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# OWHC Position Paper



## Keepers of Traditions and Laboratories of the Future: World Heritage Cities Inspire Momentum

*Based on "Recommendations from the Cultural Committee of the Association of German Cities and Towns, adopted 5 April 2019.*



ORGANIZATION OF  
WORLD HERITAGE CITIES

## Preface

This report by the Working Group for UNESCO World Heritage Historic Centers within the Association of German Cities and Towns is a welcome and timely inventory which brings together various key aspects of urban heritage management in an integrated manner. This study helps to identify the interconnectedness of current urban development challenges in World Heritage cities, such as over-tourism, non-compliance in construction, unsustainable use of resources, population pressure, infrastructure and traffic pressure, pollution and a shortage of (affordable) housing.

When we understand the interconnectedness of the multifaceted challenges, it will enable us to find better long term solutions and plan effective interventions in World Heritage cities. It will also enable the cultural heritage sector to contribute more directly to reaching the internationally agreed upon SDG targets by using new technologies and smart solutions in dealing with complex historic urban centers.

I would like to commend the authors of this report. Their principle recommendations are fully in accordance with the main objectives of the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC). These include effective cooperation between World Heritage cities; the financing and realization of World Heritage projects; and the involvement of citizens and community groups in urban planning. These recommendations are essential to transparent and inclusive governance in World Heritage cities.

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## Context

Recognition of a historic town or a city district as a UNESCO World Heritage site is the highest international distinction given for preservation. Even more than with other World Heritage sites, urban sites are particularly challenged to withstand and balance the tensions between tradition and modernity and preserving historical heritage and developing a vibrant city. The distinction opens up new economic prospects, especially in tourism, but it can also have its drawbacks, for example in the impact of large numbers of users visiting a site. In addressing these issues, new impulses arise to integrate urban development—which also benefit cities that are not World Heritage. The aim is to heighten a city's own profile, to develop a shared city identity that draws on both a European and global context, and to promote social cohesion. In view of the current challenges of globalization, climate change, immigration and social segregation, these goals and the ways in which they are operationalized are very important.

The European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 raised awareness of the importance, in particular, of architectural heritage for the development of shared values and identity. The Davos declaration made by the European Ministers of Culture—“An Exemplary Architectural Heritage for Europe”—emphasizes the central role that architectural heritage plays in providing quality living environments. For years now, World Heritage cities have been learning how to cultivate traditions with a forward-looking approach. Their experiences can give other cities the momentum to cautiously reconcile architectural heritage with new developments and to make use of opportunities for participatory urban development. World Heritage cities are at once keepers of traditions and laboratories for the future.

Many problem-solving approaches from UNESCO World Heritage cities can be easily applied to other (historic) cities.

In order for World Heritage cities to meet the challenges and to live up to their exemplary designation, further supporting structures need to be developed on a global as well as a federal level. For a further beneficial development of an integrated Urban Heritage site management, the following points are essential:

- World Heritage cities need continuous financial support to meet the ongoing challenges of World Heritage management.
- Special funding programs are required, for example in linking the themes of sustainability and cultural heritage.
- A platform that provides opportunities for coordination, collaborative communication, training and support should be guaranteed – next to the OWHC on a global level, also federal structures are essential.

# **Impulses for Urban Development**

## **Overcoming New Societal Challenges**

Cities face certain challenges such as demographic change, migration, and climate change. Currently, the main factors influencing urban development are population trends, housing demands, traffic, tourism, and issues around sustainable urban management. Like all European cities, cities with historic centers need to respond to technological and societal changes. However, it is not easy to implement major changes to a city or area that has a protected inventory of World Heritage. Yet, this is rather desirable. Urban planning and design requirements are there to preserve the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and the authentic appearance of a site and should, after careful consideration, deliver practicable solutions for the World Heritage.

The World Heritage designation has become a coveted brand for many cities. The distinction promises international awareness, recognition, and more specifically, an increase in visitation and the related economic benefits that it brings to the city. The “UNESCO World Heritage” label has commercial value and is, consequently, often leveraged by business. In some instances, the designation is conversely perceived as an encumbrance or even as a hindrance to growth-oriented urban development. This is especially apparent when the intentions of planners, investors, and business people et al. are purely focused on rapid growth and short-term financial returns that are not compatible with the principles of the World Heritage Convention and are without a sustainable strategy for the future.

It follows that preparing integrated development concepts, not to mention setting a forward-looking course and balancing different concerns and interests, are essential to a city. In this way the city remains equally attractive, accommodating immediate needs while planning for the future needs of residents, tourists, businesses, and all other user groups. As such, this requires the careful consideration of all issues and the courage to find new and smart solutions.

