



PEOPLE  
PROTECTING  
PLACES



# UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Online Toolkit

## Guide 4 Engaging local communities and businesses



# Welcome to the UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Toolkit

Sustainable planning and management of tourism is one of the most pressing challenges concerning the future of the World Heritage Convention today and is the focus of the UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme.

These 'How To' guides for World Heritage Site managers and other key stakeholders will enable a growing number of World Heritage Site communities to make positive changes to the way they pro-actively manage tourism.

## How to use this guide

These easily accessible 'How To' guides are focused on best practice approaches to sustainable economic development through tourism. The first of their kind, the 'How To' resources offer direction and guidance to managers of World Heritage tourism destinations and other stakeholders to help identify the most suitable solutions for circumstances in their local environments and aid in developing general know-how for the management of each destination.

The 'How To' guides bring best practice knowledge to the full WH community, so that site managers, tourism professionals, conservation professionals, and communities around the world understand the possibilities of sustainable tourism and what key issues have already been achieved.

These resources are a valuable asset to site managers in particular, who often lack the tools and know-how to effectively manage and maximise tourism benefits, while minimising its negative impacts.

Our series of guides have been structured as a step-by-step process for site managers.

Guides 1-4 establish the basic foundations for sustainable tourism (these are coloured yellow).

Guides 5-10 are tailored to more specific issues, which will have greater relevance at some sites than at others (these are coloured orange). We recommend that site managers explore each guide, however, as sustainable tourism is a holistic process, addressing all issues in a strategic manner.

### Strategic Foundations

Guide 1  
Understanding



Guide 2  
Strategy



Guide 3  
Governance



Guide 4  
Engagement

### Core Delivery (Only works if steps 1 to 4 are undertaken)

Guide 5  
Communication



Guide 6  
Infrastructure



Guide 7  
Value



Guide 8  
Behaviour



Guide 9  
Investment



Guide 10  
Monitoring

## Our Objective

The goal is to stimulate local solutions in communities through capacity-building in best practice. With the immense scale and variation of World Heritage Properties around the globe, coupled with scarce human and financial resources, this is now more important than ever. Site managers and other stakeholders in the tourism sector must have access to these types of innovative sustainability tools in order to develop and formulate their own successful results.

Ideally, site managers and other users will begin to navigate through this system by learning basic ideas and guidance. The system then enables the user to delve deeper into any given subject that falls in line with their local interests, needs, and aspirations.

Our objective for these guidance resources is to enable the growth and success of an entire community of World Heritage Properties, making positive changes to their local surroundings and pro-actively managing tourism in their areas. In parallel, by establishing this community, we aim to facilitate knowledge exchange of the most progressive ideas, and encourage their implementation and evolution.

The driving ethic for the 'How To' guides is to explain critically important ideas for sustainable tourism in World Heritage sites in a clear and concise manner, conveying the key knowledge and processes in a reading time of under 20 minutes per idea. Our goal is to make implementing the ideas of sustainable tourism easier to understand and put into practice for all parties involved.

## Getting started

We understand the complex range of different societies in which World Heritage sites exist, and the many challenges site managers face on a daily basis. While the intention is to encourage each site to undertake most, or at least many, of the tasks included in the guides, considering them together all at once may seem daunting and even impossible.

We have developed this tool as a source of guidance and inspiration. It is a menu of ideas from which you, the user, may choose to put into practice, helping your World Heritage site become more sustainable for its current and future visitors.

Getting to know these 'How To' guides will move your site towards better self-management and sustainability rather than demand a level of sophistication that might simply be unattainable for some World Heritage sites. We would urge all site managers to read through these resources thoroughly and begin to think about what positive steps can be taken to implement these changes. Again, we remind each user that results will differ for each site, and the circumstances of the local environment and community must always be taken into consideration.

Sustainability is a complex system to navigate. Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the information provided in the 'How To' guides, or send us your feedback. We are here to help.

## Guide 4: Engaging local communities and businesses

This guide will tell you how to reach out and engage with local businesses and the community in a dialogue explaining the mutual benefit that comes with making tourism more sustainable.

