

# Why Do World Heritage Sites Need Interpretation?

Carolin Kolhoff

German Commission for UNESCO

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United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

German Commission  
for UNESCO

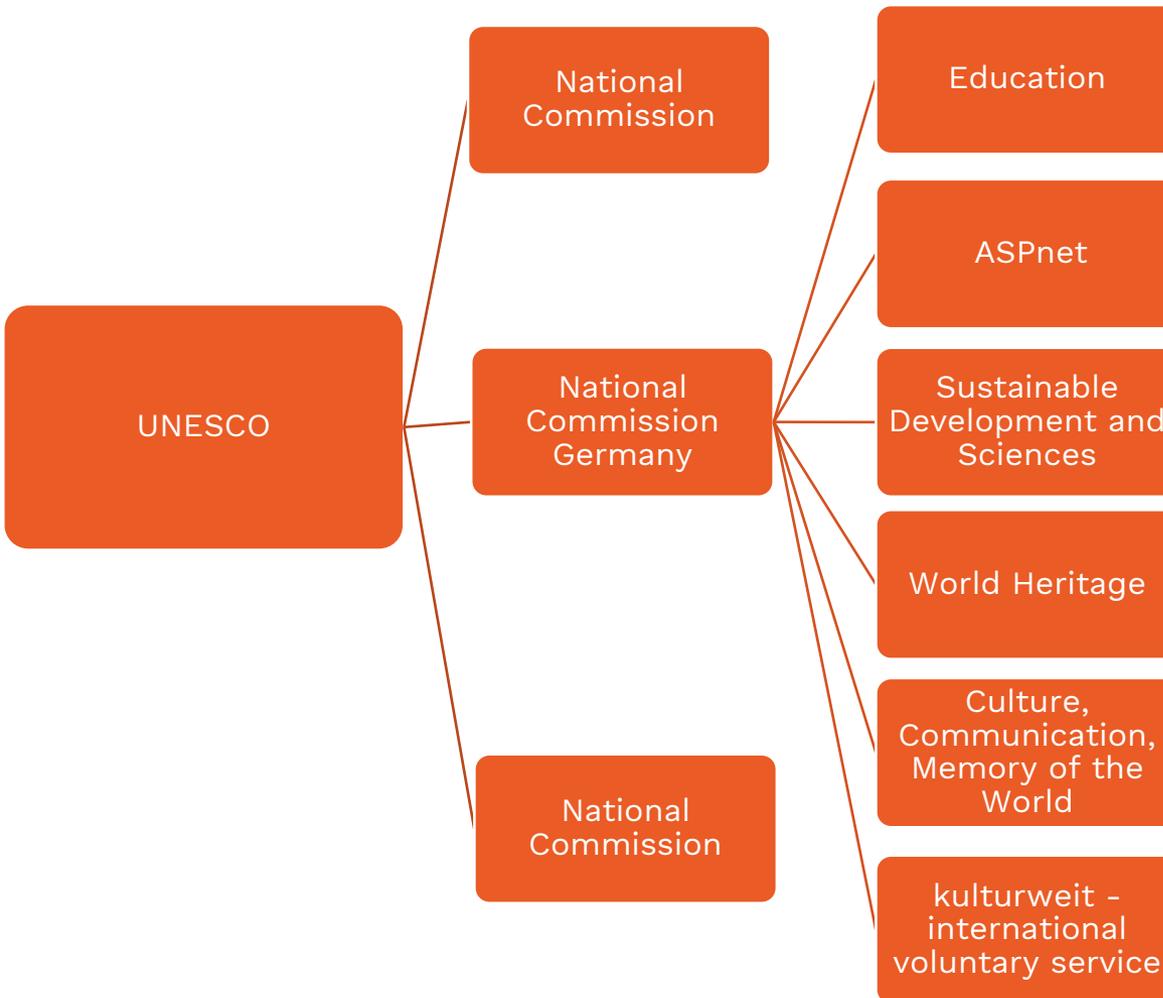
# UNESCO – International Cooperation

„...since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”

(Preamble of the Constitution of UNESCO, 1945)

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- Specialized agency of the United Nations

# German Commission for UNESCO



## Key areas:

- Communicating World Heritage
- Transboundary Cooperation
- Sustainable Development
- World Heritage Management

# The Origins of the World Heritage Convention

- Increasing awareness for the threats to cultural heritage and the environment
- Parts of the heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole
- 1972 Adoption of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention)

# Obligations and Objectives

- Current situation: 193 States Parties
- 1.121 World Heritage sites in 167 countries
  - 869 cultural / 213 natural / 39 mixed sites
  - 39 transboundary or transnational sites
  - 46 World Heritage sites in Germany
- International solidarity and cooperation for the protection of heritage
- Financial assistance and exchange of knowledge

# Obligations and Objectives

## Article 4:

- Identification, protection and conservation of sites
- Presentation and transmission to future generations