## **A Special Responsibility—Implementing Global Goals of Sustainability**

In 2015, the international community passed with broad consensus 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Their implementation on a local level has to be supported by numerous organizations, agencies, and administrative units. In Germany, for example, a key document guiding this initiative is the latest edition of the German Sustainability Strategy (January 2017).

The UN considers education as fundamental to achieving its sustainability goals. To this end UNESCO has launched the World Action Program, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). World Heritage cities play an important role in the implementation of the ESD program in that they owe their special status as World Heritage to the UN, and as World Heritage sites they have exceptional potential to facilitate sustainable development. Consequently, they have a responsibility to implement the SDGs and the program, Education for Sustainable Development. Clearly, the existing educational and participatory activities in World Heritage cities should also be used to facilitate and implement the global goals of

sustainability. In addition to the ESD content, formats and methods, a framework of facilitation (e.g. information centers) should be kept in line with the comprehensive ESD approach based on sustainable principles. On the one hand, this presents another responsibility for World Heritage cities, for which additional budgetary and human resource costs are incurred; on the other hand, numerous options and opportunities also present themselves within the broad range of SDG topics, for example the cooperation with new partners. Some of the new responsibilities would include the following: connecting the concepts of sustainability with cultural heritage at the local level, facilitating the SDGs to various target groups, strengthening the integration of the concepts of sustainability into local policies and cultural heritage strategies and overall promoting the popularity of World Heritage sites at an international level, as part of the SDGs.

To achieve these desired outcomes, specially funded programs are required to facilitate the connection between sustainability and cultural heritage in tangible local projects. Furthermore, these programs are required to raise awareness of the link between the goals of sustainability and the cultural heritage through corresponding activities.

Moreover, in order to strengthen World Heritage cities as places of sustainable development and as venues of learning for the ESD program, there is a great need to enable and network the actors involved in the sites. It is also helpful to understand sustainable development as a comprehensive responsibility in the management of World Heritage cities, in addition to positioning the ESD program as an integral part of World Heritage facilitation.

The OWHC has accepted this responsibility in the implementation of the SDGs. Relevant topics already have been addressed in conferences like for example 2008 in Regensburg (EARTH WIND WATER FIRE - Environmental Challenges to Urban World Heritage), 2014 in Quedlinburg ("Crisis as opportunity for World Heritage Cities – Resilience") as well as in different case studies (to be found on the online platform City2City – [www.ovpm.org](http://www.ovpm.org)).

Especially the upcoming OWHC World Congress 2021 in Québec/Canada will focus intensely on how to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in our World Heritage Cities and use them for guaranteeing a high status of quality of life. Inspired by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the New Urban Agenda and the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach, the OWHC wishes to reflect on the solutions that will address these issues to enhance the liveability and highlight the uniqueness and identity of World Heritage Cities. By facing these challenges, these cities can become even stronger models of urbanity and conviviality.

## **Building within a Fabric of Structures worth Preserving**

It speaks volumes when the structural fabric preserved is worth keeping. Structural fabric in many ways influences and contributes to the authentic preservation of local sites and cityscapes. Locally defined as well as landscape defined structural fabrics can be differentiated. The structural fabric of World Heritage cities receives special attention here

because it typifies (regionally) the character of a place and can influence the appearance of entire streets and quarters, moreover, define the townscape. Because it is representative of a conserved area or an ensemble, it is documented and enlisted in local building regulations and plans, not to mention in statutes.

However, major differences do exist in regard to a structural fabric's protective status versus that of a monument's. Even though architectural and archaeological monuments in World Heritage cities have been effectively protected by state conservation laws or nature conservation laws (as an extension to the Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage), structural fabric worthy of preservation is still subject to very different levels of protection and in some instances the protection is questionable. Regardless of any real or anticipated future changes and construction plans concerning World Heritage, it is important to consider the potential of unprotected structures in terms of their value for preservation as World Heritage and, when possible, to professionally document and list them as part of a particularly valuable structural fabric. Under the possible arising pressures of future change, structures noteworthy of protection will have a greater chance of preservation when supported by relevant political voting bodies, and, thereby, have their continued existence even secured within World Heritage.

UNESCO World Heritage cities are testament to the prosperity of the past. Given their history and design, they reflect a variety of building periods from the past as well as regionally typical architectural traditions. And these should be preserved. They are tangible embodiments of cultural identity and usually do not require reconstruction. However, they do require a sophisticated, contemporary building culture that concurrently respects the old and develops it further. Here, planners and architects are competitively called to task: to plan afresh without disturbing existing architecture. The possibilities are many, as are the opportunities.