### Why this matters

Dialogue with local businesses and the community is imperative, even when it is difficult, or their aspirations clash with protecting the OUV of the site. Remember that **dialogue educates** all parties. People start to learn each other's languages and terminologies, and over time, understanding grows. **Stakeholders will have a greater sense of the limits of growth**, the responsibilities that fall upon everyone in the destination to protect its natural or cultural heritage, and also how to deliver benefits sustainably to local people. Successful, sustainable initiatives have been developed with active, local buy-in and support – **local people are the heart of sustainable tourism**.

### 1. Talk and listen to the host community and businesses

**Build relationships with the existing community and tourism organisations.** They can help you to communicate with local people and businesses. If you explain your intentions to develop a destination that offers these people greater opportunities, then there should be a willingness to work with you. If there is an existing tourism DMO and strategic planning process, then this would be your obvious starting point.

**Create on-going opportunities to listen** to local people and businesses, as well as discovering the issues and challenges they face. Through these discussions, you will be able to **develop a list of their most pressing concerns** and aspirations for the future. **List the positive and negative impacts** of tourism on local people and businesses – this should be a key part of understanding tourism (Guide 1). If a forum does not already exist, create one for this discussion.

Ensure that the **aspirations and challenges** of the host community and the local businesses **are given a high status of importance** in the strategy for the destination. This does not mean that everyone can have what they want, but it does mean that **where aspirations are realistic**, appropriate, and add value to a sustainable destination (for instance, equal opportunities between men and women), **they are taken seriously** and embedded in the approach to the future. Too many destinations focus solely on the visitor experience and forget about the importance of 'liveability'. The **views of the local communities should be regularly monitored**, recorded, and publicly reported in a timely manner as a useful check against inappropriate development or activities.

In some cases, communities may require access to heritage sites for reasons that are fundamental to their culture and way of life – **you should monitor, protect, and restore local community access to natural and cultural sites when appropriate**.

### 2. Identify and communicate sustainable, economic local opportunities

**Look strategically** at how local people and businesses can secure greater benefit from the destination and the heritage attractions. This does not happen automatically; it **requires conscious efforts and investment** to identify – and make real – new transport, accommodation, food and drink, retail, leisure, or guiding and interpretation opportunities. **List three actions** that can economically empower local people and businesses, and aim to make them a reality. Consider carefully how changes to the destination may affect local people and businesses. **For example**, if a green bus scheme replaces hundreds of small taxis, will there be a negative effect on the local community?

**Build the visitor experience around learning** about, experiencing, and respecting the knowledge, values, stories, culture, and activities of the host community. These people are not 'extras,' but the stars and hosts of your destination. Research has shown that some of **the humblest occupations** in a destination have a massive effect on the visitor experience – taxi drivers and hotel receptionists **are crucial** in greeting visitors and explaining the distinctiveness of a destination's cultural and/or natural heritage. **Do not underestimate their value**.

**Talk to local businesses** and potential entrepreneurs **about the 'barriers-to-entry'** they face in the marketplace for services, products, and experiences. Some of these will require capital and can be addressed by fundraising or an investment strategy (see Guide 9 on Investment). Others may be as simple as having the skills to become a guide or understanding what visitors might want to experience and pay for at the destination (see Guide 7 on Value).

**Encourage, celebrate, and reward** tourism businesses that act responsibly. When offering visitors a choice of accommodation, transport, or food and drink, give prominence to those businesses that train local people, invest in socio-economic development and/or education, or use sustainable local products and services. **This gives businesses an incentive** to be sustainable – a bottom line advantage over their less responsible competitors.

**Secure resources** and investment from the tourism sector or visitors **to deliver community aspirations**. Communities and local businesses will be sceptical until they see money or effort being applied to their concerns, or being used to make their lives better. Some sites have already established **Community Development Funds** that secure investment and donations from the tourism sector and visitors to **invest in projects that empower local people**. This reflects well on the destination. Giving visitors some degree of 'ownership' over transport, accommodation, retail, food and drink, or leisure, is not only economically beneficial, but it also helps create a sense of responsibility and ownership of tourism to the local community.

It is not beneficial for the local people or visitor experience if the products, services, and experiences offered are provided entirely by external or foreign businesses. **Destinations should create opportunities for local people** to establish their own businesses and enter the marketplace.

