, it is possible to indicate the type of implementation on each property. The implementation will be shown at two levels:

- 1) **Urban Level:** An Urban Conservation Plan, will consist of a series of maps that illustrate all the above analyses, referred to the Base Map. At the urban level the proposed action is indicated in urban planning regulations and building norms. It will indicate whether the building should be preserved considering that it has maintained all the essential elements, or whether some changes are required in order to restore or recover some of the lost features in reference to the original typology.
- 2) **Property Level;** When an individual building is taken as subject to conservation or rehabilitation, it will be necessary to make a detailed survey with measured drawing indicating the historical stratigraphy, typological features, current/original functions, and the physical condition. Here the question is about maintaining the historical **authenticity** of the building. Consequently, priority should be given to maintaining still existing original structures, materials, fittings, and decorative elements. In case

these need replacement, reference should be taken from the building itself and not from a standard design based on analogy. The option of using modern but compatible design can also be taken into consideration.

**Capacity Development/Building** is the process by which individuals, organisations, institutions and societies develop abilities to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives. It needs to be addressed at three inter-related levels: individual, institutional and societal. The ICOMOS *Principles for Capacity Buildings through Education and Training in Safeguarding and Integrated Conservation of Cultural Heritage* (2013) indicate that no single individual or institution is likely to be solely involved in the conservation process as it will usually be necessary to involve a variety of skills and disciplines, to carry out the relevant actions. Capacity Building thus requires:

- 1) building a network of qualified teachers, and identifying necessary didactic facilities;
- 2) identifying sponsors and regional and national partner organisations;
- 3) directing financial and administrative support to heritage management;
- 4) organising collaborative networks of individuals and institutions for the exchange of ideas and opinions on approaches to education and training;
- 5) expanding the market for conservation, research and training, and encouraging the creation of opportunities for qualified, trained conservationists; as well as,
- 6) ensuring that the necessary legal and regulatory frameworks enable organisations, institutions and agencies at all levels and in all sectors to enhance their capacities, developing frameworks and communication systems;

Conservation of historic urban areas requires a multi-disciplinary team, ranging from professional urban planners, architects and engineers to conservators, conservation technicians, scientists, historians, archaeologists, crafts-persons, and managers. All these professions must have relevant training and education to be able to approach the complex tasks at hand, and to be able to communicate properly.

## IN CONCLUDING

As was noted in The Kyoto Vision of 2012, the World Heritage Convention has generated positive developments. It has introduced international interest in identifying new types of heritage and new types of safeguarding and management measures. These have been taken over even in areas that are not listed for their OUV. However, there are challenges that urgently need to be faced. One of these is the question of community involvement. Indeed, the Convention has clearly indicated that heritage needs to have a function in the life of the community. Indeed, reading the history of conservation, it is understood that the idea of heritage was born from the community's interests. It is however, particularly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the identification and protection of heritage resources has been taken over by governmental authorities. Even though in itself this is fine, the community has not always been involved in decision-making processes. In fact, in the case of World Heritage



properties, it has been rather to the contrary. There are cases, where original inhabitants or indigenous people have even been removed from areas proposed for nomination.

From the 1990s, there have been new developments, broadening the focus from individual groups of buildings towards larger areas. First this concerned particularly cultural landscapes, but since the early 2000s it has been recognised that, in order to be successful, conservation of heritage areas requires taking into account the economics and functional continuity of larger territories. This has been the point of the 2011 Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscapes. Indeed, as has been shown in the 2005 Xi'an Declaration of ICOMOS, even the significance of heritage areas necessarily depends on context. For this purpose, it will be necessary *“to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes”*, as has been indicated even in the 1972 Convention.

In 2011, the World Heritage General Assembly discussed the Future of the World Heritage Convention.<sup>6</sup> Regarding the present situation, it was noted that while the Convention has strengths for example in a near universal membership, it is slow to enact change. Emphasis has been on inscription as an end itself and not enough on management of the continuity of the site's significance. There are differing interpretations about OUV and appropriate management standards, and the threats include political, economic, environmental and social pressures on heritage sites. The opportunities embrace heritage as a driver for sustainable development, and there does exist ability to improve structures, plans and practices for business. Heritage can also harness civil society support, and new technology can enable more efficient awareness raising and knowledge sharing.

For the future, the 2011 policy document stresses engaging communities as future actors: *“The World Heritage Convention is implemented through a wide and ever-expanding network of actors. Each has an important role to play in shaping policies, driving management practices, building capacity and expanding awareness of cultural and natural heritage. The traditional actors – States Parties, the Committee, Secretariat and Advisory Bodies - continue to need encouragement, support and assistance to meet their obligations under the Convention, but it is also important to ensure that local, national and international communities feel a connection to, engage with and benefit from the world's natural and cultural heritage. It is noted that the inscription on the World Heritage List is not the end of the process, but a part of the responsibility to ensure that World Heritage is effectively protected and managed for the future. Conservation and communication should be understood as complementary tasks. “For World Heritage, increased awareness and knowledge of World Heritage objectives can increase commitment to conserve, engage with and support cultural and natural heritage sites. Each World Heritage property communicates the value and quality of the World Heritage Convention and should operate as a standard bearer for other heritage places.”*

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<sup>6</sup> WHC-11/18.GA/11, Paris, 1 August 2011