## **Cultural Heritage—A Contribution to Urban Resilience**

Nobody knows what the future holds. However, what is certain is that a global transformation is taking place with climate change and increased digitization having a major impact on the development of our cities. These changes will affect complex urban systems in various dimensions, at different levels and locations of planning and with a variety of stakeholders.

Historic cities are characterized by their large capacity for conservation. At the same time, they also have resilience<sup>1</sup> given that municipal authorities have to act rather creatively in adapting the historical fabric to change. Architectural heritage has been largely perceived as rigid, unchangeable and inert in urban environments. But a closer examination reveals that it is precisely this heritage that contributes significantly to a city's ability to adapt to change.

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<sup>1</sup> "Resilience is the psychological or psychophysiological resistance that enables people to sustain and master psychological and psychophysiological stress (stress, hyperstress, strain)"; cf. H.G. Petzold/L. Müller, Resilienz und protektive Faktoren im Alter und ihre Bedeutung für den Social Support und die Psychotherapie bei älteren Menschen, Düsseldorf / Zürich, 2002, p. 2.

The following aspects are relevant here: the resilience of design and construction, the resilience through suitable materials, the resilience through adaptive use, and the resilience within the parameters of planning. In order for these aspects of urban architectural heritage to have a beneficial effect on the resilience of cities, the ensuing fortifying measures must be considered:

- In regard to construction and renovation measures, one should be mindful of deconstruction preparedness, and planning should create options for a variety of possible uses. At the federal level, for example, it would be desirable to have relevant projects address these topics. (Resilience of design and construction)
- When selecting building materials for urban cultural heritage, their durability and reparability are important considerations. At a European level and at the federal level, it would be desirable to take careful consideration of these two qualities as fundamental criteria in procurement procedures. (Resilience through suitable materials)
- Urban planning processes should promote concepts of integrated usage, include a large selection of stakeholders and, accordingly, facilitate a wider range of uses, as well as make temporary usage possible. (Resilience through adaptive use)
- Since resilience is based in a systemic approach, comprehensive concepts of protection and development can only be devised by overcoming sectoral policy boundaries first. The hazards and challenges faced by cities are seldom one-dimensional. It follows that at a European and international level programs and projects should increasingly promote approaches in good governance in the context of urban cultural heritage, as well as in connection with the implementation of planning approaches that are comprehensively integrated. (Resilience within the parameters of planning)

## **Impulses for the Economy**

### **Location is a Key Factor for Economic Development**

World Heritage and monument sites seen as locational factors have a positive effect on the economic development of a city, and, also by themselves, are grounds for economic activity. The World Heritage designation alone has positive connotations and is a source of pride. It can draw in people, give an advantageous image to the local economy, and promote the establishment of businesses. Companies making investments in a World Heritage city can anticipate positive economic outcomes and benefit from the prestige of World Heritage status.

Above all, monument preservation directly drives the economy. Based on high quality standards and the idea of sustainability, UNESCO World Heritage cities/OWHC member cities can make an important contribution to developing the economy by providing labor-intensive conservation commissions to medium-sized companies and the craft trades from

various disciplines. Sustainability in this case refers to both the quality of materials and workmanship and also to the quality awareness of companies. There are opportunities here to specialize and to occupy sector niches thereby aiding competitiveness despite the high costs. Municipalities and builders could then capitalize on the expertise and specialists locally available.

Aside from the positive image World Heritage sites enjoy worldwide and the respective publications and media coverage, the commercialization of UNESCO World Heritage cities is built on the marketing activities of each city. From the outset, provision must be made for a wide variety of actors: the entire tourism industry including tour operators and hotel and restaurant businesses, not to mention retailers and other service providers and companies, either managerial or industrial, need to be considered. Taking an open and innovative approach, marketing activities should also involve neighboring cities as well as interested citizens in a regional network. As such, a [World Heritage] city should be viewed—with its history, its structure, its peculiarities, and its surrounding contextual cultural landscape—as an integrated whole. Within this comprehensive approach the city should take appropriate action and maximize economic opportunities for all.

The advantages of the unique selling point of UNESCO World Heritage cities are obvious: the cities are tasked to realize the opportunities and prospects offered and to sustainably benefit from the significance of the historic heritage.

## **Tourism in UNESCO World Heritage Cities**

For numerous UNESCO World Heritage sites tourism is a particularly significant economic factor. Although the World Heritage designation does not necessarily correlate with increasing visitor numbers, the designation, due to its exclusivity, demonstrably offers increased marketing opportunities, especially internationally. A targeted marketing strategy can increase tourism.

