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IN FOCUS

NETWORK FOR URBAN HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (UHC-HEI)

Marie-Noël Tournoux, WHITRAP Shanghai

1. Background

Urban Heritage Conservation and Education

In the area of heritage conservation, the lack of adequate competency and capacity at all levels is constantly highlighted on a daily basis by professionals or people active in the field as well as by UN Organisations, at international summits and committees such as the World Heritage Committee, or the World Urban Forums, to name a few and more recently at the UNESCO World Conference on Culture and Arts Education (Abu Dhabi 2024) as priority challenges to be urgently addressed.

This lack of competency is not only true in the area of heritage conservation but also in the area of urban-rural development design and regeneration approaches, where the dichotomy between conservation and development still prevails. Even though the understanding of the crucial role of culture and heritage in managing change has increased in the past decades, there is still a long way to go in actually integrating heritage in development processes, not only in doing no harm to it but to leapfrog to another stage, by understanding heritage as a solution, by understanding the intrinsic qualities of heritage, its resilience, the relevance of historic, ingenious systems as functional contemporary references for conceiving alternative heritage-led development approaches and long-term strategies. The overarching principle is the well-being of people, and improving the quality of life, which is at the core of the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Educational systems

Urban heritage conservation is interlinked with the conservation of tangible, intangible, cultural and natural heritage and relates to a multitude of stakeholders, areas, disciplines, skills, technologies, socio-economic environments, and legal frameworks. There is an existing substantial diversity of education traditions, systems and values in the different regions of the world and a wealth of approaches within them for urban-rural heritage conservation or which are relevant for urban-rural heritage conservation and qualitative heritage values led urban-rural development. Some educational systems are provided by higher education institutions, in a diversity of disciplines, whilst some are provided outside higher education institutions through traditional knowledge systems. Some mainly target students, others target professionals in lifelong learning processes. What, for whom, where, how and when is education delivered, is however not sufficiently well known, mapped out systematically or studied as a topic per se.

Network for Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions (UHC-HEI)

The UHC-HEI Network was set up to address these issues. Its overall agenda is setting new directions in the area of Education, Research and Action focusing on How we teach, What we teach, With and for whom, and eventually Where. It aims to bring together and strengthens cooperation with and among universities, higher education institutions and relevant stakeholders who share a strategic interest in education, research, action and internationalisation in the field of urban heritage conservation and sustainable development.

It is designed as a loose network, a voluntary membership, an international platform and was established in Shanghai, China, on 27 September 2023 at the International Conference on Urban Heritage Conservation and Design for Sustainable Development and International Network for Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions (UHC-HEI) initiated by the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region, Shanghai Centre (WHITRAP Shanghai) and the College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP), Tongji University. Its principles were set forth in the Shanghai Initiative on Urban Heritage Conservation and Design for Sustainable Development and Roadmap for Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions adopted by the participants who agreed on the relevance of setting up an international network.

International Policy Dialogue on the Role of Culture

In the past two decades, UNESCO has endeavoured to promote the importance of Culture in the Development Agenda at the UN level, in its Programme and through a set of normative instruments, Recommendations, Conventions, or strategic frameworks and global policies. After consolidating a corpus of Cultural Conventions in the past 25 to 50 years, in 2022, with the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – MONDIAL’22, the Organization reinvested itself in the global policy dialogue in the field of culture, building on its mandate and expertise to strengthen and foster multilateral cooperation.
UNESCO World Conference on Culture and Arts Education (WCCAE2024), 13-15 February 2024

From 13 to 15 February 2024, UNESCO organized an intergovernmental conference at the Ministry level “World Conference on Culture and Arts Education (WCCAE 2024)”, hosted by the Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Ministry of Culture and the Department of Tourism and Culture of Abu Dhabi.

UNESCO WCCAE 2024’s purpose was to adopt the UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education which provides a new roadmap to address the fast-evolving changes of the past decades and further broadens the understanding of culture and its role – from heritage to the cultural and creative industries to digital transformation and needs for a “new contract for education”.

The WCCAE 2024 referred mainly to the principles and frameworks developed by UNESCO in the two world conferences mentioned before related to Culture Arts Education in Lisbon 2006 and Seoul 2010 and the outcomes of the Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – MONDIACULT 2022 Document adopted in Mexico.

The intergovernmental conference convened nearly 1000 participants from 125 countries, including 90 Ministers and Vice Ministers of Culture and Education as well as numerous observers from civil society from all over the world, the academic world, including UNESCO Chairs, artists, teachers, learners, youth, heads of cultural and educational institutions, the private sectors and organizations such as UNESCO Category 2 Centres or ICMPD, who discussed how to integrate culture and arts into education.

