

REPORT

World Heritage and Sustainable Development

The Role of Local Communities in the Management of UNESCO Designated Sites

Kotor, Montenegro. 7-8 June 2012

ORGANISED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF



THE MEETING

In the context of the 40th anniversary of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, under the theme “World Heritage and Sustainable Development; the Role of Local Communities”, the UNESCO Venice Office, in cooperation with the national authorities of Montenegro, organized 7-8 June 2012 in Kotor, Montenegro a regional meeting to share



experiences, good practices and planned activities concerning the management of World Heritage and other UNESCO designated sites (MAB Biosphere Reserves).

The two-day meeting included best practice presentations on the first day and facilitated group discussions directly related to the

participants' area of work on the second day. Each participating country (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey) presented current issues in the management of UNESCO designated sites. The presentations are made available from the UNESCO Venice Office webpage. (<http://www.unesco.org/venice>)

WORKSHOP THEMES

The workshop was structured as a professional capacity-building workshop, focusing on two interrelated themes: 1) Integrated heritage management processes; 2) Community involvement and heritage development. For each of the proposed themes, the workshop intended to stimulate a collective discussion over opportunities, obstacles, and emerging trends concerning the management of heritage in South-Eastern Europe, drawing on the experience of the participating sites as well as on the contribution of international experts.

In so doing, the workshop aimed at raising awareness on key-issues, favoring the emergence of a shared approach to heritage management, and sharing knowledge and good practices on the selected themes. In particular regarding:

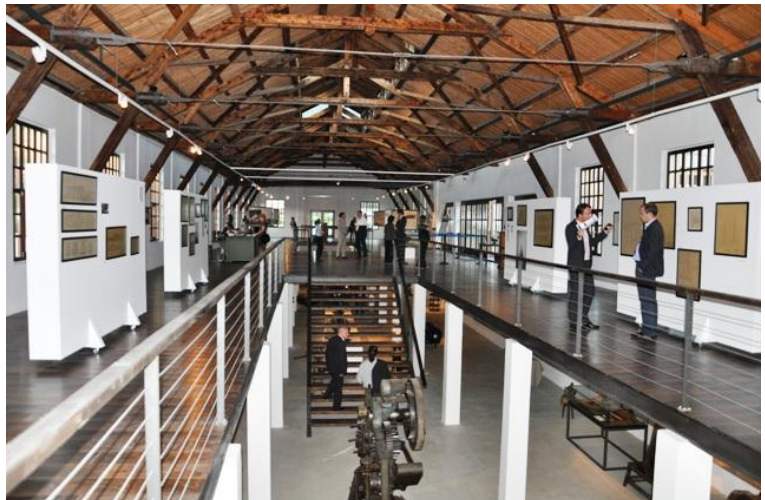
- Development challenges and the effective implementation of management plans
- New ways of building partnerships with local communities
- Enhanced awareness of the benefits of protected area management
- Capacity building for better communication, public participation and conflict management skills

1. Integrated heritage management processes

The session dealt with integrated planning and management approaches as means of balancing conservation and community interests and securing a sustainable heritage development process. Day-to-day management on the site is becoming more and more complex; it has to deal with multiple layers of protection measures and many competing interests.

The effective implementation of management plans is a challenge in today's rapidly changing societal and political realities.

There is a need for innovative and site-specific solutions for sustaining living heritage sites. Therefore the concern for heritage values must be integrated in all planning and management frameworks.



Questions for the debate:

- Can natural and cultural heritage management have the same objectives?
- Is there a need for new linkages, collaborative planning practices and strategies?
- Are World Heritage and MAB Biosphere Reserve designations just another layer of protection (and complexity?) or can they help in building these new linkages and promoting more integrated approaches?
- Which role and mandate should the central and local institutions/government agencies have in an integrated management process? Why should they invest in proper World Heritage management?
- Which kind of policies and actions could be put in place to enhance the economic value of the site? How is it possible to ensure financial viability of preserving heritage?



