



WORLD HERITAGE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FORUM 2021

World Heritage and Sustainable Livelihoods

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 World Heritage
Young Professionals Forum
世界遗产青年论坛
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Outcome Document

Youth Voices on World Heritage and Sustainable Livelihoods

We, the participants of the UNESCO World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2021 “*World Heritage and Sustainable Livelihoods*”, would like to extend our sincere thanks to Vice Minister of Education of the People’s Republic of China, Mr. Tian Xuejun, Chairperson of the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee, and to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

Furthermore, we are grateful to the National Commission of the People’s Republic of China for hosting the Forum. Our heartfelt thanks go to the organization teams for their support, and the groups of experts and facilitators for their enriching insights and mentorship. Along with them, we have examined pertinent vectors of World Heritage including:

- people and governance;
- tourism and community development; and
- community empowerment through innovation

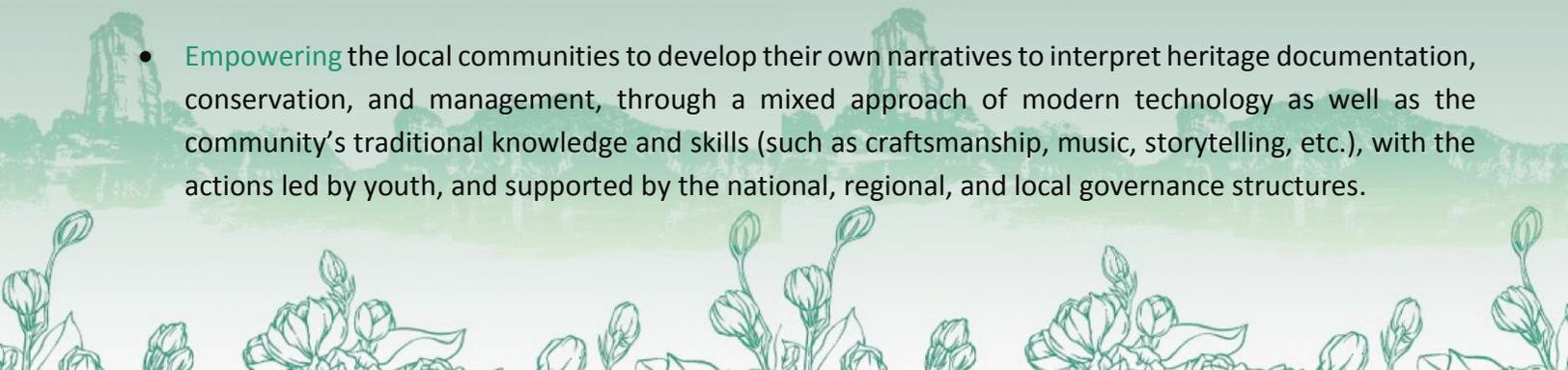
Through our exchanges, we have recognized and reiterated education as the cornerstone for fostering *World Heritage Sustainable Livelihoods*. While we acknowledge and support the need for continuous education on World Heritage conservation across age groups, levels of expertise and engagement, we particularly advocate the capacity building of youth towards World Heritage protection, preservation, and promotion, through international exchanges such as the World Heritage Young Professionals Fora.

Building on the outcome statements of the previous Fora, and from our enriching experience at the 2021 edition of the Forum, we would like to share our recommendations with all heritage stakeholders¹, through this outcome document, ‘*Youth Voices on World Heritage and Sustainable Livelihoods*’.

We recommend:

- **Encouraging** dialogue and enhancing the inclusive participation of local communities and youth, by UNESCO, other international agencies, national, regional, and local governance structures, towards World Heritage governance, by promoting safe spaces for communication and consensus, by developing new media and platforms for lateral exchanges, and by democratizing the decision-making processes.

- **Creating** a wider, universal knowledge-sharing platform accessible to all stakeholders, led by UNESCO in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, and the State Parties' national, regional, and local governance structures, which would provide best practice guidelines and propose strategies to empower local actors to act towards the protection, preservation and promotion of the World Heritage sites, subject to regular monitoring.
- **Ensuring** the sustainable management of World Heritage sites by supporting and mobilizing community networks and establishing feasible and realistic exit strategies for external agencies working on the field.
- **Devising** mechanisms to elaborate, revise, discuss, and update World Heritage management plans in shorter time-durations at local levels, to account for the evolving socio-cultural contexts, values, perceptions, knowledge and priorities of the stakeholders over time. The nature of heritage is multi-layered and changing, therefore management plans must adapt to this dynamic condition.
- **Integrating** a diverse approach to World Heritage management processes, by establishing dialogue and strong synergies with varied sectors (those particularly engaged with digital technologies), in order to benefit from intersectoral expertise and to develop sustainable solutions towards World Heritage conservation.
- **Enhancing** capacity building on World Heritage for the local actors through public fora, citizen assemblies, and community coalitions.
- **Encouraging** the management and tourism bodies at and around World Heritage sites to implement sustainable tourism practices through cross-sectoral collaborations with other industries; and by holding accountable the existing/established management frameworks, through the [Culture|2030 Indicators](#).
- **Supporting** local tourism through community-led projects on the ground, by incorporating local knowledge and skills into development projects, to ensure economically viable and sustainable livelihoods of those who depend on World Heritage tourism directly or indirectly.
- **Recognizing** and **promoting** the role of cross-sectoral institutions in the field of culture and environment/ecology like local museums, libraries, etc. in propagating the communities' narratives and affinity towards World Heritage sites through storytelling and other formats of documenting ethnographic information, which highlight these dynamic relationships and strengthen stakeholder commitment.
- **Empowering** the local communities to develop their own narratives to interpret heritage documentation, conservation, and management, through a mixed approach of modern technology as well as the community's traditional knowledge and skills (such as craftsmanship, music, storytelling, etc.), with the actions led by youth, and supported by the national, regional, and local governance structures.



- **Advocating** equitable access to technology and connectivity at and around World Heritage sites, in line with the established guidelines at the sites, particularly in the global south and under-served communities, through public- private sector collaborations, and by ensuring the allocation of sufficient funding and resources.
- **Promoting** innovation projects aimed at enhancing the livelihoods of communities engaged with World Heritage by providing financial incentives, technological and logistic support, and business training to young professionals. UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies may maintain a consolidated database of such community-led projects, jointly.
- **Diversifying** the approach to World Heritage conservation by addressing other forms of associated heritage (such as intangible cultural heritage (ICH), underwater cultural heritage, etc.) which have a significant presence in the livelihoods of the heritage-driven communities; drawing from the frameworks of other cultural *Conventions and* international instruments and led by UNESCO, the Category 2 Centers, UNESCO Chairs and the Advisory Bodies.

We, as young heritage professionals commit ourselves to pursuing UNESCO's mandate of building peace, through our practice of heritage management. Our recommendations are built upon our conviction in the unifying power of World Heritage, and the contribution of cultural and natural diversity in attaining sustainable livelihoods.

Thank you.

¹The young professionals acknowledge the diversity of the term heritage stakeholders to include international agencies, national, regional, and local governance structures of State Parties, site managers, NGOs, public and private sector organizations and institutions, tourists, youth, local communities, migrant communities, and indigenous communities; with the understanding that these terminologies are ever evolving.