WCCAE was organized into 7 thematic Sessions:
1) Equitable access to culture and arts education
2) Quality and relevant lifelong and life-wide learning in, through and with cultural diversity
3) Skills to shape resilient, just and sustainable futures
4) Institutionalization and valorization of culture and arts education ecosystems
5) Culture and arts education through digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI)
6) Partnerships and financing in support of culture and arts education
7) Monitoring, research and data

Monitoring access to education

A recurring concern, and particularly coming from the field of Education is monitoring the diversity of educational models, whether formal or informal, access to education or its effectiveness amongst educational models, amongst others as well as the New Urban Agenda adopted at Habitat III Quito, 2016 and of accessing data.

The more recent policy documents, roadmaps and frameworks include heritage conservation in the discussion, referring, as mentioned previously, to several standard-setting UNESCO documents, Conventions and Recommendations, including the corpus of cultural Conventions and the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) amongst others as well as the New Urban Agenda adopted at Habitat III Quito, 2016 and of the UN 2030 Agenda. They also address the use of new technologies as a means to achieve the targeted goals.

In terms of stakeholders, the acknowledgement of Indigenous communities, the promotion of underrepresented heritage, and the relevance of traditional knowledge systems and beliefs have definitely become part of priority concerns, particularly in the past decades through the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the Intangible Heritage Convention, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Expression to stick to the area of heritage.

The paradigm shift applies equally to the understanding of heritage in general and of urban heritage, in particular, to break the divide between conservation and development and consider heritage as a solution.

Both hosts co-chaired the conference and its rapporteur was the President of the Korea Arts and Culture Education Service Category 2 Centre. 12 Vice Chairs from the UNESCO Regional Member States Electoral Groups were elected. Representatives from Columbia, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of Congo, France, Indonesia, Iraq, Portugal, Kuwait, Latvia, the Republic of Korea, Romania, and Sierra Leone formed the Bureau, which took stock of the progress of the Conference.

On the first day’s plenary session, the two UNESCO Assistant General for Culture and Education presented the UNESCO Framework, the process of its development, its objectives and vision.

The last day was dedicated to summarizing the past-day thematic sessions and side-events discussing and adopting the Framework, which was adopted by acclamation on Thursday 15 February 2024.

The Rapporteur to the Conference in her summary, referred to the words of one of the Ministers attending the conference to illustrate the importance of culture:

“Why are we trying to justify the need for Culture and Arts Education, we don’t do that for physics mathematics or geography, indeed the possible impact of Culture and Arts Education is well known and documented today”.

In the closing ceremony of the WCCAE, Audrey Azoulay, Director General of UNESCO announced the following steps to implement the Framework.

The new initiative relies on three main pillars. It will provide grants to those that implement exceptional practices for arts education in each region. It will engage teachers – in particular those in the more underrepresented heritage, and the relevance of Indigenous communities, the promotion of underrepresented heritage, and the relevance of traditional knowledge systems and beliefs have definitely become part of priority concerns, particularly in the past decades through the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the Intangible Heritage Convention, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Expression to stick to the area of heritage.

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She continued by highlighting how too often still, heritage and culture are encircled by boundaries. Protective zoning creates isolated islands in urban, rural or natural environments. Sectoral zoning in terms of heritage and culture is restricted to “cultural affairs”. Economic zoning in terms of limiting heritage to the tourism economy and its commodification. Symbolic zoning in terms of transforming cultural diversity into publicity. Considering traditional knowledge systems as valuable but not enough to be integrated with the “real-life” economic chain. She insisted furthermore on how heritage and culture are not integrated enough in education systems, training, competency building, and empowering traditional knowledge holders. She then continued by presenting the UHC-HEI Network to the audience of the session and how WHITRAP Shanghai and CAUP endeavour to address the theory and practice of both urban-rural conservation and development and educational practices through the setting up of the Network.

Side event on “Re-shaping Education for and through Cultural Heritage: Setting Global Networks and Disseminating Good Practices for Urban Sustainable Development” 14 February 2024

WHITRAP Shanghai and CAUP jointly co-organized with ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Education and Training (ICOMOS-CIF) and the Ibero-American Network of UNESCO Chairs, a side event on “Re-shaping Education for and through Cultural Heritage: Setting global networks and disseminating good practices for urban sustainable development” held on 14 February from 10:30-11:30.

