



## World Heritage Volunteers (WHV) Initiative

The World Heritage Volunteers (WHV) initiative was launched in 2008 within the framework of the *UNESCO World Heritage Education Programme*, to mobilize and involve young people and youth organizations in World Heritage preservation and promotion.

The initiative raises awareness of World Heritage issues and volunteer activity opportunities among youths and in eight years, more than 3000 youth volunteers have taken part in the 219 camps carried out in over 60 World Heritage sites by 52 local organizations and NGOs in 46 countries.

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre coordinates the overall implementation of the initiative in collaboration with the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service who has been assisting UNESCO World Heritage Centre in coordinating the WHV campaigns since 2008. The initiative has reached a new development phase, where it has become essential to consolidate the gains of previous years and to continue to mobilize a greater increasing number of young volunteers and organizations and to further improve the quality of actions for World Heritage preservation and promotion.

Participating organizations have come forward to assist the coordination with WHV projects with Open Houses taking on Europe Coordination since 2014 and Better World taking on Asia Coordination starting 2015.

### In practice...

Youth organizations, clubs, educational institutions, NGOs, site management and public authorities wanting to sensitize young people about the value of World Heritage sites, and wishing to organize actions to preserve and promote World Heritage with young national and international volunteers, can all participate in the campaigns.

WHV youth action camps are often organized in a multi-stakeholders cooperation, with local youth organizations, NGOs, schools, universities and public and private institutions working together with the site management. The action camps are held in the field and in direct relation to a World Heritage site or property in the country's Tentative List. They generally last between two to four weeks, where young volunteers carry out concrete actions (minimum of 10 days), comprising both hands-on preventive conservation activities and information sessions on issues related to World Heritage, as well as activities carried out together with local communities. Each action camp accommodates some ten to thirty national and/or international volunteer participants, and often preparatory and follow-up activities with the local communities and the volunteers are also implemented by the organizers to ensure the sustainability of the actions.

## **Objectives**

The World Heritage Volunteers is an initiative to raise awareness among young people, communities and the wider public on the importance of World Heritage protection, to provide the opportunity for young volunteers to acquire skills by working on a project through an action camp at a World Heritage site and nurture meaningful youth involvement in World Heritage preservation and promotion.

In addition, each year actions promote specific thematic. As example, the WHV 2015 campaign will contribute to the celebration of the 70th Anniversary of UNESCO and the continuing Decade on Biodiversity (2011-2020).

The WHV initiative aims to:

- **Raise awareness** and **sensitize** youth, international and local volunteers, the local communities, concerned local and national authorities about the necessity to protect, preserve and promote cultural and natural heritage and on issues related to World Heritage;
- **Promote active youth involvement** in World projects planned on the basis of the concrete needs of the site and **promote capacity-building activities** that provides additional skills to improve youth efficient engagement in important societal projects and to express their ideas effectively;
- **Provide youth opportunities to acquire abilities and skills** on basic preventive preservation and conservation techniques;
- **Foster creation of synergies** and concrete cooperation between the local youth organization and the local community, site management, national and local authorities;
- **Identify best practises** and develop non-formal education tools to facilitate stakeholders' participation in the World Heritage education.

## **Selection criteria**

For selection, proposed projects must fulfill the following set of criteria:

- The project is organized in **immediate connection to a site inscribed** on the [World Heritage List](#) or a proposed site on the country's [Tentative List](#)
- The project should be developed **in consultation with site managers** and local authorities in planning details of the activities
- The project should **include practical hands-on skills training** activities as well as **reflection** on issues related to World Heritage
- The project should **involve the community** in order to deepen their knowledge around issues related to World Heritage and the World Heritage Volunteers campaign.