➤ **Protection, conservation and transmission are of equal importance!**

## Strategic Objectives – the “Five Cs”

- Credibility
- Conservation
- Capacity-building
- **Communication**
- Communities

Increase public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through communication

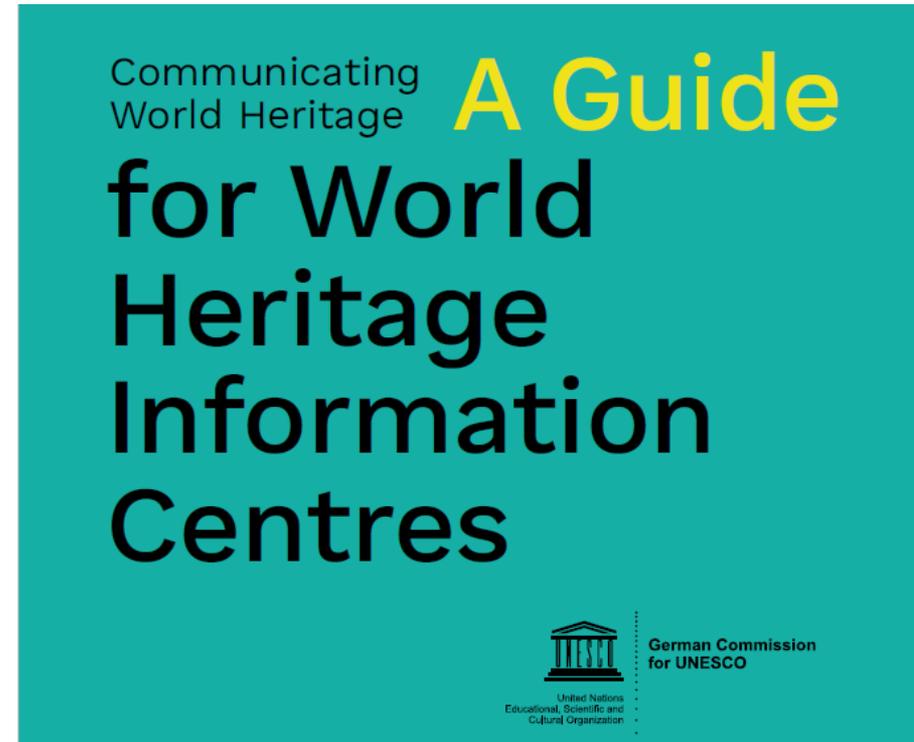
# Communication according to the Convention

## Article 27:

1. The States Parties to this Convention shall endeavor by all appropriate means, and in particular by educational and information programmes, to strengthen appreciation and respect by their peoples of the cultural and natural heritage defined in Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention.
2. They shall undertake to keep the public broadly informed of the dangers threatening this heritage and of the activities carried on in pursuance of this Convention.

# Objectives of Communication

- Communication through in-/formal education, tourism, participation opportunities, public outreach
- Diverse target groups
  - Local communities
  - (inter)national visitors (individuals and groups)
  - Children and families, students, elderly, etc.



#### Case Study 4

### UNESCO World Heritage and civic participation – the World Heritage pop-up visitor centre in the UNESCO World Heritage site Town of Bamberg

In December 2016, the municipal council of Bamberg passed a resolution to set up a World Heritage visitor centre in the heart of Bamberg across the historic Old Town and at the heart of the city. The development of such a building is a complex process. It included a temporary visitor centre – a World Heritage pop-up visitor centre – in an empty shop building on the “Old Town Hall” (Alte Rathaus), immediately adjacent to the Old Town Hall, and opened it from 16 May to 3 June 2017.

In the shop space covering 50 m<sup>2</sup>, the Bamberg World Heritage Office presented the planned content of the visitor centre and its new concept design. In addition to a small exhibition, there was a reading table with a range of publications and a “kiosk” corner with touch-and-feel tables and paper and pencils. The aim of setting up the pop-up was to allow visitors to meet visitors could all see and hear. It offered visitors four activities that the pop-up visitor centre could offer for the visitors. The team from the Bamberg World Heritage Office and the design team from the agency “to have better” tested the idea and were available to discuss the new visitor centre concept.

The World Heritage pop-up visitor centre programme was structured with different formats tailored to the target audience.

**World Heritage for all generations**  
In the morning, local children and school classes were invited to approach the topic of World Heritage together via play. For example, the children were given specially designed colouring pictures and paper templates.

**Science at lunch time**  
At lunch time, visitors presented their research papers on cultural heritage and discussed them with the audience.



Figure 5. Welcome to the World Heritage pop-up visitor centre in Bamberg World Heritage Office

**World Heritage 4 me**  
Every day, a professional photographer took photographs of guests at the pop-up visitor centre, along with a personal statement. The photographs were collected and displayed on a wall of the pop-up visitor centre and can still be found in a digital gallery.

**Lectures**  
Every afternoon, one or two lectures were given by local experts about topics relevant to World Heritage.

The initiative was made possible thanks to the support of several Bamberg companies. In addition, a Japanese artist was invited to perform a concert, where she put local heritage into a global context.