2. Community involvement and heritage development

The session explored ways to build a meaningful dialogue with the local community and to better respond to society's interests. Community involvement is about commitment to the place and a condition for its sustainable development. The concept of heritage is

broadening with the recognition of socio-economic as well as intangible values and site management has to deal with a growing number of stakeholders. Is there room for community involvement in management plans? Good practice from different projects where local participation has been a starting point for awareness building and site management will be discussed.

Questions for the debate:

- Do conservation policies allow all stakeholders to have a voice?
- Many sites have multilayered communities, with different relationship with the place - who are the custodians?
- How can site management adapt to the society's needs – and the other way round?
- How can benefits for the local community be shared and constraints dealt with? Are benefits only measured in economic terms?
- What kind of community participation activities have been the most useful in your sites? How have they influenced the site management? What expectations have been met?

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

Each working group session was introduced by a short presentation on the key issue by the resource persons, Alessio Re from UNESCO Centre on World Studies and the Economics of Culture in Turin, Italy and Aleksandra Kapetanovic from Expeditio NGO, Montenegro. The participants were invited to discuss their experiences and explore possibilities for developing a shared approach. The sessions in three parallel discussion groups, facilitated by experts, focused on questions related to the above themes. However, all groups found that the issues are interlinked and the discussions dealt with both integrated management processes and community involvement. The following summary is structured according to the most prevalent questions raised during the sessions.

ISSUES DISCUSSED

Need for a shared vision for community development

The Convention on Intangible Heritage has placed community in the first place. As Anthony Krause, Head of Culture Unit, UNESCO Venice Office, mentioned in his opening address, the World Heritage Convention is catching up and emphasizing community involvement in the implementation of the Convention.

The nomination and management process is more comprehensive and allows for new actors to get acquainted with the World Heritage context. Community involvement is an important part of the nomination dossier and part of the evaluation. In 'older' sites the Outstanding Universal Value is often not even well known by the community, and very few sites have it as a starting point in setting management priorities.

New nominations in the SEE region are including innovative ways of collaboration, for example establishing a Memorandum of Cooperation (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). The local community is on board from the initial stage and is aware of the



values which the nomination emphasizes. For example, in preparing the nomination dossier for Chania, Greece, the inhabitants were astonished to see the city in a World Heritage perspective.

The importance of *the celebratory aspect* and emphasizing the 'spirit and feeling' of the World Heritage site was underlined by the participants. Some sites are in the process of developing the intangible value concept – like the diving from Mostar Bridge. Another aspect is linked to the change of inhabitants, for example in larger cities like Istanbul, and in rural villages in Romania where the community feeling is rapidly changing. The

success of festivals in World Heritage sites is encouraging, and examples were presented from Romania and Bulgaria. The range is wide from film festivals to performing cross-cultural traditions and revitalizing local cuisine.

There is a need for new ways to present and transfer the values and to find new audiences. The activities in Ivanovo Rock Hewn Churches World Heritage site has proven to work: three steps for awareness building; first work with children and schools



together with the municipality, involve NGOs, artists and celebrate with festivals of traditional food! Slovenian experiences with schools and training the teachers were also very positive.

Mr. Matteo Rosati from UNESCO Venice Office brought up the question of *the role of*

media. The participants discussed how to use the potential role of media, especially new internet based media. New virtual social networks can have a considerable influence on building up the identity and create meeting places and new audiences.

The participants stressed the *need to connect the local community and the local authorities* and underlined the need for awareness building about the benefits and obligations of an UNESCO designation. What are the reasons for lack of involvement; who is the community? Local authority may not have the same perspective as the local community – and the international community including tourists can have a great impact on the local identity. The participants pointed out that the reaction of the local communities can be different; an increase in tourism is not always experienced as only positive. Many sites, among them Starigrad Plain, Škocjan Caves and Ivanovo Rock Hewn churches, witnessed that the direct involvement of local authorities in site

management was an important factor. Concrete conservation works are a good start, and experiences from Berat show that hands-on projects and informal activities can bring in new groups in heritage work.