Do not get too tangled up in academic, long-term strategic planning – you need to **move forward and establish the credibility** of your strategy and management. In your strategic analysis (Guide 2), you should have identified some quick, and possibly low cost, wins – **things you can do right now** to show that the destination is serious about sustainability and supporting the socio-economic development of the local community. **These quick wins are a statement of intent** and credibility that will sustain the initial enthusiasm of stakeholders.

**Develop systems of law and good practice** to prevent the exploitation of anyone through tourism – particularly children, adolescents, women, and minorities. Such laws and practices should be widely communicated so that everyone in the destination understands that **exploitation is not acceptable** or a part of the tourism initiative that will be undertaken.

**Develop clear rules and regulations** for what is expected of the host community and businesses. In many destinations, businesses simply want to know what they can and cannot do.

### 3. Empower the host community by telling their story in the site

World Heritage sites have a duty to share their values and their OUV with other people. However, **sometimes the host community has a culture, identity, and/or story that is different** from the UNESCO-defined OUV of the site, or one that does not complement the wishes of tourists. Sometimes this can leave locals rather marginalised, and when they are not part of the narrative, they may sometimes be ignored, disrespected, or pushed out of the way. We believe that **sustainability requires a site to tell both** the OUV story and the story of the host community and culture. You must **help visitors to understand** the historic and contemporary realities of the place they are visiting, as well as respect or engage with both of these narratives. This may sound like rhetoric, but **it is an essential step** to building respect and

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trust between those working on the conservation and those living around, or within, a historic site. **It sends a signal to the host community that they matter.**

There is growing evidence that **storytelling comes to life beyond museums** and interpretation panels. People in the host community are crucial to this process. Research has shown that **tourists spend less than 10% of their time** in museums or galleries – the rest of the time is spent in airports, railway stations, taxis, hotels, restaurants, bars, shops, on the street, by the pool, or on the beach. If we want to become excellent at storytelling and interpretation, **we need to take the stories** of the site and the community into those places (see Guide 5 on Communication). **Great sites make members of the community** – particularly hotel receptionists and taxi drivers – **champions, ambassadors, and storytellers for the site**. They offer them training, education, site visits, and support to become adept at explaining simple, but critical things about the OUV and the host community. Visitors find such knowledge and passion infectious.

**Guiding is a professional activity of the highest importance** and deserves to be managed like any other issue, with a proper system of training, accreditation, badging, and policing to protect visitors and guides, themselves, from untrained individuals undermining the system. **Make good use of the local community and enable** those interested in being a guide to go through the proper process without being barred from entry because of race, religion, class, ethnicity, or gender.

**Working with schools** and educational organisations is **also critical** to make sure that everyone who grows up and is educated in the host community knows about the site and its values. They will, in turn, become guardians, champions, and ambassadors of the site too.

Raise your aspirations for the local community – not everyone wants to sell low-value souvenirs. Some sites need to **think carefully about how tourism can deliver meaningful opportunities for local people**. This means working with community groups to think about the skills, capital, and the technologies they may need (and want!) if they are to have a good standard of living in their locality.



## Guide 4 Case study

### Avebury World Heritage site, Wiltshire (United Kingdom)

#### Baseline situation

Avebury stone circle or 'henge' lies at the centre of half the Stonehenge, Avebury, and Associated Sites inscribed as World Heritage. It is the sister-site to the perhaps more widely recognisable monument: Stonehenge. These monuments were inscribed together with their interrelated monuments and wider landscapes due to their common historical narrative. However, **Stonehenge is set in the middle of an immediate landscape inhabited only by sheep, whereas Avebury henge is surrounded by the village of Avebury**, with homes and roads actually criss-crossing the stone circle. This proximity to a residential area creates a very particular set of management issues, and taking into account the needs of the local community is essential to the sustainable management of the site.

**At Avebury challenges stemmed from the tensions between the residents and the numbers people visiting the site.** There are peaks at particular times of year from certain special interest groups; a problem that was not specifically addressed by the community until 2006, approximately 20 years after Avebury was inscribed on the World Heritage List.

#### What did they do?

A feeling of **'disconnect' between residents and the World Heritage site and a lack of ownership was identified as a key issue** at Avebury by the World Heritage site coordinator. There was also some lack of understanding between different groups who valued the Site for a number of different reasons. **The Residents' Pack project set out to address this issue.** At the outset, all residents were invited to participate in an aerial photograph standing in the henge. This marked the start of a two-year effort to collect stories from residents and visitors that focused on the various values Avebury was associated with.

