BEST PRACTICES IN WORLD HERITAGE: PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document contains proposals which aim to be a reference for the proactive and dynamic practice in the management of World Heritage properties. It is intended for everyone, specialists and institutions interested or related to the treatment of Cultural Heritage

This open document includes actions and key tools to be implemented in World Heritage sites from a perspective related with people and communities, and which, in turn, are transferable to the management of other cultural properties.

The document main purpose is to serve as a practical tool, allowing to approach heritage projects where people and communities should be considered.

The text was originated in the framework of the *2nd International Conference on Best Practices in World Heritage: people and communities,* held in Menorca, Spring 2015, and was a result of a participatory process, which allowed more than 150 people from 30 countries and 5 continents, to discuss and propose the key issues that should be included in this document. Along with it, the document was opened to the virtual community of about 1500 people, as well as other organizations and individuals who wanted to delve into the social networks of the Conference and contribute with their proposals.

The precedent of this text can be found in another document on best practices devoted to archaeology, published in the Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Best Practices in World Heritage, held as well in the same island of Menorca in 2012, and which emerged as an initiative of the Organizing Committee of these Conferences. Thus, the drawing up of these Best Practices is a consolidated activity that works as an alternative, but complementary to the official vision of World Heritage, being aware that precisely this concept regulated by the Convention of 1972, allows us today to speak of these recognized properties. This has made us once again, as in 2012, remind UNESCO about the need to require applicant countries and the World Heritage Committee a true policy of participatory consultation with a special attention being paid to the concerned

communities, as a requirement for their inscription on the World Heritage list. Therefore, a new discourse is needed for World Heritage as well as a renewal of the rules for the inscription list. This list, regulated by the 2003 Convention, continues to grow in its tangible category, while at the same time, in parallel the list on so-called Intangible Cultural Heritage properties keeps increasing too.

Consequently, developing new guidelines or rules has become an urgent need, so that a new discourse and a new policy for World Heritage management can be conformed. These discourses have to bind current polarized visions—with an imbalance weight in decision-making policies—between experts and communities of people, citizens, visitors and different specialists, that is, between multiple agents acting and participating in the daily management of World Heritage.

First of all, this document aims to give voice to other people who do not usually reach the institutional frameworks, but that we as researchers or managers of these assets know they exist. We have to find the channels so that the peoples voices become more than just words of complaint or petitions to the administrations and international organizations. Indeed, they should be integrated in current good practices.

As in the previous edition, *we have selected the topic of World Heritage knowing the importance these sites have in terms of national pride international prestige and economic development through tourism. Proof of it is the competition set among States to register their sites on the list. However, we understand World Heritage in a way that the most important issue is not its "outstanding Universal value", but what World Heritage should be for the people who live with it or want to enjoy it and, consequently, how it should be managed* (Document on Best Practices 2012).

Despite the fact that UNESCO is aware of the social problems implied in World Heritage, and of the multiple strategies developed and carried out by advisers such as ICOMOS bodies and other expert groups, the truth is that the most important issue regarding such properties is still pending, i.e. the respect and appreciation by all the peoples of the world, as the Convention includes in its preamble.

On the basis of the contributions made, this document is structured in two main parts: key issues regarding the treatment of persons and communities in World Heritage and good practices which will help us to improve it.

II. TOPICS

1. INVOLVEMENT OF THE COMMUNITIES

Communities are heterogeneous in their conformation and accordingly, ways must be found to make most people feel recognized and represented in the true World Heritage to which they are attached.

Therefore, it is necessary to develop methodologies that allow the involvement of the community. This methodology will have to be redefined and classified in relation to people's perception and identification of the cultural properties and the past. We need to know and redefine who is responsible for what, and who should take decisions about World Heritage properties, depending on multiple factors. The role of the agents—expert groups as opposed to lay people, or people with direct interests—in contrast to those who suffer side effects, and how their relate to each other should be identified in more detail and depth than what has been done so far in World Heritage management.

Regarding stakeholders, it has become an urgent to balance the role in decision making policies between the communities, considering clearly the least represented, the agents of cultural sector and the administrations involved.

2. SUBVERTING PRINCIPLES IN CULTURAL HERITAGE

The concept of Cultural Heritage is constantly being reviewed and changed, however, the World Heritage Convention still has a very static and traditional view of this concept. It is necessary to check its meaning and overcome the Western, elitist and colonial approach that sets the agenda of World Heritage, introducing multiculturalism and horizontality in the process of inscribing properties as the most recognized in the world, and allowing a multivocal understanding approach on them.

Likewise, World Heritage sites are alive, especially cities, and consequently, the treatment and meaning of these assets, as well as the reasons for which they were inscribed change. These cannot be static values and UNESCO should recognize these changes much faster. These changes do not always mean a loss of the Outstanding Universal Values for which the properties were considered World Heritage, nor does it mean the destruction of these assets, rather on the contrary, they can even be revalued, and other dimensions of Cultural heritage that were not considered in their initial inscription can be encouraged.