The importance of good *personal contacts and communication* was brought up. The experiences of Istanbul management plan process, Rhodes work with private business sector and the Skocjan caves management has resulted in close contacts with the stakeholders and the community. Quoting some words from the presentations: “The community need somebody to talk to” (Slovenia) and, “The broken contact with the community must be restored” (Bulgaria).

Effective implementation of the management plan

Montenegro Deputy Minister of Culture Lidija Ljesar pointed out in her welcoming speech the importance of *effective management measures*. There is a need for a strong political will and necessary legal support. The developers need guidelines!

Challenges for protected area management were common; large and more complex sites, need for capacity building in management teams and lack of long term planning practice. One of the key issues was the resources needed a participatory and integrated management process – it may take many years to build cooperation with the stakeholders. There is a visible *lack of awareness of what an UNESCO designation means in day-to-day management practice* – and the local authorities might not recognize that it is an obligation beyond the other duties. Several sites witnessed that the management cooperation is initiated with small steps through collaboration with the private sector, giving local service priority.

The participants reported of ongoing work with new management plans and updates of existing management plans. Institutional reorganizations, instable government structures were a challenge but also an incentive to develop innovative site specific solutions. The *importance of an integrated overall environmental management strategy* of cultural and

natural values was also an issue. This aspect was especially highlighted in Škojcan caves management plan which focuses on relationships, linkages and interdependencies between cultural and natural heritage.

A common concern was the lack of *clear definitions of the function and legal provision of the management plan* on all administrative levels. Who is the driver? Who is actually implementing the management plan? Ambitious management plans may remain only a paper because of lack of clear responsibilities for their effective implementation. The coordination system and process is as important as the adopted document itself. How are the action plans incorporated in the municipality planning – are the action plans realistic or a wish list? Albania has a fairly new legislation under revision and the goal of the new law is to include community in the management plan process. In Romania cooperation with local community is mandatory by the National legislation. However, in many sites the designated area community is small and not on the main political agenda. Benefits from tourism, festivals and other celebrations were found to be means for increasing the political motivation as well.

In many sites the ministry (or even several ministries) is in charge of drafting the management plan.



The question is the *institutional coordination on site level*. Best practice shows that it is urgent to involve the local community in the first place. In order to ensure the sustainability of the cooperation it should be formalized. For example, Starigrad Plain management plan has established an institution with a specific task to deal with communication with the local community on a daily basis. *The co-sharing of funding* is another factor to consider in the management set-up. In Starigrad Plains the local

authorities finance management salaries and material costs, and the state/ministry finances projects and activities.

Stakeholder participation in management process

Stakeholder participation includes a range of issues, from identifying the relevant stakeholders to explaining the objectives of the protected area management to all stakeholders and clarifying the roles and responsibilities. *The organization of the participatory process* obviously differs due to the character of the sites. In large cities like



Rhodes and Istanbul, the decision-making and coordination of stakeholder responsibilities and functions is complex. It is integrated in the local authority planning system. One of the advantages with this structure is that development proposals are discussed at an early stage and the management plan has a proactive role, as in the case of the permanent infrastructure

board in Istanbul management plan. In Slovenia, experiences proved that best ways for the local authority participation is by councils – and local participation by direct activities in the site.

The question was raised about *the concrete role of networks*- how do they function? Some responses were given in examples: the revitalization projects in historic towns of Berat and Gjirokastra the local networks formed a consultation forum which was helpful in resolving political conflicts.

The *cost and benefits of stakeholder consultation process* were discussed. It was generally agreed that the process takes time, up to several years. It is therefore important to make a realistic funding strategy for stakeholder participation. How did the

participatory process impact on the management process – what difference did it make? The Istanbul experience showed that the municipalities and the universities had the ‘loudest voice’. The process gave an opportunity to learn about the other partners’ views and activities which facilitates future decision-making when everybody is aware of priorities in management.



