# Thematic Area Briefings


**Historic Urban Landscape Approach**

The *Historic Urban Landscapes Declaration* was adopted by UNESCO in 2011 in order to address contemporary issues related to heritage in historic urban contexts. This approach aims to increase the sustainability of urban development by integrating the environmental, social and cultural concerns into the planning of heritage in historic urban landscapes. The approach has had very positive outcomes when it comes to the creation of a balance between development and protection of urban heritage. However, some concerns have arisen in relation to authenticity and integrity, and this has evidenced the need for integrated strategies to achieve the sustainable development of urban contexts and solve the conflict between these interrelationships. Therefore, professionals call for a comprehensive and integrated approach for the identification, assessment, conservation and management of these historic urban landscapes that takes into account urban values and identity, as well as a holistic landscape approach that integrates urban conservation into the wider socio-economic development.


*Further reading:*

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Veldpaus, L. and Pereira Roders, A. 2013. Historic Urban Landscapes: An Assessment Framework. 'IAIA13 Conference Proceedings': Impact Assessment the Next Generation, 33rd Annual Meeting of the International Association for Impact Assessment, Canada.

**Cultural Landscapes in Conflict: Challenges and Solutions**

The constant evolution and change of cultural landscapes, which is in some cases seen as a threat, could also be an opportunity to reflect upon the importance and meaning of cultural landscapes in our contemporary societies. In this sense, the current discourse focuses on the need to re-define a more suitable approach to preserve and manage cultural landscapes, which takes into account different perspectives and new views on conservation and preservation, land use, human interaction and site conservation. Furthermore, the different management strategies to approach its issues need to consider the changes and its natural evolution, as well as relevant aspects like environmental concerns, the preservation of cultural values, the meaning and interpretation and the interests of local communities, indigenous populations and other stakeholders, whose views on the site could be conflicting.

*Further reading:*

UNESCO. 1972. *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage – World Heritage Convention*

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Antrop, M. 2005. *Why landscapes of the past are important for the future*. In *Landscape and Urban Planning*. V. 70, Issues 1-2.

Antrop, M. 2006. *Sustainable Landscapes: contradiction, fiction or utopia?* In *Landscapes and Sustainability*. V. 70, Issues 3-4

IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, IUCN. 2005. *The Protected Landscape Approach: Linking Nature, Culture and Community*. Glandand Cambridge

Stephenson, J. 2006. *Conflict in the Landscape: A Case Study of the Cultural Values Model*. In *Public Historic Review*. V 11

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**Heritage in the Event of War and Terrorism**

As more sites become threatened with destruction, heritage professionals, institutions and government bodies play an increasingly important role in protecting both the built and intangible heritage. Heritage sites, traditional knowledge and skills, language and music all serve to represent not only the history of a community, but also its identity. The freedom to practice our own self-identified heritage is not only an essential component of international human rights, but it also a key to the sustainability of a culture. Unfortunately, it is the aim of groups such as ISIS and other illegal armed groups, to destroy all traces of cultures that are not their own by completely wiping their heritage and thus the different histories off of the map. The current discourse concerning heritage in armed conflict zones is focused mainly on re-building after demolition and/or 3-D documentation, so that destroyed heritage is not lost forever. Looking to the future, as the sole UN agency whose mandate it is to protect cultural property and heritage, it is vital that UNESCO devises pro-active steps that can be acted upon before destruction.

*Further reading:*

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Sinclair, M. 2004. Learning to Live Together: Building Skills, Values and Attitudes for the Twenty-First Century. France, UNESCO. [online] Available at: www.developmenteducation.ie/teachers-and-educators/transition-year/strand-3-Conflict/Resources/Learning_to_Live_Together.pdf.

UN. 2008. United Nations Youth. Definition of Youth Fact Sheet. [online] Available at: www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf

War Child. 2011. Youth and Conflict. Youth Working Group Briefing Paper. [online] Available at: www.warchild.org.uk/sites/default/files/Youth%20and%20Conflict%20Brief%20-%20IYY.pdf

Williams, R. 1960. *Border Country*. Parthian Books.

Women's Commission for Refugee Women & Children. 2000. Untapped Potential: Adolescents affected by armed conflict. [online] Available at: www.unicef.org/emerg/files/adolescents _armed_conflict.pdf

**Climate Change and Natural Disaster as Challenges for Natural Heritage**

Climate change, "a change in the climate that persists for decades or longer, arising from either natural causes or human activity" (UNISDR, 2009, p. 7), is a serious global challenge, particularly in a world of exponentially growing population and development, hurrying to keep pace. As it is a process that affects our environment, it also has an impact on our natural and cultural heritage. The current trend in dealing with the enormous, global issue of climate change on a local scale has been to turn from prevention to adaptation, focusing for example on fostering ecosystem resilience and site-specific climate change adaptation strategies. If one takes a look at recent natural and mixed World Heritage nominations, it is evident that (at least at that stage) management has not prepared specific, actionable strategies for what is projected to become the greatest threat to these sites. Although some climate change occurs naturally, in recent times humans have accelerated the process to the point of great concern. Even if emissions were completely halted, climate change would continue to impact natural heritage in the future. Because climate change is a global and local issue, it requires global and local solutions. One important aspect of addressing the challenge of climate change is awareness raising; therefore it becomes crucial for cultural heritage professionals to understand how climate change crosscuts many sectors.

*Further reading:*

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Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 2014. *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Core Writing Team, R.K. Pachauri and L.A. Meyer (eds.)]. Geneva: IPCC, 151 pp.

International Union for Conservation of Nature. 2015. Climate change and dams threaten natural World Heritage, warns IUCN [online] 25 June. Available at: http://www.iucn.org/ ?uNewsID=21573 [Accessed 10 November 2015].

United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. 2009. *2009 UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction*. Geneva: UNISDR.

**Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) as a tool for solving conflicts**

The discussions in these thematic areas emphasised the need for further study and improvement of Heritage Impact Assessment as a new tool in order to effectively respond to the problems resulting from conflicts between development and protection of cultural heritage. Still, this tool needs to be integrated into the management and conservation strategies of World Heritage Sites. An appropriate HIA can improve the resilience of tangible and intangible heritage in the face of future development. An important issue, which is often neglected, is to consider local community and encourage participatory methods in the application of HIA where it can positively rebind local communities with their values. In addition, further effort is required to support HIA by local administrations and state parties through the development of legal mandates for the implementation of HIA in heritage protection actions.

*Further reading:*

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