#### Strategic priorities

Engage the local community; replace any view of the World Heritage site as constraint or as excluding local residents with an understanding of the opportunity and inclusivity it represents.

Identify and demonstrate to residents the broad spectrum of values to be found at Avebury.

Develop a feeling of pride and 'stewardship' amongst residents.

Use the values identified to develop a more appropriate visitor strategy.



## What worked?

**The Residents' Pack was a limited edition, available only to residents of Avebury**, and designed to celebrate the World Heritage site as a unique and special place to live. It included a book, Values and Voices, which compiled pieces of writing from a range of people, including archaeologists, residents, farmers, and pagans, both local and from as far away as Germany and America, expressing their personal and professional views of the World Heritage site. **Crucially, the Pack also contained information leaflets from the main organisations involved in the management of Avebury**, removing the feeling of bureaucracy and identifying who was responsible for what in a much more transparent way. **The Pack also indicated ways in which residents could be more involved in the day-to-day running of the site, primarily through voluntary duties such as tracking traffic and guiding visitor parking.**

**Parking congestion and visitor etiquette had been two key matters that created some tensions between residents and visitors.** This was particularly the case at the busiest times of year, such as Solstice. Avebury, like Stonehenge, attracts contemporary pagans and druids from both the UK and further afield, and these visitors amass specifically around the seasonal Solstices and other pagan festivals. Due to the small size and limited infrastructure at Avebury, there are few places for visitors to stay; the resulting 'improvisation', in terms of camping and illegal parking, incited tension between residents and visitors. **By presenting both visitors' and residents' impressions side by side, the Residents' Pack gave equal weighting to everyone** in an effort to facilitate understanding and tolerance in both this matter and other areas of the site.

## What was tough?

There was a sense of distance implied by the concept of 'Outstanding Universal Value', which seemed to put abstract philosophical ideas of historic and academic 'value' above the needs and wants of the local community. This may have been exacerbated during the joint inscription process of Stonehenge and Avebury to the World Heritage List in 1986, in which **there was minimal local stakeholder or community involvement, leaving a feeling among some that World Heritage status was being imposed upon Avebury, rather than chosen.** The sheer diversity amongst stakeholders (e.g. residents; visitors; landowners and farmers; pagans; archaeologists) also made it difficult to define any shared vision.

Read about the Avebury Residents' Pack and other examples of engagement in the English Heritage Conservation Bulletin [People Engaging with Places](#).

## How did they get buy-in?

**The success of the Residents' Pack is believed to primarily stem from the way the publication was 'allowed to evolve organically'**, with contributions being accepted as they came in, along with a wide range of formal and informal consultation platforms to attract contributions. As the common perception of those managing World Heritage was one of rigid bureaucracy, this flexibility and absence of tight deadlines or barriers made people feel that their opinion was truly valued.

## What are the results?

**Values and Voices includes contributions from a range of people** and includes reference to the many different kinds of significance found at Avebury, from its official OUV to its very personal value to those born and raised in the area. Individuals and groups not usually represented on formal management committees, such as druids and business owners, also contributed pieces on their relationship to the site. **All the voices are heard side-by-side, with no bias given to any particular narrative.** This has helped instil an increased feeling of ownership of the site, and the notion that everyone's values have been given equal weight alongside the more grand concepts of 'Outstanding Universal Value'.

**This publication – while not relieving all tensions – has made residents more willing to accommodate pagan interests in Avebury.** The village continues to work with the National Trust to make areas of land available for camping at peak times of the year, and the Chair of the Parish Council in Avebury now chairs the Avebury World Heritage Site Steering Committee. The Residents' Pack is a valued possession – only very few copies have ever appeared on Ebay, and those at a price which reflects how greatly the pack and the World Heritage is valued by its residents.

## What lessons can others take from this?

**The most important message to be taken from Avebury is how important it is to facilitate communication between different stakeholders.** When interests in a site are as diverse as those at Avebury, it is vital to create a level of understanding between different interest groups to avoid feelings of alienation or disregard in favour of others. Through this type of communication, it is far more likely people will work together in order to uphold these values.

