

3 Understanding management in the World Heritage context

increasing recognition of the interdependency of heritage places and society (see Part 2) have led to conventional training no longer being sufficient. The gradual adoption of a capacity-building³¹ approach acknowledges that, to make a difference and improve prospects for heritage places, a wide, diverse and growing audience needs to be targeted. Creating and strengthening capacities of institutions and networks that link the heritage sector to wider communities is as much a priority as the training of individual practitioners. If successful, the results are stronger organizational frameworks and interfaces between heritage and the wider environment, enabling individuals, including those outside heritage-related professions, to take more effective actions. This shift in thinking was acknowledged by the World Heritage Committee when it adopted in 2011 the World Heritage Strategy for Capacity-Building³² (hereafter 'Strategy').

Defining capacity-building

The Strategy has clarified the meaning of capacity-building (which was often being used as a synonym for training) in relation to World Heritage initiatives which have traditionally been dominated by training programmes for mid-career heritage practitioners. The Strategy identifies not only the heritage practitioners but a wide variety of target audiences which are essential to address if heritage places are to be managed effectively and in a sustainable manner.

If capacity is 'the ability of individuals, organizations and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner',³³ then capacity-building for the effective management of World Heritage properties will:

- strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviour of people with direct responsibilities for heritage conservation and management,
- improve institutional structures and processes through empowering decision-makers and policy-makers, and
- introduce a more dynamic relationship between heritage and its context and, in turn, greater reciprocal benefits by a more inclusive approach, such that the OUV of the properties will be protected effectively and in a sustainable way.

Capacity-building – whether of practitioners, institutions or communities and networks – is seen as a form of people-centred change that entails working with groups of individuals to achieve improvements in approaches to managing cultural heritage.

Considering the popularity of the World Heritage Convention and its ongoing political support, attempts should be made to use the World Heritage Strategy for Capacity Building for the benefit of broader heritage conservation and management needs. Indeed, the Strategy is explicit that capacity-building messages for World Heritage properties should promote good conservation and management practice in the field without drawing distinctions between World Heritage sites and other sites.³⁴ Most importantly, capacity-building should be understood as the most cost-effective means by which the World Heritage Committee can protect the OUV and other values of World Heritage properties and ensure a mutually beneficial dynamic between heritage and society. Enhancing existing capacities or creating new ones is the first step towards addressing shortcomings that have emerged from an assessment of a heritage management system (see Part 4.5). Substantial changes to the management system should be embarked upon only when it is clear that opportunities for 'people-centred change' have been exhausted.

31. One of the five strategic directions of the World Heritage Committee.

32. UNESCO World Heritage Centre. 2011. *Presentation and adoption of the World Heritage strategy for capacity building*. Paris, UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (Doc WHC-11/35.COM/9B)
<http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2011/whc11-35com-9Be.pdf>

33. http://www.undp.org/cpr/iasc/content/docs/UNDP_Capacity_Development.pdf
UNDP Capacity Development Practice Note, April 2006, p.3.

34. This is important because many practitioners, institutions and networks work in environments that cannot draw distinctions between these categories.