In view of the increasing number of travelers worldwide, a timely discussion is taking place concerning the concept of “Over-Tourism”. This phenomenon is creating an increasingly negative impact on the integrity of World Heritage sites in terms of their physical, functional, and social structures. Heavy tourism not only damages the material fabric of monuments, but in some places the general consensus is that it also leads to restrictions concerning the quality of life of residents because of the misappropriation of public, residential, and commercial spaces by the tourism sector. These resulting tendencies to displace and to cause social tensions must be addressed at an early stage.

Sustainable and high-quality tourism programs and policies must aim to keep UNESCO World Heritage cities alive, attractive, and functional. As such, the key to successfully implementing programs and policies is constant inter-agency cooperation at the municipal level involving all pertinent local stakeholders. In this way, the setting of objectives and the implementation of tourism marketing can be aligned with the interests of residents and the respective compatible heritage user policies of historic centers. In the context of destination

management some of the possible solutions in managing visitors might include: defining hubs for tourism development and offering alternative visitor programs in the vicinity or surrounding area of the World Heritage site. Equally important is inter-agency agreement on the budgetary aspects of tourism and what component is re-invested in the conservation of the World Heritage resource.

In order to increase awareness of World Heritage sites and to promote a soft tourism compatible to the heritage, greater interaction between tourism associations and World Heritage cities is desirable at all levels.

## **Impulses for the Environment**

### **Responding to the Consequences of Climate Change**

Combating climate change and adapting to its effects—the escalation of global ecological issues—are among the greatest challenges we face in our time. Extreme weather patterns and events are occurring with increased frequency and intensity in the form of storms, heavy rains, floods, flash floods and droughts as well as leading to the rise and/or fall of moisture levels in soils. Moreover, all of these manifestations pose a threat to archaeological remains, landscapes, and historical buildings. Because of their significant and sometimes fragile structural fabric, historical cities in general and UNESCO World Heritage cities in particular will have to develop special programs to protect themselves from these events.

Demands will be placed not only on cities, local governments and institutions, but also on building owners and residents, who will be obliged to protect themselves from the dangers.

### **The Use of Renewable Energies and Energy-Efficiency Measures**

Currently, numerous cities are pursuing climate-friendly environmental policies by providing green electricity to public consumers, refurbishing buildings for energy-efficiency, and improving transport systems and the like. In combating climate change, UNESCO World Heritage cities require adaptive measures of energy management that preserve the authenticity and integrity of respective sites. Reference to combating climate change, the opportunities and challenges as well as the possible [mitigating] measures can be found in the position paper of the Association of German Cities and Towns<sup>2</sup> and the Civil Protection Manual of the German Commission for UNESCO<sup>3</sup>.

Improving the energy efficiencies of existing historical buildings using compliant materials imposes exacting demands on urban renewal and is often associated with additional expenditure. Designated protected old buildings must specifically qualify for this retrofitting. Solar power, for instance, can only be minimally used due to the often protected rooftop

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<sup>2</sup> Deutscher Städtetag (Association of German Cities and Towns): „Positionspapier Klimaschutz in den Städten“, Köln 2008: [Positionspapier Klimaschutz](#)

<sup>3</sup> Handbuch Katastrophenschutz an Welterbestätten, Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission e. V. 2017

landscapes and, similarly, the use of standard measures of insulating are also limited. It follows that innovative solutions need to be researched in the areas of civil engineering, material technology and conservation. Findings should be centrally managed and easily accessible. At present the Deutsche Fachwerkzentrum Quedlinburg e. V. (German Centre for Half-timbered Construction, registered society) together with the Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz (German Foundation for Monument Protection) have made important contributions to the research, and the provision of examples, in renovating—respectful of heritage, ecological and environmental values. These contributions aid in the refurbishment of architectural monuments for energy efficiency.

Indirect measures in combating climate change are gaining new and greater importance. In light of this, the increased greening of historic urban areas needs to be re-discussed and compromises and resolutions regarding the preservation of historical monuments might have to be made. Appropriate measures as such could significantly improve urban living conditions.

It also needs to be considered that restoring or reusing of old buildings is definitely in itself the most sustainable and environmentally friendly thing we can do, so there needs to be a paradigm shift in the way we think and live.

## **Impulses for Cohesion**

### **World Heritage Concerns Us All—Active Local Participation**

A broad on-the-ground alliance is a prerequisite for preserving a shared heritage. Beyond UNESCO's requirement that civil society participate in the preparation of management plans of already designated World Heritage sites<sup>4</sup>, it can be understood that the local economy and the residents should be involved right from the start in the application process. Reference to this can be found in the 2015 UNESCO Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention.