Several sites raised the issue of *communities in the buffer zone*. A buffer zone is an integrated part of site management and even a single heritage building has its community context. The process of defining Kotor World Heritage buffer zone was a very positive experience – the municipalities wanted to join in. In Škocjan caves the function of the buffer zone became very visible. The site itself is small in population (74 inhabitants) but the buffer zone – the catchment zone – is large (17 000 inhabitants). The draft Management Plan, to be adopted soon, deals with how to strengthen the role of the Park in buffer zone and transitional area.

The viability of World Heritage and protected areas and revenue sharing experiences

The benefits of a World Heritage/MAB designation are not evident for the majority of the local communities. Still, many best practices about the positive role of heritage in

community development were presented during the workshop. Only to mention some examples; Škocjan Caves park management offers employment, restores households and the number of inhabitants has increased. The win-win partnerships include direct payments to the households, investments in infrastructure and availability of ranger service. The situation of regional/ national parks is evidently different from other sites, but lessons learnt from how the management is linked to the community welfare directly are useful.

Revenue sharing mechanisms through real estate regulations were successful in many countries. In Croatia, 10% of the real estate tax is earmarked for conservation, and grants can be given for the restoration costs. In Mostar, 20% of the state owned properties rent goes to the World Heritage site. There is also a state architectural conservation fund for restoration works. The site specific partnerships with the private sector were not so frequent, but several sites were exploring different options. In Starigrad Plain the promoting of agricultural products is done for direct income for the rural community.

Tourism income is what the inhabitants see as the immediate impact of the World Heritage designation. In several sites tourism creates as well a conflict



situation between the local community and the business sector. How to manage visitors in order to spread touristic benefits as much as possible? Which kind of tourism could maximize the positive impacts on local economies? Examples of innovative new partnerships with tourism organizations are needed. Rhodes started at an early stage a living community project with a goal to improve the quality of life in the medieval city. Now the benefits are seen in the valorization of the historic city, in tourism quality control – and one of the results is that the stakeholders now know each other well. To raise the awareness of the tourism business sector has been difficult, but now supported by legal

and a control measures, the quality of the offer is improving and the disturbances for the inhabitants reduced.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Lidija Ljesar, Deputy Minister of Culture, Montenegro, stressed the positive experiences of including community in management planning from the beginning – and that there is a need for guidelines for community collaboration. Anthony Krause concluded by recommending to focus on revenue sharing and economic valorization of heritage values – and to use UNESCO as a platform and for facilitation.

Summing up, the main issues raised during the workshop are in the line with those from the prior SEE Periodic Reporting meeting in Sibiu; need for a shared vision as a guiding principle, the importance of the management process itself and the need to build new partnerships.

Challenges and problems were shared. Securing the effective implementation of the World Heritage Convention on local level remains one of the major issues – and in this work the cooperation with local community and local authorities is crucial. Participatory planning takes time and resources and this should be taken into account in management cycle and be allocated adequate funding. At the same time there is an opportunity for new and innovative management plan structures which are been developed, triggered by many new administrative and legal reorganizations in the SEE region. The need for capacity building in conflict management and overall communication skills were not specifically addressed but they were an underlying issue in the presentations.

The awareness of the socio-economic benefits for the community of World Heritage / UNESCO designation need to be made visible in the management process. Successful best practice of site-specific partnerships and funding mechanisms were presented but still needs to be further explored. The recommendation was to develop thematic workshops on revenue sharing options and partnerships with tourism sector.

The sites are presently involved in a great number of international and regional programs and activities, including transboundary nominations. The SUSTCULT project was brought up by partner countries and a suggestion was made to explore possibilities for new joint projects targeting UNESCO designated sites management issues.

Many presentations illustrated how heritage can be the step stone for a variety of different local activities. The impact of a celebratory approach on awareness and identity cannot be underestimated – the economic benefit is not the only value.