This review of the World Heritage concept should be internalized by site managers and consequently, it should have a reflection on the way such management treatment interacts with society.

3. CONFLICTS

Geopolitical conflicts: wars

Armed conflicts are in the background of the World Heritage Convention, the first, and specially World War II were very destructive with samples of the past of whole populations. Unfortunately today, this tangible and intangible wealth is being destroyed by wars and terrorist interests. We need to make people understand that our past heritage belongs to all mankind, that it belongs to us as a human group, beyond borders or current cultural and identity values, since those who preceded us left them.

Daily conflicts

Besides war conflicts, there is a daily conflict, apparently less serious, but that relates to the day-to-day activities and to most people living within or from World Heritage. From conflicts on the property and the enjoyment of its use, to the respect to the people or visitors, all issues must be thought over and analyzed to search for solutions that meet all the interests and worries of the people directly or indirectly involved with a World Heritage site.

It must also be recognized that there are communities that do not want the inscription of nearby properties, or of their ownership on the World Heritage list. They should therefore be taken into account and listened to when dealing with the process of inscription, and even when the continuation is a matter to consider. In many cases, these communities are in conflict with the national/regional offices involved in UNESCO discourse and policy, and they might even represent them in front of this intergovernmental organization.

4. EDUCATION: CO-LEARNING

Education is an essential basis in order to achieve a respectful treatment of the common past heritage. However, even in highly and long-time educated contexts we find a great ignorance and devaluation of cultural property. We need to reformulate the relationship between heritage properties existence and instructing the citizens, so that both can be mutually enriched.

5. TOURISM: SUSTAINIBILITY

Tourism, besides its economic value, has led to a new form of social relation and it is changing our heritage spaces and the ways of living of those who inhabit them. Assuming this transformation of World Heritage sites, we should be able to diminish the effects resulting from turistification and gentrification, or at least

mitigate their effect if we want those sites to continue representing the reasons for which they were inscribed as World Heritage. This means governments, especially the local ones, have to apply measures which can be against the immediate economic interests of the tourist sector, although in the long term these would allow for a greater life quality of the inhabitants of the sites and a better enjoyment of the tourist experience.

It is important to highlight that the relationship between heritage and tourism has to be rethought within a general tourism and sustainability framework.

6. COMMUNICATION MEDIA: SOCIAL NETWORKS

Informing those involved in World Heritage sites is fundamental, but it is even more important to open the appropriate communication channels so as to make them get, both inhabitants and visitors involved, in the management of these assets. Social networks have become the independent and alternative communication tool to present new discourses and strategies, and therefore, we must empower them so that they become active and constant tools in the management of World Heritage sites

III BEST PRACTICES

1.   DEVELOPING A NEW WORLD HERITAGE DISCOURSE FROM THE SOCIAL BASE

The detachment occurred between the official discourse of World Heritage and that of society must be corrected by listening to the social base. The experts need to be the facilitators of this change in discourse helping society's empowerment through heritage. Therefore, making people aware of what heritage is today needs to be done from the collective memory, working interculturally and horizontally to generate participatory processes.

The citizenship should be organized to defend and value what we want a World Heritage site to be, facilitating discussion forums and building bridges to modify strategies of expert groups. This citizen participation should be encouraged locally, making local authorities accomplices of the process. In this way, open spaces and resources together with legal support will be provided, so that meetings and civil organizations can be developed.

The citizen organizations should be considered competent, at the same level as the experts and at least, they should actively and determinately participate in the following actions:

-Revision of the Convention and the operational guidelines, regulations—both national and international—in relation to the inclusion of measures against conflicts, as well as overcoming the Eurocentric conception of Cultural heritage. Therefore, the (new) social demands should be assumed to solve everyday conflicts, which are the greatly forgotten ones by the competent authorities.

-Drafting a collective, flexible and constantly reviewed strategic plan, beyond the management plan, which can serve as a backbone of the World Heritage site, where stakeholders are represented, together with interdisciplinary representatives from different areas. This mixed character strategic plan should modify the discourse and integrate it into the territory plans.

-Representatives of the citizenship must yearly attend the World Heritage Committee, being able to defend their positions as well as integrating themselves into projects.

As in every participation process, this requires some time and previous steps, being knowledge dissemination about the World Heritage site very important to build citizen awareness in order to empathize or modify the values of the sites, and getting people involved in decision making from the local to the international scale.

2. DEVELOPING MECHANISMS ENSURING COMMUNICATION AMONG THE IMPLIED STAKEHOLDERS

The importance of stakeholders in the management of World Heritage sites is obvious, but this involvement needs to be structured and should have a specific and appropriate budget for this purpose. This relationship will be based on regular meetings and on the creation of a Board of stakeholders' representatives who perform executive tasks to allow communication to flow, and to optimize resources and improve the treatment of cultural sites. These meetings will take place as needed and depending on the context, but they should be called at least twice a year.