The conservation laws and other legal regulations at times recommend, or even require, the establishment of monument advisory councils / development advisory boards—these could also be dedicated to World Heritage sites and to working in an interdisciplinary manner. Furthermore, individuals or groups could engage in a variety of ways: there are civic movements that advocate for cultural heritage, public petitions and referendums. In some instances protests are organized against urban planning measures. Facilitating and addressing civic engagement requires openness and allowing a platform for groups with different objectives and differing interests and a goal of achieving a balanced approach.

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<sup>4</sup> UNESCO requires all World Heritage sites to prepare management plans. These can take a multi-purpose approach for the World Heritage areas ensuring both their preservation as well as their further development. Integrated heritage management plans can, furthermore, be effective tools based on cultural heritage development for historic cities. This approach has been described and tested within the framework of the EU project HerO (Heritage as Opportunity).

Consequently, it is vital to communicate the principles of participation, favorably, early on by making the [participatory] processes as transparent as possible to citizens and by keeping the public informed of pending actions and the potential end result of those actions.

## **Identity, Identification and Participation**

As unique legacies of humanity, World Heritage cities have both identity-building and people-uniting qualities. Often passed down from generation to generation, this heritage provides understanding and meaning to the present and must be safeguarded for the future.

By doing so, reference points in space and time are created that give visitors and local people insight into their cultural heritage, while portraying the local culture as part of the diverse and interconnected heritage of humanity.

To this effect, one of the most important responsibilities of cities is to convey the value of World Heritage both locally and internationally to all actors on site—to citizen and visitor alike. For only those who can "read" the historic urban landscape develop an understanding of its unique features and thereby identify with the cultural heritage, not to mention become committed to preserving it. Customized education programs provide opportunities to understand the diverse aspects of a city from its historical significance through to its architectural history and Outstanding Universal Value. In addition to these tangible aspects, it is also important to consider the interface aspects of intangible heritage. For the identity-creating factors of a city are usually not just their stone landmarks, but also the rituals and customs that anchor cultural heritage in the daily lives of people that bring it alive.

With regard to the agreed implementation of the 2015 Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention, unrestricted access to information and equal participation of citizens, including the less educated social classes or people with migrant backgrounds, should also be ensured. Improved participatory-social programming helps residents identify more closely with "their" World Heritage city.

## **World Heritage Facilitation—Imparting Values**

World Heritage sites are educational venues and facilitators of UNESCO and World Heritage Convention values. Article 27 (1) of the World Heritage Convention states: "The States Parties to this Convention shall endeavor by all appropriate means, and in particular by educational and information programs, to strengthen appreciation and respect by their peoples of the cultural and natural heritage defined in Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention."

In its 2006 Hildesheim Declaration, the German Commission for UNESCO explicitly defined World Heritage sites as having their own educational mission: 'they are educational sites—experiential, creatively transformative and informative— where children and adolescents are given intercultural access to their own history, to the history of other peoples and to the history of the planet Earth.' As such, Germany has assumed a particular responsibility for

cultural and educational policies, which when implemented translate to concrete action at all federal levels.

The managing bodies of World Heritage sites understand that objectives that facilitate, educate, and inform complement the protective and preservationist activities of listed cultural and natural assets. World Heritage facilitation goes hand in hand with Education for sustainable development (ESD), peace education, and related intercultural education because, for the most part, it pursues the same goals. Increasingly, broader public attention is being given to respective endeavors that are target-group appropriate and professionally facilitated within World Heritage. Naturally, users of World Heritage sites are expecting fitting services.

Even though all generations and age groups are addressed in the facilitation of World Heritage, young people stand out as those who will be responsible for heritage in the future—they represent a particularly important target group for World Heritage management. Presently, information centers, visitor centers, and site related event formats in World Heritage historic centers are being used as a means of raising awareness; this includes partnerships with schools, especially with the UNESCO project schools, not to mention other educational institutions.

In order to further professionalize World Heritage education the actors involved in the sites need to be equipped with the necessary resources and enabled with the required competencies. To this end the following points are helpful:

- understanding World Heritage facilitation as part of the role of management,
- comprehending World Heritage facilitation as imparting values (peace, solidarity, tolerance, global responsibility, sustainability) and
- promoting World Heritage facilitation in conjunction with other educational policy initiatives, or through other actors such as universities and teaching institutions, which embody government programs, curricula and teacher training programs.