**It is also necessary to recognise the criteria of a site that leads to its inscription may not be felt widely amongst the local community.** For this reason, **it is even more important to engage with people**, find out what they value most about the site, and what they find to be the positives and negatives of inscription. Management must be guided by the needs and values of the local community; otherwise, no management strategy will be sustainable or lead to a sense of guardianship amongst its stakeholders.

## Guide 4 Case study

### Old and New Towns of Edinburgh (United Kingdom)

#### Baseline situation

The World Heritage Status Report showed that 41% of visitors to Edinburgh are aware that it is a World Heritage site, and 17% of all visitors think that Edinburgh's World Heritage status influenced their choice. Even with these impressive numbers it was considered that **much more could be done in making the most of Edinburgh's World Heritage status**, especially after confirming that few tourism businesses were using Edinburgh's World Heritage status within their promotional materials. Moreover, in the 'Edinburgh 2020: The Edinburgh Tourism Strategy', it was widely recognised that the tourism industry's ability to access relevant business support was a key factor in improving business performance, and that **Edinburgh's WHS was one of its main strengths as a tourism destination**.

#### What did they do?

**The Edinburgh Tourist Action Group**, an association made up of representatives from across Edinburgh's tourism sector, together with Scottish Enterprise, an organisation supporting Scotland competitiveness, **worked together to create** the 2010 World Heritage Business Toolkit Kit, with the aim of providing businesses with an insight into how they can use the Edinburgh's World Heritage status as a strong competitive advantage and promotional tool. They also counted on the support of Edinburgh World Heritage, the charity responsible for protecting, conserving, and promoting Edinburgh's World Heritage site.





## Strategic priorities

To raise awareness about Edinburgh's World Heritage status and OUV among local businesses.

To make every business aware of the importance of Edinburgh's heritage resources as its strongest visitor motivation, and influence towards an integrated targeted promotional strategy.

To ensure improved business performance through the development of new products, services, and innovative marketing strategies using the World Heritage status of the city.

By influencing those that deliver tourism services to improve visitors' experience and Edinburgh's destination competitiveness and sustainability.

## What worked?

The easy language used throughout the toolkit made the World Heritage concept very easy to understand for a general audience. It explained in a very simple way the qualities that allowed Edinburgh to be included in the World Heritage List.

By offering relevant statistics pointing to heritage as Edinburgh's main visitor motivation, it provided a clear, common strategic objective to the whole tourism sector.

It clearly outlines the potential benefits of World Heritage as a strong destination quality brand, as an effective tool to attract higher-spending cultural visitors, and as a reinforcement of the destination image (through focusing on identity, authenticity, unique culture, etc.).

By giving very practical tips for businesses on how to use the Edinburgh's heritage and World Heritage status for their benefit, this initiative is making possible for businesses to start small actions immediately to improve their reach into Edinburgh's potential tourist market.

## What was tough?

It was a challenge to develop a training tool able to speak directly to business managers of diverse backgrounds and varied initial knowledge concerning World Heritage issues. It was also difficult due to the numerous and diverse tourism related businesses present in Edinburgh (an estimated 3,500) – as well as making the tool accessible and distributing it among all stakeholders at a low cost.

## How did they get buy-in?

A user-friendly format was developed. This included an e-magazine, with brief and easy to read content, which focused on 'ready to act' tips. The tool was made available using innovative distribution platforms, like Issuu, a well-known digital publishing platform that can be accessible through smartphones. The fact that the tool was developed by three different stakeholders – Edinburgh Tourism Action Group, Scottish Enterprise, and Edinburgh World Heritage Organisation – helped to make it relevant for business, tourism and conservation interest.

## What are the results?

All of Edinburgh's businesses can now use a very simple and practical tool to develop new business opportunities benefiting the World Heritage status of Edinburgh. This will also help to improve visitors' overall experiences to the World Heritage site. An update of the tool is due in 2014.

## What lessons can others take from this?

The case study offers a great example of a multi-stakeholder effort to create World Heritage awareness among their local business sector. Moreover, it is proof of the great results that can be achieved when culture and heritage, tourism and business innovation schemes/organisations work together towards a common objective. Finally, it is an excellent example of a capacity building-business supporting tool, which has the possibility to be adapted to suit other World Heritage destinations.



## [The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site Management Plan 2011-2016](#)

also contains valuable information pertaining to stakeholder engagement, management, and conservation issues.