Every World Heritage site should have a person in charge of the coordination of stakeholders, as a facilitator/a, which as well as supporting the Executive Board, ensures compliance with the agreements reached in the meetings and the involvement of the community.

The stakeholders should include the following:

-Directly involved agents coming from the following sectors: education, security, local, business, administration, site workers, media, health, international organizations, equality, observatories etc.

-Representatives of the local community.

-Specialists, such as scientific-technical profiles, international organizations related to Cultural Heritage

3.   IDENTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES IN A WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Although it would be desirable that the organization and representation of the communities in relation to World Heritage sites should start from a social base, today sociological/anthropological/ethnological techniques are needed to identify relevant stakeholders directly related or affected by a World Heritage site. These processes should be consistent and should be revised and renewed based on the evolution of the World Heritage site, until self-management reduces their use or adapts them to other needs. Agents defined above have to be summoned to arrange and facilitate their communication. This can be done through regular meetings with communities, and through information processes that also allow collecting opinions and perceptions of the sites and organizing people in relation to them.

4. CREATION AND USE OF INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS TO MEDIATE IN WARS OR TERRORISM IN THEIR DIFFERENT FORMS

These organizations, on a permanent basis, funded by non-profit institutions, should focus their work on helping to solve conflicts using World Heritage as a path to peace. They should also educate in the long term, and function as a shield against attacks on cultural property in the event of an armed conflict. People who conform these organizations shall be independent from governments or interstate agencies. The mediators cannot be related to the conflict topic or place regarding the World Heritage site. The coordination among these organizations, through mediator agents or social networks will be key for a good performance.

5. TRAINING COMMUNITIES IN EDUCATIONAL VALUES AND FORMS OF COMMUNICATION REGARDING WORLD HERITAGE.

In community processes and training programs for the treatment of World Heritage, training should go beyond business attitudes for the creation of business opportinities or the heritage resource exploitation. Indeed, it must also teach communication, education in cultural values and legislation.

Trainers will be necessary both coming from the field of Cultural heritage, and from the world of business, communication, public relations and advocacy.

However, it should be recalled that the management and protection of the sites varies depending on the socio-cultural, economic and legal or regulatory contexts, so these educational systems must be adapted to them.

Training projects should teach how to establish clear objectives, to build map agents and to develop meetings between such agents, to establish the limits of the site protection/management, as well as marking not only economic, but also social milestones.

Knowledge co-learning and co-building strategies should be used as relevant and alternative formulas to help enhance, improve and change discourses and treatments of World Heritage properties. This community empowerment is particularly important for the day-to-day conflict and to improve the involvement of residents and tourists in the heritage treatment. Intervals between training processes, as well as meetings between agents should be short, since these processes need to be fast and consistent in order to be effective.

6. ORGANIZATION OF MEDIATORS IN DAILY CONFLICTS

Lack of coordination between agents is one of the main reasons for everyday conflicts in World Heritage. It is necessary to detect and define the key agents in these conflicts and organize them so that they interact in their resolution.

Agents must be adapted to each place and conflict to be effective in their resolution. They should adopt short/annual, half/five-year and long term (20 years) measures.

The main themes that will tackle everyday conflicts are actions that allow:

-To Identify values or economic dimensions

-Strengthen the awareness capacity of people who should take the decision to change the legal framework and its implementation.

-Urban and spatial planning as a tool for preserving the cited economic dimensions.

-Intersectoral policies between the fields of agriculture, culture, tourism, coasts and in general environmental policies.

-Establishing new networks for the exchange of experiences and strengthening the existing ones.

Actions carried out may be joined to form an observatory that facilitates the transferring of best practices in resolving conflicts from some places to others.

7. DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MEASURES AND STRATEGIES FOR INHABITANTS AND VISITORS IN WORLD HERITAGE SITES

Educating or training citizens in heritage values and through them is fundamental. At the same time, raising awareness from school times in relation to tourism and the impact it has on a community with a high value or international recognition of their Cultural heritage is also important.

However, this training has to be complemented with the visitors of these places, through strategies such as the celebration of heritage festivals (culinary festivals, cinema, theater), building smart communities and social networks (educational games, interactive maps, groups of networks, etc.). In addition, they should promote training places for family, summer courses or courses in the evenings that facilitate the attendance of people in their leisure hours, or generate student groups in relation to the site or interventions on the cultural property where communities will be involved in decision-making or in the works to be carried out.

There are multiple tools for both formal and informal training, however, it is important to remember that the use of the local voices to convey knowledge, without being the economic expert voice the one dominating the educational discourse. Financing of such actions can range from the administrations with their classic tools to promote education in values, to crowdfunding systems. Combining these multiple financing systems with volunteering work may also be key.