## **World Heritage Cities—Interfaces for Migration, Cultural Diversity and Integration**

Historically, people and cultures have experienced migration, as well as encounters, interactions and coexistence with the other. Cities, in particular, have usually been places of long-term immigration and are, consequently, characterized by a diversity and mixing of cultures and lifestyles. The resultant cultural variety, and opportunities and possibilities of cultural exchange are enormously enriching and need to be consciously and purposefully embraced and promoted by various civic institutions. Finding one's way into a culture and society that is different from one's own usually requires a positive course of action and is challenging at the best of times. At the core, integration through education is a key policy issue. When understood as the acquisition of professional, social and emotional

competencies and abilities, education has a wide-ranging impact on integration. However, integration cannot be viewed only as an aspect of migration. In fact, the term encompasses universal participation in social life. This is essentially the Agenda 2030, Goal 4 policy message of the United Nations: equal opportunities for all, inclusiveness, sustainability and world openness—values that measure the quality of education. The possibilities for interacting, learning and experiencing collectively strengthen cohesion. Accordingly, municipalities have an important role to play in creating these places of coexistence.

Especially in a globalized world with profound flows of migration, UNESCO World Heritage cities can be unique places of learning and understanding because they are able to use the cultural heritage itself as a means of connection. World Heritage facilitation, in particular, is a useful means of reaching broad sections of the population. In some World Heritage historic towns, visitor and information centers are already the norm; they offer a range of individual guided tours and workshops, their own educational programs for schools and even digital learning platforms. If one regards World Heritage within the context of educative intercultural encounters, the developments, influences and interrelationships to which World Heritage sites bear witness must all be taken into consideration. So, too, the significance of the sites must be considered as places of encounter, understanding and communication. The methods of negotiating culture are cross-national and unbiased and allow for commonalities and differences to be revealed, which in turn promote dialogue. As places of learning, though, World Heritage sites have a reach that goes beyond cultural or natural heritage: they embrace the entire planet with the inherent message of peace, as set out in the World Heritage Convention.

Working in intercultural education, World Heritage city partners such as municipal education institutions and museums have important duties to fulfill. Particularly the mutual influence of cultures can be brought to light. For example, the project “Multaka: Treffpunkt Museum - Geflüchtete als Guides in Berliner Museen (Refugees as Guides in Berlin Museums)” was an exemplary approach to substantive, methodological, and didactic training at Berlin's museums. Syrian and Iraqi refugees were trained to become museum guides so that they could provide guided tours to other Arabic-speaking refugees.

World Heritage cities need to incorporate facilitation, public relations, and education projects in their general management strategies. As such facilitation methods and communication channels must be continually adapted to changing social and technical conditions.

## **Impulses for Cooperation**

### **A Comprehensive Understanding of Cultural Heritage**

Over time the idea of cultural heritage has become common place in the population at large and has taken many different forms. There is a greater awareness of built cultural heritage thanks to national and state level programs and as well as international conventions such as the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and European institutional projects (European Heritage Days, European Heritage Label). In addition, in recent years, intangible cultural

heritage has come more into focus because of the ratification of the UNESCO Convention on the Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013. However, numerous programs at state and federal levels still focus primarily on tangible cultural heritage, in particular on the renovation of culturally significant individual buildings or entire districts in urban areas.

In spite of considerable [bridging] efforts, such as the Leipzig Charter, there still appears to be a thematically exclusive focus by municipalities, as well as by state and federal levels of government and subordinate federal agencies, on either architectural heritage, intangible heritage, documentary heritage or other [distinct] thematic elements. Nonetheless, a number of international papers and academic writings substantiate that a comprehensive and integrated approach to dealing with cultural heritage is more efficient and congruous to the interests of citizens. The opportunities to exploit cultural heritage for identity and development cannot be fully realized if responsibilities are fragmented and if poor coordination exists between the thematic elements.

It follows that the interfaces between different activities and programs should be made more permeable and that projects and activities should be promoted and supported in order to enhance a comprehensive, local understanding of the cultural heritage.

## **The Complex Cross-cutting Function of World Heritage Management**

World Heritage has a cross-cutting function that affects a range of actors, such as field-related authorities, institutions and networks, including the local populations of respective cities. The close cooperation of all actors and their early involvement in decision-making processes are indispensable for securing the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage designation, as well as for exploiting its full potential for the benefit of the cities concerned and their citizens. In this way a variety of possibly differing interests and demands can be collectively addressed so that they serve the preservation and the further sustainable development of the heritage. The core purpose of the World Heritage Convention is to safeguard World Heritage, whereby the utilization and further development of World Heritage historic centers are inclusive in their criteria. It is fundamentally important to prepare guidelines and criteria that support development aimed at conserving World Heritage. For this very reason, the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention stipulate the creation of a binding management plan to protect the OUV. This same plan should be a record of the characteristics and attributes of the World Heritage site and should state the managerial objectives and measures to be administered for the preservation and development of the site.