There were 18 offline and 17 online events. At the invitation of UNESCO, this side event federated WHITRAP Shanghai and CAUP, with ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Education and Training (ICOMOS-CIF) and the Ibero-American Network of UNESCO Chairs as all partners addressed heritage.

The key highlights of the side events put forward by the participants as their contribution to WCCAE and shared in the WCCAE wrap session were the following:

1) Supporting research, including, but not limited to, traditional knowledge and modern materials to inform education and training for the conservation of tangible and intangible heritage and its environment.

2) Facilitating closer and more agile exchanges and collaboration between academia and professionals.

3) Integrating heritage values, tangible and intangible, cultural and natural, outstanding and ordinary heritage, into education and training for the conservation of tangible and intangible heritage and its environment.

4) Broadening the focus of longstanding youth education.

5) Shifting towards more community-centric approaches, which involves rethinking the role of local communities in decision-making processes, encouraging participatory planning, and fostering a sense of ownership and pride in the heritage.

6) Rethinking conservation should involve a more inclusive approach that considers the cultural diversity of urban heritage. This includes recognizing and preserving intangible cultural heritage, such as traditions, rituals, and oral histories.

7) Evaluating the economic aspects of heritage conservation is crucial. Rethinking how heritage contributes to local economies, cultural creative industries, and job creation can help build a stronger case for investing in conservation efforts.
8) Rethinking educational approaches in the field of heritage conservation involves incorporating interdisciplinary training, fostering a deeper understanding of cultural significance, and promoting the development of practical skills needed for effective conservation.

The side event is accessible online: https://pan.baidu.com/s/1Gk2PsnuJHRSc6v2h5MB3\w9ywdl-6598

Relevance of WCCAE to UHC-HEI

The UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education refers to its Preamble and Introduction and onwards, to Culture as per the definition of MONDIAL U, which refers to heritage but mostly to buildings or heritage sites when referring to places or stakeholders.

Introduction, paragraph 5 states the following: For the purpose of this Framework, culture is defined as the “set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group, [which] includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs” as adopted in the UNESCO MONDIAL U Declarations of 1982 and 2022 and that “culture can be transmitted, expressed and experienced across time and space through words (literature, oral traditions, and language), sound (music, radio, media), images (visual arts, media), movement (dance, theatre), monuments and objects (architecture, design, crafts), digital media of all types, and traditional knowledge (local and indigenous knowledge systems, living cultural heritage, and expressions), among others”.

Urban heritage, territorial approaches, and the Historic Urban Landscape approach are not included per se in the MONDIAL U definition, however, the Framework, in its Preamble, paragraph 7, footnote 1, refers to a body of UNESCO statutory documents such as the World Heritage Convention, the Convention on Intangible Heritage or the HUL Recommendation. The side event is accessible online: https://www.unesco.org/en/wccae2024


http://www.whitr-ap.org/?classid=1461&newsid=3490

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The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the HUL Recommendation both advocate the importance of culture and heritage as key components to foster new approaches for more sustainable and qualitative development. Goal 11.4 focuses on Cities and Heritage Goal 4.3 focuses on access to Higher Education for all and 4.7 on “appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s overall contribution to a just society and healthy planet”. Whereas the HUL Recommendation, in its Section V on “Capacity-building, research, information”, paragraph 26 advocates “Research should target the complex layering of urban settlements, in order to identify values, understand their meaning for the communities, and present them to visitors in a comprehensive manner. Academic and university institutions and other centres of research should be encouraged to develop scientific research on aspects of the Historic Urban Landscape approach and cooperate at the local, national, regional and international levels. It is essential to document the state of urban areas and their evolution, to facilitate the evaluation of proposals for change, and to improve protective and managerial skills and procedures”.

Urban heritage, cultural landscapes, heritage places, heritage values based spatial planning, and intangible and natural heritage values, fit in the broader understanding of culture. This means that the work WhITRAP and CAUP focus on and the UHC-HEI initiative is fully relevant to the reflection on Culture and Arts Education and contribute to supporting the principles of the Framework and implement its roadmap as well as the Lisbon 2006 and Seoul 2010 Roadmaps as described previously.
3. Cultural Heritage Actions to Refine Training, Education and Roles (CHARTER) Paris Conference, 19 March 2024

Prof. Plácido González Martínez took part on 19 March in the CHARTER Paris Conference, at the Institut National du Patrimoine (INP) - French Heritage National Institute - Paris, France, to know firsthand about the CHARTER project, learn more about CHARTER and promote the UHC-HEI Network. This event was a collaborative effort with ICOMOS, Labex Industries Culturelles & Création Artistique (Université Sorbonne Paris Nord, Paris France) and the INP.