## Guide 4 Case study

### Great Barrier Reef (Australia)

#### Baseline situation

Coral reefs around the world are threatened both by natural and anthropogenic factors, with tourism having an important role in the latter. Direct impacts in coral reefs are related with badly managed tourism activities, such as snorkelling, diving, and sailing. Indirect impacts of tourism related to waste, pollution, and unsustainable uses of natural resources are also critical.

Along the coastline of the Great Barrier Reef, tourism is a major industry with up to two million visitors contributing greatly to local, regional, and national development. However, unlike other coral reef destinations around the world, in this World Heritage site, **appropriate tourism management strategies have changed tourism from a threat in the past to a strong conservation ally in the present.**

#### What did they do?

**In 1997, tourism operators started collecting coral observations during their visits** to the Great Barrier Reef and reporting them for analysis by the Marine Park Managers and scientific researchers. This data provided them with regular and up-to-date data on reef health status and tendencies, the presence of protected and iconic species, and early alerts of environmental impacts. This initiative, currently named 'Eye on the Reef – Tourism Weekly Monitoring Programme', was the origin of the 'Eye on the Reef Programme', which now overarches this and three other sub-programmes, **all aiming to monitor the health of the Great Barrier Reef through the participation of different key local stakeholders.**

#### Strategic priorities

To create synergies between tourism operations, conservation, research, and heritage management at the Great Barrier Reef.

To increase knowledge and conservation awareness among the tourism businesses and promote their participation in the governance of the World Heritage site.

To obtain regular, relevant long-term data about the 'health' of the Great Barrier Reef, which supports strategic, not reactive, management.



## What worked?

Establishing conditions for participation, including the commitment to survey the same reef site on a weekly basis at least 40 times per year, allowed site management authorities and researchers to collect relevant data, on a regular basis, and from specific reef locations.

'Hiring' tourism operators to carry out reef monitoring was a great idea – they are often the people who know the different reef sites best due to their regular, first hand tourist operations.

Creating standard tools for collecting information (a survey form) and reporting information (single online data management and reporting system), made it possible to standardise the information coming from different sources.

All participants receive a complete monitoring training, providing them with the capacities needed.

While providing regular information to Marine Park Managers and scientists, tourism operators improve their knowledge and the quality of their tour management, reef interpretation, and tourism product design capacities.

## What was tough?

One of the challenges of the 'Eye on the Reef – Tourism Weekly Monitoring Programme' was **to make it easy for local tourism operators to participate**, with monitoring training being a critical stage of the process.



## How did they get buy-in?

**A three-step training programme was developed and adapted to the different schedules**, backgrounds, and locations of tourism operators. This adaptability made it more feasible for them to participate. The first step was a two-hour online introduction to monitoring on the Great Barrier Reef. This was followed by two-hour workshops in different local areas four times a year, in which programme coordinators and guest researchers addressed important issues and present relevant topics regarding the Great Barrier Reef. The last part consisted of a full day of in-water training. **Combining short online training sessions, nearby face-to-face training workshops, and the need to commit to just one day of full training, made the programme accessible for tourism operators.**

## What are the results?

The 'Eye on the Reef — Tourism Weekly Monitoring Programme', **is one of the largest tourism-based coral reef monitoring collaborations on the planet.** The Reef Health Incident Response System allows the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to predict and detect reef health incidents such as coral bleaching, and act accordingly. This is made possible thanks to the information from 'The Eye on the Reef — Tourism Weekly Monitoring Programme'.

## What lessons can others take from this?

**The Eye on the Reef – Tourism Weekly Monitoring Programme is an example of tourism businesses acting as conservational champions** of the Outstanding Universal Value at World Heritage sites. It shows that appropriate, adapted, and flexible training programmes, combined with the development of innovative, participative monitoring tools and reporting platforms, can lead to a successful inclusion of tourism operators into monitoring and conservation strategies in World Heritage sites. **This illustrates a huge potential in those World Heritage sites such as the Great Barrier Reef**, whose large extensions mean they can only be monitored by relevant authorities' or scientists' resources. Finally, it showcases how **commitment and long term-cooperation between the tourism sector, scientists, and World Heritage management authorities can benefit** the overall management performance of a World Heritage site.