On-site management of World Heritage builds on individual professional / technical components to form a steering and planning instrument that, in addition to formal World Heritage instruments, uses legal mechanisms enshrined in law. This cross-cutting approach is an important principle of the UN's New Urban Agenda (Habitat III) dealing with sustainable urban development. Finalizing administrative arrangements is important for community involvement and for dialogue to exist between various actors, levels of government and policy-makers.

Why municipalities are indeed the key actors for implementing management goals lies in the need to adapt solutions to on-site conditions, which, as part of the urban development of World Heritage historic centers, are continually changing. Experience shows that when the interaction between municipalities, external experts and civil society is carefully circumscribed, it has a favorable outcome on sustainable and lasting development. Within this context World Heritage management endeavors to analyze and evaluate all present and future development activities so as to avoid direct or indirect damage to a World Heritage site.

In the interest of avoiding or limiting conflicts, World Heritage impact assessments should be made part of the municipal planning process at an early stage.

## **Underlying Conditions for Successful Site Management**

### **Consolidated Financial Conditions in Heritage Management improve Quality of Life for Local Communities**

The financial challenges for World Heritage conservation are extensive in scale and scope. World Heritage cities do considerably more in protecting the cultural heritage experience because of World Heritage stipulations and their associated costs. This additional outlay is partly incurred from the redevelopment of traffic schemes, on-going restoration measures and reconfiguration of protected properties, not to mention the special conservation requirements and constraints that arise out of a World Heritage designation. Even more costs are incurred when relatively expensive solutions are chosen, for example in changing street layouts in the provision of buffer zones and visual axes, so as not to compromise the structural appeal of the World Heritage or to lose the World Heritage status.

To cover these costs, the state governments and, to some degree, the federal governments are providing support programs for monument protection—in addition to the specific actions taken by municipalities. Nevertheless, these specialized, short-term funding programs are not enough; instead, stable, continual funding is required for World Heritage cities. Financially, cities and communities must be in a position to take up responsibilities at their own discretion in the broad field of heritage protection as well as in their alternate operations. Any money spent on our heritage is a valuable investment in our children's future.

### **Strengthen and further develop the Role of World Heritage Site Managers**

How urban heritage is perceived has changed significantly over the past years, and so too has the role of local communities. A more systemic and holistic understanding of urban heritage has been gaining favor as urban heritage sites face a number of global, regional and local challenges. In order to coordinate the complexities of urban heritage sites, new roles for site managers have evolved over the past two decades, not only as part of pertinent international instruments, but also as a bottom-up development at many urban heritage sites around the world.

Based on the aims of the FARO convention (adopted in 2005) as well as the recommendations of the Historic Urban Landscape HUL approach (2011) a new modern and dynamic perception of cultural heritage has been adopted by UNESCO. Understanding heritage as a system in process with modern-day challenges calls for new coordinating roles: in the “New Urban Agenda” drawn up from the Habitat III conference in Quito 2016, a people-centered approach to sustainable development that is participatory and civically engaging is emphasized.

Only with a cross-sectoral access and an integrated approach, the special requirements of managing an urban World Heritage site can be met. Consequently, the different roles a Site Manager has to fulfill are manifold and should be mentioned here:

#### COORDINATOR

Heritage is understood more broadly today, encompassing different sectors within local administrations, members of local communities, and other private and public stakeholders. It follows that there is a need for coordinating the dealings of different issues between these entities.

#### LEADER

Heritage projects and operations / processes need not only to be coordinated, but also designed and implemented. Leadership is required especially for projects and operations / processes that are not essentially regulated or legislated by laws. Their cross-sectoral nature calls for one person, a leader, to discern issues, design facilitation, and to carry out actions effectively.

#### MEDIATOR

Few heritage sites are conflict free, and the disputes that do occur often arise from the different needs and interests of affected people and stakeholders. A string of conflicts can exist between the interests of preservation and modernization, between tourist requirements and the needs of inhabitants, and / or between shop owners and residents. Mediating a balanced outcome is a core responsibility of a site manager and the process should be imbedded in the development of a World Heritage management plan.

#### INTERPRETER

Creating and communicating narratives for a given heritage site is another major role of a site manager. Delivering the message to local communities and various target groups usually involves cooperation with different partners. A World Heritage visitor center can also help in professionally communicating and interpreting a site.