The 4-year project on Cultural Heritage Actions to Refine Training, Education and Roles (CHARTER) started in January 2021 with the aim to detect what the needs were in the cultural heritage sector, to provide advice for the development of ad hoc education curricula and specific policy recommendations for Europe to professionalize the cultural heritage sector.

The objective of the Paris Conference was for the main stakeholders to discuss and gather feedback on the analysis that was undertaken to examine functions, occupational profiles, professional competencies, and education and training schemes in the heritage sector to contribute to the final document. CHARTER has been very ambitious, and they have a clear usefulness that can serve as inspiration for the CHARTER project, learn more about CHARTER and promote the UHC-HEI Network. This event was a collaborative effort with ICOMOS, Labex Industries Culturelles & Création Artistique (Université Sorbonne Paris Nord, Paris France) and the INP.

The meeting allowed us to provide an update on the UHC-HEI Network’s progress since it was launched, with more than 20 universities or higher education institutions having expressed their formal interest in joining and above 80 contacts with potential members throughout the world. As well as informing the participants of WHITRAP Shanghai and CAUP’s participation in the UNESCO WICCAE in February 2024, which attracted additional interest from universities and institutions. The technical meeting allowed us to focus on the background of the UNESCO policies, including insights on the UNESCO Abu Dhabi Conference and a summary of the side event organized by WHITRAP Shanghai and CAUP. After that, the outline of the key concepts and implementation of the UNESCO Cultural policies were explained.

The March meeting allowed us to further discuss the UHC-HEI Framework and the future activities of the Network, including firstly the organization of the 2nd Workshop, planned as a follow-up to the September 2023 conference and workshop, secondly the UHC-HEI Symposium proposal and finally the prospects of developing a study or observatory on Higher Education institutions having expressed their formal interest in joining and above 80 contacts with potential members throughout the world. As well as informing the participants of WHITRAP Shanghai and CAUP’s participation in the UNESCO WICCAE in February 2024, which attracted additional interest from universities and institutions. The technical meeting allowed us to focus on the background of the UNESCO policies, including insights on the UNESCO Abu Dhabi Conference and a summary of the side event organized by WHITRAP Shanghai and CAUP. After that, the outline of the key concepts and implementation of the UNESCO Cultural policies were explained.

Attending in person was a very good opportunity to connect with potential partners for UHC-HEI from different institutions and countries as well as with individual experts working in similar research and education initiatives. The meeting allowed us to provide an update on the UHC-HEI Network’s progress since it was launched, with more than 20 universities or higher education institutions having expressed their formal interest in joining and above 80 contacts with potential members throughout the world. As well as informing the participants of WHITRAP Shanghai and CAUP’s participation in the UNESCO WICCAE in February 2024, which attracted additional interest from universities and institutions. The technical meeting allowed us to focus on the background of the UNESCO policies, including insights on the UNESCO Abu Dhabi Conference and a summary of the side event organized by WHITRAP Shanghai and CAUP. After that, the outline of the key concepts and implementation of the UNESCO Cultural policies were explained.

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To follow up on the setting up of the Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions Network (UHC-HEI) launched in September 2023, on 18 March 2024, WHITRAP Shanghai and CAUP, Tongji University, organized a 2-hour online technical meeting to follow up on the establishment of the Network, discuss its aims, objectives, framework, activities and determine a timeline to move forward. Under 40 participants, including scholars from 27 universities and representatives from UNESCO and ICOMOS CIF were invited to discuss collegially.

The key points that came out of the discussion were the following:

1) Regarding urban heritage conservation in higher education there is a clear need to focus on three questions: Why, How, and For Whom. It is imperative to reconsider the gaps between academic professional and practitioner’s environment. What type of education is delivered and should be delivered not only in higher education institutions but also by other stakeholders, and whether there is a need to create a new discipline?

2) Conduct a survey to assess what is the state of the art that involves teachers and students, students who have graduated, professionals and non-professionals, as well as technicians and managers involved in the field of heritage protection and conservation and so on. It will consider geographic nuances and specificities, different objects to better determine the role and function of this international Network.

3) Establishing connections with additional resources and networks, including the ICOMOS University Forum, UNESCO Chairs, Heritopolis Network and others to fill in gaps and strengthen ties instead of duplicating networks. We aim to organize joint activities, such as workshops.