**What recommendations can we make to other World Heritage sites who also want to set up a World Heritage pop-up visitor centre?**

- The location must be central. The entrance area must be visible, accessible and inviting.
- Many permits must be obtained in advance (for special use, advertising panels, the sale of refreshments, safety, and so on).

A considerable amount of time and money is required for



# Objectives of Communication

- Get young people interested and involved
- World Heritage Trainee Programme
  - Young people acting as multipliers
- School programme “denkmal aktiv”
  - Bringing cultural heritage to schools



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World Heritage Trainee courses



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# Objectives of Communication

- UNESCO World Heritage Day (UNESCO-Welterbetag)
  - Since 2005
  - Every first Sunday in June
  - Raises awareness

# Objectives of Communication

- **Key objectives**
  - Raise awareness for the value of World Heritage
  - Raise awareness for threats to heritage and promote support for its protection and conservation
  - Inform about the key ideas – **heritage of mankind as a whole, cultural and natural diversity, international solidarity, sustainable development**
  - Enable an inclusive experience of World Heritage (accessibility)
  - Create a sense of joint responsibility for World Heritage
- **Objective of Communication: Influence behaviour**

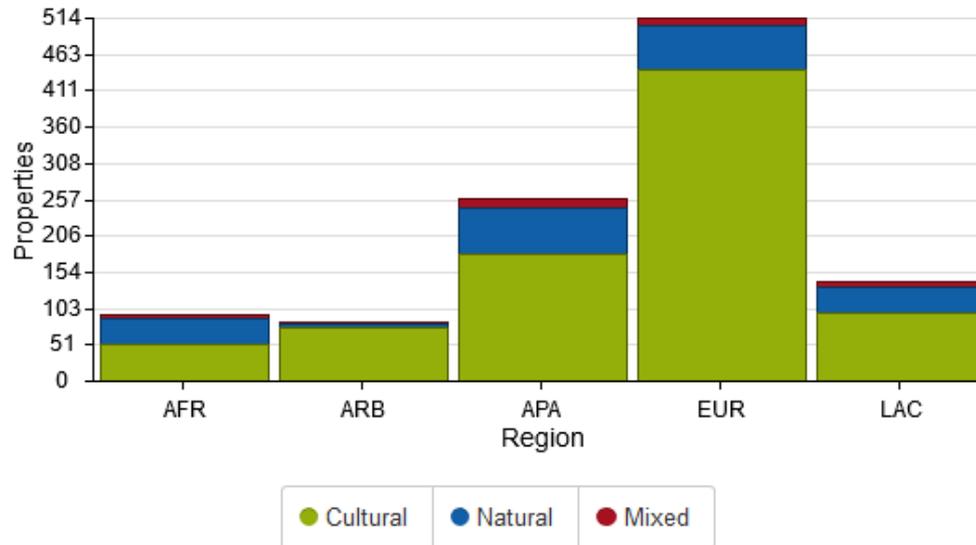
# Contents – Outstanding Universal Value

- Consideration for inscription on the World Heritage List: Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)
  - Meet at least one out of ten possible selection criteria
  - Meet requirements of authenticity and/or integrity
  - Establish an effective mechanism to preserve and manage OUV and authenticity/ integrity (management plan)
- Why is this place special and deserves to be protected? What needs to be done to preserve it? What has that got to do with me?

# Contents – Diversity

- Increasingly enhanced conception of World Heritage
  - Natural sites, landscapes, terrestrial and marine
  - Religious and secular heritage, historical buildings, residential buildings, industrial heritage
  - Prehistoric and modern heritage
  - Monuments, groups of buildings, cultural landscapes
  - Geological formations, marine heritage, etc.
  - All regions, vegetation zones, cultural surroundings

# Contents – Imbalances



- In 1994 the World Heritage Committee established the existence of imbalances on the World Heritage List.
- Global Strategy:
  - Broaden the definition of World Heritage
  - Achieve a representative, balanced and credible World Heritage List

# Contents – World Heritage in Danger

- Currently 53 sites are included on the List of World Heritage in Danger
- Justification: ascertained threat to the OUV of a site
  - War damages and deliberate destruction
  - Pollution
  - Climate change and natural disasters
  - Buildings and development
  - Impacts of tourism

# Contents – Sustainable Development

- World Heritage sites are places of learning for sustainable development
  - Sustainable Development Goals
  - Knowledge resources: adaption process, use of natural resources, risk management and resilience, etc.
- Tourism: Opportunity and Threat
  - Potential damage to the site
  - Displacement of local communities
  - Overtourism

# Contents – International Solidarity and Cooperation

- World Heritage ≠ National Heritage
- Sites have intercultural and cross-border importance

Thank you very much for your attention!

German Commission for UNESCO

Martin-Luther-Allee 42

Tel.: +49 228 604 97 110

E-Mail: [welterbe@unesco.de](mailto:welterbe@unesco.de)

[www.unesco.de](http://www.unesco.de)