## Guide 4 Case study

### Røros Mining Town and the Circumference (Norway)

#### Baseline situation

Røros Mining Town and the Circumference is linked to the copper mines, established in the 17th century, which were used for 333 years until 1977. The site includes the Town and its industrial-rural cultural landscapes; Femundshytta, a smelter with its associated area; and the Winter Transport Route. While highly valued by the community and its various stakeholders, **several years ago this World Heritage Site was having serious conservation problems related to vandalism on protected buildings.**

#### What did they do?

**A combination of local key actors** (municipality, museum, conservational organisations, schools etc.) **launched programmes focused on enhancing heritage conservation awareness**, promoting OUV conservation, and communication capacities **focused on young people (the key local stakeholders of the future).**

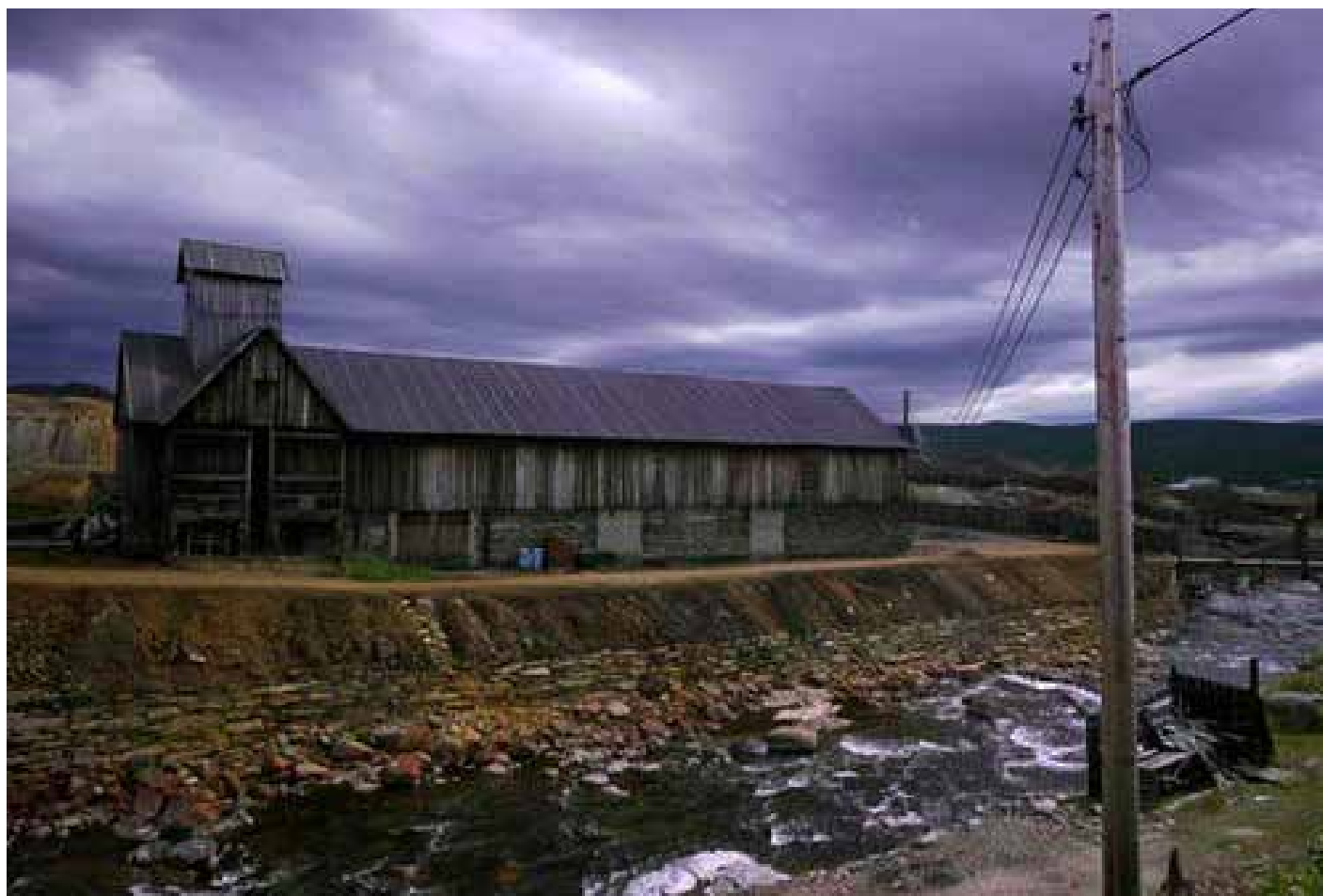
#### Strategic priorities

Educate young people to be guardians and champions of the World Heritage Site and its values.