4) Continue to bolster research in heritage education institutions across the Asia-Pacific region and Africa. Contact details of resource persons are welcomed.

5) Regarding the draft Network framework, the principle of a loose network was welcomed. The importance of developing a 3-year plan as well as a longer-term plan to allow members of the Network to clearly identify how and to what they wish to contribute was highlighted.

6) WHITRAP Shanghai and CAUP confirmed that Tongji University offered to support a Secretariat. Establishing a Scientific Committee was discussed which would be composed of one representative from each institution or organization. Each university or institution was invited to designate one representative and communicate their selection to the Secretariat via e-mail.

7) Next step is to schedule a second technical meeting in June to report on the latest progress and prepare the second workshop in September. This workshop would be the follow-up to last year’s September Conference’s Session 3 Network kick-off meeting and will also serve as the first meeting of the Scientific Committee.

https://charter-alliance.eu/about-us/what/
Experts from the National Cultural Heritage Administration came to Suzhou to assess the status of World Cultural Heritage conservation

Jiang Yeqin, Yan Huiyue
WHITRAP Suzhou

From 20 to 21 March 2024, the National Cultural Heritage Administration appointed Yan Haining, Deputy Director of the China World Cultural Heritage Centre, along with four other experts and Yang Lixia, Deputy Director of the Cultural Preservation Department of the Jiangsu Provincial Cultural Heritage Bureau, to Suzhou to conduct special research on the protection of the Classical Gardens in Suzhou. The field trip was accompanied by the directors of the Heritage Supervision Department of Suzhou Garden and Landscaping Bureau, as well as WHITRAP Suzhou, and members of the Municipal Cultural Heritage Bureau.

Giu Wenhua, Director of the WHITRAP Suzhou, presented a report on the coordination mechanisms of Suzhou Classical Gardens management institutions, the cross-sectoral collaborative management mechanism, and the development and implementation of monitoring information systems. The participants engaged in a discussion of the most pressing matters about the conservation and renovation projects, the foundation for the demarcation of heritage areas, the implementation of public monitoring, key conservation efforts, and major challenges.

The experts also conducted field research on the restoration and maintenance of heritage elements, water environment governance, active utilization and the surrounding construction environment of the Humble Administrator’s Garden, Lion Forest Garden, the Garden of Couple’s Retreat, the Retreat and Reflection Garden. This research highlighted the importance of the management offices paying special attention to the impact that rail transit construction and operation may have on the heritage gardens. The specialists praised the overall protection and management of Suzhou Classical Gardens and offered professional advice on future garden protection initiatives.

IN FOCUS

The 2nd Gansu Dialogue - Sustainable Tourism along the Silk Road was successfully held in Lanzhou, Gansu Province, from 25 to 28 March 2024. Co-organized by the UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for East Asia, the World Bank and the Gansu Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, the conference was themed around topics of “Sustainable Tourism” and the potential for tourism transformation and development in Gansu and other regions. Dr. Li Kuanghan, Assistant Director of WHITRAP Beijing, delivered a keynote speech and moderated a panel discussion on the topic of “Cultural Heritage Protection and Tourism Development.” The theme aimed to examine the role of tourism in protecting cultural heritage, promoting cultural diversity and enhancing cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

Zhi-Xing China Global Young Leaders visited WHITRAP Beijing

Ma Laron (intern)
WHITRAP Beijing

On 16 April 2024, a delegation from Zhi-Xing China Global Young Leaders Fellowships Programme visited WHITRAP Beijing and discussed “World Heritage and Heritage Protection in China”, with Dr. Li Kuanghan, Assistant Director of WHITRAP Beijing. At the meeting, Dr. Li Kuanghan first introduced the organizational structure and working philosophy of WHITRAP Beijing, and detailed various training, public participation and research projects of WHITRAP Beijing, fully demonstrating the rich achievements of the Centre in heritage conservation, publicity and education. After the presentation, Dr. Li Kuanghan and the delegates had a discussion on heritage conservation, community participation and other related issues.

Delegation of WHITRAP Suzhou visited WHITRAP Beijing

Zhu Xichen (intern)
WHITRAP Beijing

On 17 April 2024, a delegation from WHITRAP Suzhou, including Zhu Huihui, Director of the Heritage Supervision Department of the Suzhou Municipal Garden and Landscape Administration Bureau, Gu Wenhua, Director of WHITRAP Suzhou, Li Lixin, Deputy Director of WHITRAP Suzhou, and Jiang Yeqin, Office Manager of WHITRAP Suzhou, visited WHITRAP Beijing. Zhang Jianwei, Executive Deputy Director of WHITRAP Beijing and Associate Dean of the Peking University College of Architecture and Landscape, Li Chuxia, Deputy Director of WHITRAP Beijing, and Assistant Professor of the Peking University College of Architecture and Landscape, Li Kuanghan, Assistant Director of WHITRAP Beijing, and Nina Park, Programme Specialist of WHITRAP Beijing, attended the meeting.