LESSONS LEARNT

Overall assessment of main outcomes

The workshop confirmed the conclusions from the previous Periodic Reporting meeting in Sibiu; the usefulness of joint meetings with national focal points and site managers; the need for integrated approaches and the importance to have a shared vision and knowledge of OUV as the basis for management. The most urgent issue is need for better communication skills and to find new ways for partnerships on site level. In Sibiu the questions focused on formal issues directly related to World Heritage Periodic

Reporting and management plans. In Kotor the discussions dealt more with site specific solutions and issues.

The expected outcomes were:

- Sharing experiences and creating opportunities for future exchange
- Identifying key elements for promoting participatory approach
- Identifying needs for further regional capacity-building on planning and management at regional/State/site level
- Establishing a network of sites with a cross-border or regional perspective
- Exploring possibilities for fund-raising and resource mobilization at regional level

The main outcome of the Kotor workshop was an increased awareness of different aspects of community involvement, update of their implication in day to day site



management in the region and more in-depth knowledge about implementing participatory approaches in management practice. Many innovative and pro-active actions and strategies were presented during the Kotor workshop. However, a certain change of mindset seems to be needed. The discussions revealed overconfidence on increased public funding, on World

Heritage / conservation national conservation legislations, and on UNESCO involvement for solving management problems. Therefore the examples from site specific initiatives in partnership with local authorities, local businesses etc. were useful.

It seems that it could be worthwhile to conduct a survey about the obstacles and reasons of negative impacts – that is, *why* does the local community not participate; *what are the reasons* why conservation guidelines are not activated in development planning and so on. Generally there is a lack of a ‘contact zone’ between the conservation institutions,

the local authorities and the community. This should, in fact, be the function of a management plan. The necessity to widen and open up the working area of the (natural and cultural) conservation professionals is evident.

The OUV as a guiding principle for management was clear for the new, less so for the earlier inscriptions. Obviously recently inscribed properties were more focused and had the baseline data available, even regarding community participation. But why are the ‘old’ sites not moving? Possible actions, as referred to earlier, could be opening up the management scope and inviting other actors and stakeholders; increasing awareness also among national funding and legislative authorities and taking the local community on board in all development planning.

The political commitment, different roles and responsibilities in community development were not brought up as a specific issue, beside the role of NGOs (Berat, Mostar) and the political agenda in urban development (Istanbul). It was however evident that skills in conflict management, stakeholder interest assessments, and other participatory planning methods were of interest.

Comments on workshop structure

The Kotor workshop had a very wide scope. Likewise the sites were of very varying character – from large landscapes to single objects. Still, the workshop functioned well as information sharing and contact occasion. However, the workshop themes ‘integrated planning and community involvement’ are overarching issues and a more specific theme would have facilitated a more focused and result – oriented discussion. Future workshops could, for example, gather historic cities or cultural and natural landscapes, or archaeological sites around common management questions.

The second day workshop did open up for many aspects and ideas, but was too short for reaching conclusions and agreeing on joint activities. In this aspect, an open plenary would have worked better. This solution would have solved some obstacles in the

logistical arrangements as well (inappropriate spaces for group work and underestimated need for translation). With more time, the workshop location in a World Heritage site would have offered possibilities for ‘walks and talks’, and focused site visits where groups could have studied together with local colleagues a specific question.

The goal was to share experiences between the participants and the discussions were lively even if quite patchy. The groups were designated in advance, the first session had the focal point and site manager from each country together, and the second session was divided according to the key questions of the sites. However, the short sessions could have been more focused if the participants would have discussed within their own area of work; focal points / site managers / NGOs etc. The input from the facilitators, especially their conclusions, was appreciated, but a final discussion did not take place due to shortage of time.

The prepared questions for debate were found interesting, but within the short time available for discussion they were not precise enough to underpin proposals or agreements. A future model could be a pre-selection of a case, presented by the site the previous day and more in detail the second day. These case studies / discussions could then be further developed by a smaller editorial group and possibly published on the website. There were several sites working with issues of general interest, like on integrated management and legal issues, cooperation and revenue sharing with local authorities, participatory processes and developing educational programs, among others.



CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

The World Heritage Strategy for Capacity Building defines three target audiences; practitioners, institutions, communities and networks. The Kotor workshop, in line with the Sibiu Periodic Reporting meeting addressed similar learning areas: community outreach, risk preparedness, enforcement of legislative frameworks and policies, effectiveness of management plans and conservation guidelines. In short, there is a need for capacity and awareness building with a more inclusive approach; especially in communication and partnership building with private and public sector. Accordingly, the capacity building activities should target community, local authority and private sector representatives to a much greater degree than today.

Suggestions for thematic areas

- Resource management, revenue sharing and fundraising
- Adaptive tourism development
- Partnership building and project management
- Local community involvement through educational programs
- Integrated heritage management
 - tools and strategies for integrating conservation guidelines in development planning
 - historic cities development and urban planning processes
 - risk management
 - monitoring mechanisms
- Participatory management
 - communication, interpretation
 - participatory planning and process management, stakeholder analysis
 - negotiation and conflict management

The level of capacity building activities should focus beyond site managers and focal points and include professionals working with, for example, site interpretation, funding,



marketing, tourism, and development planning.

Short term capacity building workshops on national level could be carried out by the State Parties. An option is to develop a core workshop which is rotating among the SPs in the SEE region and adapted to the specific situation. In this way the

experiences could be added on and shared. The outcome of the SUSTCULT project should give valuable experiences of how these workshops could be designed in a most useful way.

SUGGESTION FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

General considerations

- Joint meetings with focal points and site managers are recommended and should be part of SP / regional regular activities.
- It was also evident that good practice and experience in the region were not familiar to participants and should be disseminated. Ways of doing this should be investigated; the networking and media sharing opportunities could be possible.
- It was found important to secure the follow up so that initiatives taken at one meeting can be picked up in the following. A durable structure gives reliability, and allows for new participants to get involved.

- The Kotor workshop highlighted the fact that SEE region is subject to a multitude of projects and programs carried out by European and international organizations, institutions and private companies. These are directly or indirectly affecting the UNESCO designated areas. A mutual awareness and capacity building activity about opportunities and constraints in working in protected areas seems necessary – possibly facilitated by the UNESCO Venice office.
- Avoid duplications, as mentioned above; the sites are involved in many different programs. For example, linking to ongoing World Heritage Periodic Reporting process, nomination and tentative list work should be explored. Current European Landscape Convention, Europa Nostra projects, among others, are highlighting community involvement projects – these which could be invited as case studies / workshop themes. It could be useful to explore if ongoing international or regional activities and programs within for example, tourism, urban development, and environmental protection could include a component of protected area management in their agenda.

Proposals for next steps

- A regional workshop on a regular base (once a year) with site managers and focal points. Workshop structure enlarged from Kotor workshop to include 2,5 days. First day presentation/discussion of current issues, second day thematic session with invited case study presentation as a basis for discussions, third half-day concluding plenary discussion.
- Thematic workshops targeting regional capacity building needs (as above) with World Heritage and Advisory Bodies support. Possible linkages to ongoing WH programmes should be examined (Historic Urban Landscape, Sustainable Tourism etc.). Promotion of UNESCO toolkits and programs, for example Young People's World Heritage Education Programme, twinning opportunities etc.

- Exploring organizational and funding options for an awareness raising programme inviting other sectors; tourism and business actors, real estate investors, infrastructure developers and international funding agencies. UNESCO Venice office could have the role of facilitator and coordinator of international and European Union funding and development aid organizations work.
- Mapping the relevant research and training activities within universities and institutions in the SEE region and enhancing regional participation in the programmes. Possible connection with UNESCO Category 2 Centers, UNESCO Chair in Heritage Studies and other relevant institutions.
- Initiating a protected areas network in SEE region. The experiences from functioning networks; for example in Albania, in France, Spain, Italy and transnational sites like the Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps property (with Slovenia) could be shared.
- Proceeding with the suggestion from the workshop to develop a regional website. Experiences from and possible links to existing websites, for example SEE Heritage network can be useful.

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