



OPEN CALL

Workshop World Heritage & Educational Institutions in Africa

In collaboration with the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), UNESCO is organizing a workshop that will mark a major milestone in the involvement of African educational institutions in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

The three-day workshop will bring together key African academics and African World Heritage experts that have expressed interest in the English-speaking African university network to facilitate their contributions to the further development of a regional network.

The highly interactive event will feature information exchanges on existing curricula related to heritage conservation and management and working session on different aspects of World Heritage. The workshop will culminate in an action plan for future activities and the creation of a regional network of educational institutions.

The workshop will be hosted by Great Zimbabwe University (Zimbabwe) as part of the project entitled “Integration of World Heritage Curriculum in African Educational Institutions” financed by UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust.

When?

26-28 April 2018

Where?

Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Aims and objectives

This workshop will provide a forum for presenting and discussing the following:

- Existing curricula related to heritage conservation in Africa with an analysis of their content;
- Issues related to successes and challenges encountered in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Africa and proposals for future development of university curricula;
- Strengths, challenges, opportunities and weaknesses related to current involvement of academics in the implementation of World Heritage;
- The creation of a regional network of educational institutions specialized in heritage conservation;
- The elaboration of an action plan regarding training courses and seminar-workshops dedicated to academics and students dealing with the World Heritage Convention and its implementation in sub-Saharan Africa.

In addition, the workshop will provide an excellent opportunity for exchanging expertise and establishing a sustainable international network of academic partners.

Who will participate?

The workshop will bring together key academics involved in education and research in the field of nature and cultural heritage from English-speaking countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The participants will present existing curricula related to heritage conservation and help to establish the first regional network of educational institutions specialized in heritage conservation.

Participation is limited to one person per educational institution.

Benefits to participants

- Learn from existing curricula throughout sub-Saharan Africa;
- Use this opportunity to disseminate the results of existing curriculum and programmes related to heritage conservation and management;
- Meet and network with other academics, share success stories and challenges, identify synergies and innovative ways of working together;
- Be part of the creation of a regional network among educational programmes related to heritage conservation and management.

Outline of the programme

25 April	Arrival in Zimbabwe Departure for Masvingo
26-27 April	Opening, keynote speech, presentations, discussion sessions and site visit of the World Heritage property Great Zimbabwe National Monument
28 April	The way forward, conclusions of working sessions and recommendations of the workshop
29 April	Return to Harare for homebound flights

How to apply?

Interested academics are invited to submit their CV (two pages max) and a summary of their paper presentation that outlines their institution's existing curricula and/or research related to heritage (300 words max), to WH-Africa@unesco.org.

Deadline for submission: 16 March 2018.

Background

Africa boasts a heritage of unrivalled natural and cultural diversity that constitutes the very essence of its identity. Yet, sub-Saharan Africa is under represented on the World Heritage List. With 93 properties (51 cultural sites, 37 natural sites, 8 mixed sites), Africa is the most under-represented region on the List. Despite the adoption of the Global Strategy for a representative balanced and credible World Heritage List, the continent hosts only 9 per cent of all World Heritage sites, while the European and North American Regions account for 47 per cent of properties inscribed on the List.

In 1994, the year the above-mentioned Global Strategy was adopted, 7 per cent of the total number of inscribed properties on the World Heritage List were located in the sub-Saharan Africa. Twenty-four years later, the continent failed to increase the annual number of inscriptions; in fact, they have been steadily decreasing. The low inscription rate can be largely explained by the following factors:

- The poor quality of the nomination dossiers, which resulted from the lack of close collaboration between academic institutions, the other specialized institutions in the World Heritage (AWHF, EPA, CHDA) and the governments of African States Parties.
- The limited budget allocated to the national heritage sector in many African countries, and especially regarding activities concerning the process of inscription on the Tentative Lists and the World Heritage List.
- The limited number of experts specialized in the field of heritage.

As diagnosed at the AWHF's 10th Anniversary Seminar (South Africa, 3-4 May 2016) and on the occasion of the African World Heritage Day Seminar (Burkina Faso, 4 May 2017), this lack of qualified African experts in the management and conservation of Africa's heritage stems from insufficient academic guidance in the field of heritage. Indeed, training on African World Heritage (and cultural heritage in all its forms) is not sufficiently integrated into the programmes of academic institutions in Africa, and existing curricula remain inadequate. At the present time, academic institutions are struggling to offer substantial opportunities in heritage professions, discouraging young people from opting for these heritage sectors. Conversely, state bodies and other institutions and organizations specialized in this field cannot capitalize on newly trained capacities and are not in a position to offer professional prospects.

The need to build capacities in heritage management and conservation is therefore urgent. The World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy acknowledged that States Parties to the World Heritage Convention often work closely with national training institutions and universities in order to carry out their capacity-building functions (Decision 35 COM 9B).

It is in this context that this project proposes to develop further on the World Heritage Convention processes within curricula in African educational institutions covering issues such as documentation and inventory of sites, site management and conservation, the preparation of the tentative lists and the preparation of nomination files. The process will also consider innovation, job creation from heritage resources, the feedback loop between practice and academic theory etc.

The pilot phase is designed to identify the key actors in the field of World Heritage and to mobilize and convince government institutions to support academic institutions in the creation or strengthening of curricula oriented towards the heritage professions with a view to expanding job prospects and supporting Africans in taking ownership of their unique heritage.