During the meeting, delegates from WHITRAP Suzhou presented their current status, organizational structure, and work plans. Both parties agreed on the high degree of public participation in heritage conservation in Suzhou. The Beijing representatives emphasised the importance of nurturing talent in the conservation of Suzhou Classical Gardens, stressing the need for technical expertise, interdisciplinary insight and international exposure. The meeting stimulated lively discussions on how to strengthen future cooperation, resulting in a consensus on further collaboration.

The Youth Heritage Alliance Salon vol.11 “The Experiences and Future of Community Archaeology”

Li Ziyi (intern)
WHITRAP Beijing

On 20 April 2024, the Youth Heritage Alliance Salon vol.11, hosted by WHITRAP Beijing, was successfully held. The event was themed the “Experiences and Future of Community Archaeology” and was convened by Wang Siyu, Director of PKU CAAGP and Assistant Professor of PKU School of Archaeology and Museology, Wang Tao, Assistant Professor at the School of History and Cultural Heritage, Building upon practical experiences in community archaeology, the salon discussed the latest developments in the field both domestically and internationally, the development of community archaeology, and the potential for future growth. The salon featured presentations by three doctoral and master’s students from Chinese cultural heritage institutions and was also involved with experts, scholars, and university students in archaeology, cultural heritage and museology.

Salon on Urban Heritage Conservation and Public Participation

Zhu Xichen (intern)
WHITRAP Beijing

On 20 April 2024, the Salon on Urban Heritage Conservation and Public Participation was held at the October Literature Academy in Dongcheng District, Beijing. The Beijing Municipal Cultural Heritage Bureau and WHITRAP Beijing hosted the salon. Li Kuanghan, Assistant Director of WHITRAP Beijing, moderated the salon. Song Feng, Associate Professor of the PKU College of Urban and Environmental Sciences and Deputy Director of WHITRAP Beijing, began the discussion by sharing how to interpret urban and rural heritage using morphological approaches. Dr. Shikha Jain, Vice Chairman of the International Scientific Committees of ICOMOS, presented the conservation of the World Heritage Site Jajpur City in India. Zhang Jianwei, Executive Deputy Director of WHITRAP Beijing and Associate Dean of the PKU School of Archaeology and Museology, gave a talk on “Pathways of Public Engagement in Heritage Monitoring”, providing an in-depth review of the volunteer public monitoring activities on the Beijing section of the Grand Canal organized by WHITRAP Beijing.
The Training Workshop on Heritage Impact Assessment: Principles, Methodology and Mitigation was successfully held in Melaka, Malaysia, from 22-26 April 2024. The workshop was organized by SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SEAMEO SPSEA) and Department of National Heritage, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Malaysia (DNH), co-organized by WHITRAP Shanghai, National University of Singapore, DNLF Heritage Studies Centre of KMTL, 32 participants from 11 countries (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and 12 resource persons joined the workshop. Ms Li Hong, Project Director of WHITRAP Shanghai, was invited as a resource person. Prof. Shao Yong, Executive Director of WHITRAP Shanghai made a closing address.

The overall objectives, principles, methodology, evaluation, and mitigation measures of Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) were used to undertake the Heritage Impact Assessments on the ground. In addition, the context of World Heritage were used to undertake the hypothetical projects of Melaka elaborated step by step by the professionals.

The training workshop on Heritage Impact Assessments was held in Melaka, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Thailand, Indonesia, and Pakistan, was shared through vivid cases. The practice of HIA in Southeast Asia countries is imbalanced. However, the consensus that Heritage Impact Assessments are tools and processes to manage change to sustainable development, is reached. More good practices, pilots of different types of heritage, templates, and Guidelines of policy documents to facilitate HIA of implementation from heritage authorities to professionals are strongly requested.

SEAMEO SPSEA and WHITRAP Shanghai will continue the collaboration on the theme of Heritage Impact Assessments, urban heritage, and other World Heritage matters.