To address the problem of 'heritage vandalism' affecting protected buildings.

To generate 'ownership' of the World Heritage Site among local youngsters (future local decision makers).

Create future knowledgeable communicators, greeters and decision makers of the World Heritage tourism destination.





## What worked?

**The headmaster of Røros Primary School, working with the Røros Museum, conceived the 'Adopt a House' project**, in which local students were given the responsibility of monitoring particular houses, and, in doing so, contributing to their conservation while simultaneously finding out about the history of the house and its heritage. This project helped young people learn about the importance and value of their heritage, generated a communal feeling of ownership of the World Heritage, as well as having a positive impact on the problem of vandalism.

Within the framework of the programme, 'World Heritage in Your Hands', **four international workshops were organised by Røros Upper Secondary School**. There were educational activities with World Heritage related content at schools, along with courses for local tour guides. **Students received practical training and skills in heritage conservation**, including independent assignments under the supervision of an experienced craftsman. The Røros Museum, The Røros municipality, and the Røros division of the Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments also participated to help supervise these restoration youth groups. The other municipalities of the site: Os, Tolga, Holtålen, and Engerdal, provided information in their schools about the history of Røros Copper Works, Røros town and the mining communities, and smelters inside the World Heritage Site.

## What was tough?

In the case of the 'Adopt a House' project, the main collaborating parts, **The Røros Museum and the school, showed different stages of effort during the implementation of the project**. The museum started early with project related initiatives, but when they were done, the employees were focused in other tasks and projects. Meanwhile, the school was more focused on trying to root the project into the regular activities of the teaching staff. **The result was that a growing commitment of the school was not met with an increasing capacity of the museum** to attend to the requirements of the students (Lidén, 2005).

## How did they get buy-in?

**New activities were added to the contents of 'Adopt a House' project**, not limiting the programme to the preservation of buildings through the cooperation with the museum specialist. The use of external individuals or organisations specialising in local history, restoration, and building preservation was helpful (Lidén, 2005).

## What are the results?

The problem of vandalism has been improved.

Local young people are more sensitive to the importance and ways of preserving their heritage.

World Heritage Site 'ownership' was generated among local young people (future key actors).

The museum learned new means and ways of teaching youngsters about heritage and conservation.

Even though local students thought the development of the project could have been improved, they recommend its application in other places/schools.

## What lessons can others take from this?

The case of Røros is an example of **how the development of World Heritage educational awareness raising and capacity building initiatives focused on young people can help to avoid both conservation unfriendly practices** like vandalism and bring this important audience into OUV conservation and communication efforts. Moreover, in World Heritage tourism destinations, today's young people are also tomorrow's local tourism entrepreneurs, taxi drivers, guides, hoteliers, shopkeepers, political actors, etc. **By promoting OUV 'savvy' youth and generating 'ownership' of the World Heritage Site, Røros started to build the pillars of a more sustainable future tourism destination.**

This case study also raises questions regarding **the importance of generating long-term education initiatives** and the need to root them in the culture of local key organisations to assure long-term sustainability and maximisation of positive results. Assessing the availability of human and economic resources, long-term commitment of relevant institutions, and diversifying content of projects might help to make these initiatives more sustainable.

*"While highly valued by the community and its various stakeholders, several years ago this World Heritage Site was having serious conservation problems related to vandalism on protected buildings."*

*"A combination of local key actors (municipality, museum, conservational organisations, schools etc.) launched programmes focused on enhancing heritage conservation awareness, promoting OUV conservation, and communication capacities."*

## Some useful resources about Røros and its initiatives

[World Travel and Tourism Council; Destination Røros; Lidén, 2005;](#)  
[Living with World Heritage. Røros, Norway: 13-16 May 2012 – Conference Report](#)

# UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Online Toolkit

To read the complete toolkit visit  
[whc.unesco.org/en/tourismtoolkit](http://whc.unesco.org/en/tourismtoolkit)



PEOPLE  
PROTECTING  
PLACES



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



World  
Heritage  
Convention