#### FACILITATOR

Events, conferences, round tables, working groups and meetings are many of the formats that bring a site manager together with other actors. This facilitation is essential to organizing

the different tasks of a site manager with partners, and is another important responsibility of the site manager.

### INNOVATOR

To deal with the on-going challenges and opportunities for Urban Heritage sites, new strategies have to be developed. How to deal with the impacts of climate change on Urban Heritage is one such challenge. Developing innovative, collaborative ideas and strategies to deal with changes, and providing corresponding actions and interventions is another key responsibility of a site manager.

All the mentioned different roles require competencies and different tasks, be it hard skills on the technical side as well as significant soft skills that might be even more important. The need to be knowledgeable in a specific discipline is minimal as expertise can always be hired externally or from other departments of the local administration. The tasks that Site Managers require most are coordination and communication – and these soft skills should be professionalized for all heritage management.

In order to build on the successful concept of Site Management and to professionalize it further, it is indispensable to first of all foster exchange between site managers and offer also instruments of peer review (digital possibilities). International organizations in the field of World Heritage like UNESCO, ICOMOS, but also the OWHC can play an important role when it comes to designing and implementing special capacity building measures to enhance the tasks and skills (see the various roles above) for Site Managers.

The OWHC has already realized the urgent need in this field and started to offer specialized trainings and workshops for its members with a special focus on urban site management (Vienna 2017: “Heritage Management & Communication”; Krakow 2019: “Citizen Participation”; Warsaw 2019: “Heritage Interpretation”). But capacity building measures should not only be offered for the Site Managers, but also other local actors with site management duties, like for example personal from museums, interpretation centers, and guides.

## **Networking and Expertise**

Cities and especially World Heritage cities are constantly facing new trends and challenges: climate change, demographic shift, population growth, urbanization, traffic and tourism growth are only a few of the most threatening issues cities have to tackle these days. Apart from strengthening the roles of Site Managers and equivalent capacity building measures, a stronghold of international support in our existing bodies in heritage management like for example UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, ICCROM and of course the OWHC for Urban sites is prerequisite for beneficial cooperation on a global level.

Learning from each other in workshops, conferences, or trainings through personal encounter, but also online platforms for exchange of case studies and best practices offer a new chance for future meaningful work and *raison d'être*. The collaborative space “City 2 City” on the OWHC website is just one example of a platform for exchange with many case studies from various member cities.

Through an increase of international networking activities that target professionals in site management as well as responsible local politicians, a new sensitivity for our cultural heritage and its role for our co-living facing global challenges can be developed. Working with experts from universities and different scientific institutions is essential in order to keep track with a seemingly accelerated mode of living in our society and its consequences for our World Heritage sites.

## Outlook

The Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC), created in 1991 by recommendation of UNESCO, has a strong role in the topics discussed in this publication. With a membership base of 300 cities with their respective mayors and officers and the active eight Regional Secretariats that function as clusters and clearing houses for a diversity of heritage-related topics around the world, it is a major resource. It brings together theory and practice and facilitates both policy and implementation in urban historic centers worldwide.

Together with partner organizations it will further enhance its activities on capacity building, information exchange and professionalization of the network activities. It also initiates and supports educational programs for the implementation of the SDGs. OWHC aims to maintain and expand strong partnerships with heritage organizations on the global level. This serves to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the joint work to address the challenges described in this publication and to use Urban Heritage more for Heritage-based urban development enabling local communities to benefit from the improvement of their quality of life.

## IMPRINT

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Supported by Colleen Swain/San Antonio and Melissa Stevens/Philadelphia

This position paper is based on the following publication:

### **Association of German Cities and Towns (DST) Working Group (AK) on UNESCO World Heritage Historic Centers: “Hüter von Traditionen und Labore der Zukunft: Welterbe-Städte setzen Impulse”**

Authors: Patricia Alberth, Steffi Behrendt, Dr. Christine Bauer, Dr. Ramona Dornbusch, Nicole Halder-Hass, Norbert Huschner, Christine Koretzky, Monika Krücken, Thomas Malnati, Kerstin Manz/Franziska Brune, Bernd Paulowitz, Matthias Ripp, Christina Stausberg

[www.staedtetag.de/imperia/md/content/dst/veroeffentlichungen/mat/empfehlung\\_hueter\\_von\\_traditionen.pdf](http://www.staedtetag.de/imperia/md/content/dst/veroeffentlichungen/mat/empfehlung_hueter_von_traditionen.pdf)

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