The First Suzhou Youth Garden Model Creative Competition was successfully held

Jiang Yeqin, Yan Huiyue
WHITRAP Suzhou

On 18 May 2024, "The First Suzhou Youth Garden Model Creative Competition" was successfully held at Suzhou Labor Road Experimental Primary School. The Suzhou Garden and Landscaping Bureau, the Suzhou Science and Technology Association co-sponsored the event, which was hosted by WHITRAP Suzhou. The competition, themed "Strive to be the guardian of ancient architecture, Jiangnan is a picture scroll", lasted two days and consisted of 18 competition categories such as individual, team, and creative competitions. A total of 4118 students from Suzhou’s 216 elementary and high schools registered for the contest under the guidance of 571 teachers.

The competition was designed to cultivate an innovative mindset and practical abilities among the young people, facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the wisdom and essence of Suzhou traditional garden design, and expand their professional knowledge of the form, structure and construction of ancient traditional gardens: from the perspective of modern technology and application scenarios. Furthermore, the competition aimed to raise young people’s awareness of heritage protection and foster a sense of appreciation and respect for Suzhou’s ancient buildings, thereby producing the next generation of Suzhou gardeners and cultural heritage guardians.

Tai Kwun Conversation

Ma Leoring (intern)
WHITRAP Beijing

On 20 May 2024, Dr Li Kuanghan, Assistant Director of WHITRAP Beijing, gave a thematic lecture at Tai Kwun and conducted a dialogue with Dr Richard Engelhardt, former UNESCO Regional Advisor for Culture for Asia and the Pacific. Dr Li’s presentation, entitled "Reviving the Past: Interpretation and Uses of Heritage in Urban and Rural China", used case studies to explore how, in an era of increasing urbanisation, widening urban-rural disparities and deepening integration of culture and tourism, we can integrate urban and rural heritage into broader sustainable development goals through the interpretation and use of cultural resources.

The Youth Heritage Alliance Salon vol. 12 "Heritage and Innovation at the Junction of Urban and Rural Areas"

Li Ziyi (intern)
WHITRAP Beijing

On 25 May 2024, the 12th Youth Heritage Alliance Salon, organized by WHITRAP Beijing and co-organized by the PKU Centre for Anthropology and Folklore Studies, was successfully held. The salon was themed “Heritage and Innovation at the Junction of Urban and Rural Areas” and convened the next generation of Suzhou heritage guardians and cultural heritage guardians.

Tai Kwun Conversation

Ma Leoring (intern)
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On 20 May 2024, Dr Li Kuanghan, Assistant Director of WHITRAP Beijing, gave a thematic lecture at Tai Kwun and conducted a dialogue with Dr Richard Engelhardt, former UNESCO Regional Advisor for Culture for Asia and the Pacific. Dr Li’s presentation, entitled "Reviving the Past: Interpretation and Uses of Heritage in Urban and Rural China", used case studies to explore how, in an era of increasing urbanisation, widening urban-rural disparities and deepening integration of culture and tourism, we can integrate urban and rural heritage into broader sustainable development goals through the interpretation and use of cultural resources.

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Heritage and these internal tensions
Examining the dynamics between
in numerous parts of the world.
strife that are causing destruction
conflicts, ethnic clashes, and religious
unsustainable tourism, political
notion of "universal value." External
necessity to reassess the established
of postcolonial perspectives; and the
development, political pressures,
and natural legacies face significant
discussions of heritage sites all
at UNESCO, the book presents
experience working in senior positions
Drawing on the author's many years of
faced by heritage, it presents insightful
the current and forthcoming issues
Critically analysing the complexity of
value of heritage for present and future
faced and emphasises the imperative
and external pressures, Bandarin
explores a wide
range of issues surrounding the
crisis in heritage management on an
international level. It will be essential
reading for heritage scholars, students,
and professionals.

Francesco Bandarin (Venice, Italy,
1950) is an Architect and Planner
specialised in urban conservation.
From 2000 to 2010 he was Director of
the UNESCO World Heritage Centre
and from 2010 to 2018 he served as
Assistant Director-General of
UNESCO for Culture. He is Special
Advisor to ICOMOS, Member of
the Advisory Committee of the
Smithsonian Center for Folklife and
Cultural Heritage, and Founding
Member of OurWorldHeritage. He
teaches at SciencesPo in Paris and
advises governments and heritage
conservation projects internationally.

