



ICOMOS



WORLD HERITAGE AND RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES

Learning from practice: Building capacity to support rights-based approaches in the World Heritage Convention

INTRODUCTION

Human rights issues have been an integral dimension of UNESCO's mission and work since its establishment. While rights issues are not explicitly mentioned in the 1972 World Heritage Convention, its Strategic Objective "To enhance the role of communities in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention" (commonly known as the '5th C') underscores the need to respect and support communities to be involved in World Heritage processes. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948 and remains the first pillar of rights law and practice. Many States Parties to the World Heritage Convention have cited the Declaration or included its provisions in their basic laws or constitutions, and further human rights covenants, conventions and treaties concluded since 1948 have been built on its principles.

In the context of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, our shared work on nominations and conservation issues has shown the importance of finding constructive solutions where World Heritage processes intersect with the rights of indigenous peoples, cultural groups, local communities and individuals associated with World Heritage properties. Where rights issues are not addressed, a range of problems and conflicts can arise. There have been notable criticisms of some aspects of the World Heritage Convention practices that require a positive response. National rights frameworks only translate into equitable heritage conservation when the practicalities of implementation are addressed. In response, this activity also supports the ongoing work coordinated by the World Heritage Centre to develop a policy on sustainable development to effectively incorporate a rights-based approach.

ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM, as Advisory Bodies to the Convention, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre, are collaborating to increase understanding and identify effective approaches to clarifying the rights dimension in World Heritage work. The goal is to promote the application of "good practice" approaches to rights and their enabling conditions in relation to World Heritage, and to develop and recommend possible tools that would assist our work in the nomination and state of conservation processes, as well as the overall work of the Advisory Bodies, to ensure rights issues are appropriately considered.

Since 2011, the Advisory Bodies have worked together on these issues through the 'Our Common Dignity' program. An important step in this process was the "*Building Capacity to Support Rights-Based Approaches in the World Heritage Convention: Learning from Practice*" project, carried out in 2014 with generous support from the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment, and the leadership of ICOMOS Norway. It culminated in an international expert workshop, held in April 2014, with over thirty participants from all continents. Key outcomes of that workshop are presented in this report, with selected recommendations on next steps to carry forward this work.

Acknowledging the valuable lessons and recommendations emerging from the project and the workshop, ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN intend to continue their collaboration to raise awareness and improve knowledge of this complex topic, and advance approaches beneficial to our shared work with States Parties, local and associated communities, indigenous peoples and all stakeholders in World Heritage.

IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature
ICOMOS - International Council on Monuments and Sites
ICCROM - International Centre for the Study of Preservation
and Restoration of Cultural Property