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

CHANGING HERITAGE: HOW INTERNAL TENSIONS AND EXTERNAL PRESSURES ARE THREATENING OUR CULTURAL AND NATURAL LEGACY

Luo Xi
WHITRAP Shanghai

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

ARCHITECTURES EN CHINE AUJOURD'HUI, DÉMARCHES ÉCO RESPONSABLES (CHINESE VERSION)

Marie-Noël Tournoux
WHITRAP Shanghai

Françoise Ged, sinologist and
architect, is Head of the Observatoire de l'architecture de la Chine contemporaine, Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, France (Observatory of contemporary architecture in China, Centre for Heritage and Architecture, France) has long-standing partnerships with practitioners, teachers and researchers in China.

Hélène Le Carrer, architecte at dMMM architects office, London, UK, has studied and conducted research in China in the past few years.

Peng Liang is Associate Professor at the School of Architecture, Tianjin University. She holds a PhD in Geographical Development from the University of Paris. Her study area is Cultural Landscape. She lived in France for 7 years.
TUGAY FORESTS OF THE TIGROVAYA BALKA NATURE RESERVE

Tugay Forests of the Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve is located in the interfluence of the Vakhsh and Panj rivers in southwestern Tajikistan at the border of Afghanistan. The confluence continues as the Amu Darya, the largest river in Central Asia, running to the Aral Sea. The Reserve includes extensive iranopan tugay riverine forests, the sandy Kashka-Kum desert, the Burtau peak, as well as the low (1,000-1,200 m a.s.l.) mountains of the southern spurs of the Arakul range – the Hodja-Fazyon mountains. The area of the Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve is 49,786 hectares and its buffer zone is 17,672 hectares. The property is composed of a series of floodplain terraces covered by alluvial soils, comprising tugay riverine forests with very specific biodiversity in the valley. Significantly, the property preserves a natural Asiatic poplar tugay vegetation complex.

Criteria (ix)
The natural complex of Tigrovaya Balka is an outstanding example of continuous ecological and biological processes taking place in the evolution and development of desert-tugay biocenoses and their characteristic plant and animal communities. The reserve hosts various ecological units, not only tugay lowland forests, but also steppe and semi-desert areas and their various ecotones where many autochthonous species of flora are found. The reserve’s forests, sandy and saline semi-deserts, piedmont semi-savannas, and various wetlands are dynamically adapting to changes in the hydrological regime of the territory. There are several habitats in the reserve: tugay riverine forests, freshwater bodies and marshes, semi-deserts, taliks and solonchaks.

Criterion (ii)
The Trans-Iranian Railway is an outstanding tool for solving unexpected problems, an achievement owing to the international breadth of experience that was applied in its construction, enabling the Trans-Iranian Railway project, overall, to stay on time and on budget.

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The Trans-Iranian Railway connects the Caspian Sea in the northeast with the Persian Gulf in the southwest crossing two mountain ranges as well as rivers, highlands, forests and plains, and four different climatic areas. Started in 1927 and completed in 1938, the 1,394-kilometre-long railway was designed and executed in a successful collaboration between the Iranian government and 43 construction contractors from many countries. The railway is notable for its scale and the engineering work it required to overcome steep routes and other difficulties. Its construction involved extensive mountain cutting in some areas, while the rugged terrain in others dictated the construction of 174 large bridges, 186 small bridges and 224 tunnels, including 11 spiral tunnels. Unlike most early railway projects, the construction of the Trans-Iranian Railway was funded by national taxes to avoid foreign investment and control.

Criterion (iv)
The Trans-Iranian Railway is the embodiment of the creative usage of various technologies aimed at gaining access to plains, highlands, forests and coastal regions at both ends of the country and linking the northern and southern shores of Iran.

TRANS-IRANIAN RAILWAY

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Criterion (ii)
The Trans-Iranian Railway is the living manifestation of the multi-faceted interchange of human values, represented by the application of railway skills and experience in railway construction, leading to the emergence of a mixed Iranian-Western architectural style. The Trans-Iranian Railway boosted the economy and trade by speeding up transportation, which led to the revival of cultural-historical routes such as the Silk Road and the Spice Route at a specific period in contemporary history in Central and Western Asia during the early 20th century. This practice was later expanded to European countries. The Trans-Iranian Railway also served to connect the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea. In addition, at the time it was built, the Trans-Iranian Railway promoted exemplary project management, which was achieved as a result of the successful working relations established between the Iranian Government, the project managers and the 40 Iranian or international companies established in 43 construction zones en route with a deployed workforce of over 65,000 engineers, office staff members and labourers.

Located in a mountainous landscape, the Trans-Iranian Railway proved an outstanding tool for solving unexpected problems, an achievement owing to the international breadth of experience that was applied in its construction, enabling the Trans-Iranian Railway project, overall, to stay on time and on budget.