

<b>Institution:</b> University of Kent		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 29: Classics		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Drafting and Supporting Implementation of the 2015 UNESCO Policy on World Heritage and Sustainable Development		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2013-2019		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Sophia Labadi	Professor of Heritage	2012-present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014-2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>In 2015, UNESCO adopted the <i>Policy on the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention</i> which ensured (for the first time) that the conservation and management of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites aligns with broader sustainable development goals. Professor Labadi, drawing on her research on heritage and social justice, gender equality and sustainable development, was part of the small team responsible for the drafting of this new policy. By integrating environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and inclusive social development into the conservation, management and interpretation of more than 1,000 sites of outstanding and universal value, the policy has significantly impacted on a broad range of stakeholders including: governments; local communities (young people, women, ethnic and religious minorities); professionals and practitioners (heritage professionals, tourist guides, site managers); and NGOs and other third-sector organisations. Since the adoption of the policy, Professor Labadi has worked with intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, governments, and civil society organisations to translate the policy into pragmatic action in varied international contexts.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Labadi's research, which underpins this case study, focuses on the ways that heritage sites can address some of the most pressing global challenges, including social justice, gender equality and sustainable development. Since 2013, she has explored the development problems associated with sites protected by the 1972 World Heritage Convention (World Heritage Sites), including gentrification, exclusion and relocation of local populations, and the environmental degradation of urban settlements. The research was based on in-depth analyses of documents on World Heritage Sites in Asia, Europe, and Latin America; first-hand experience of working for UNESCO and ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites); and in-depth ethnographic research at sites in Africa and Asia (e.g. the Island of Mozambique and at Angkor in Cambodia (see, in particular, <b>R1</b>, <b>R2</b>, and <b>R3</b>). Labadi has argued that the conservation, management and interpretation of heritage sites too often occur separately from other sustainable development concerns, and that conservation, management and interpretation plans and activities should thoroughly integrate sustainable development approaches so that sites can contribute to inclusive social and economic development and the quality of life of communities. Sustainable development should tackle issues of peace and security, as well as poverty reduction, gender equality and environmental sustainability. The research has also highlighted a number of possible solutions to these problems, for example, through inclusive economic development, enhancing the quality of life and the wellbeing of locals, and protecting biological and cultural diversity [<b>R1</b>].</p>		

In **R2** and **R3**, Labadi described how ambiguous the official documents for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention had been in the past. In particular, in **R2** she identified how the documents often omitted key principles of sustainable development, thereby overlooking the importance of inclusivity (both in economic and in social terms) and intergenerational equity; the requirement for the benefits from World Heritage to be shared equitably; and the need for a rights-based approach to heritage. In **R3**, she explained the different, and at times conflicting, understandings of heritage and sustainability by key local stakeholders, and revealed the need for a newly designed policy on the topic. **R4** considers issues with the concepts of World Heritage and gender. Gender equality is a core priority of UNESCO, yet Labadi identifies the invisibility of women in World Heritage documentation, and in the Convention's processes, as well as their lack of influence in decision-making.

Throughout the period when she was undertaking the underpinning research, Labadi was in close contact with Giovanni Bocardi of UNESCO (who was responsible for the WHSD Policy), sharing her data and findings. As a result, the new 2015 WHSD Policy integrates the key ideas from Labadi's publications on World Heritage and sustainable development.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[R1] Labadi, Sophia, and Logan, William, eds. (2015). *Urban Heritage, Development and Sustainability*. London: Routledge, 314pp. ISBN 9781138845732. <http://kar.kent.ac.uk/42427/>

[R2] Labadi, Sophia, and Gould, Peter (2015). 'Sustainable Development: Heritage, Community, Economics'. In: Meskell, Lynn, ed. *Global Heritage*. Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 196-216. <http://kar.kent.ac.uk/42441/>

[R3] Labadi, Sophia (2017). 'UNESCO, World Heritage, and Sustainable Development: International Discourses and Local Impacts'. In: Gould, Peter, and Pyburn, Anne, eds. *Collision or Collaboration: Archaeology Encounters Economic Development: One World Archaeology*. Springer, pp. 45-60. ISBN 978-3-319-44514-4. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-44515-1. <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/57759/>

[R4] Labadi, Sophia (2018). 'World Heritage and Gender Equality'. In: Larsen, Peter, and Logan, William, eds. *World Heritage and Sustainable Development: New Directions in World Heritage Management*. London: Routledge, pp. 87-100. ISBN 978-1-138-09139-9. <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/59117/>

### Grants

[G1] Drafting and Implementing the 2015 UNESCO Policy on World Heritage and Sustainable Development, 9 January 2014-6 June 2016. Funders: GCRF (Kent); European Cultural Foundation; African World Heritage Fund; Robben Island Museum. Value: £40,000.

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

#### Contributing to a ground-breaking policy on sustainable development

World Heritage (WH) Sites, designated by UNESCO for their outstanding and universal significance are protected by the 1972 World Heritage Convention. Labadi's research on heritage and sustainable development informed a significant shift in the implementation of the Convention, when the landmark 2015 *Policy on the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention (WH-SDP)*, which she helped draft, was adopted.

As a result of her research on heritage and development, and in particular her focus on issues relating to gender equality and social and economic inclusion, Labadi was approached by Giovanni Boccardi (then Senior Programme Specialist at UNESCO) to contribute to the drafting of the WH-SDP policy document [a]. She presented a first draft of the section on

'Achieving Gender Equality' at the first workshop on WH and Sustainable Development (held at Cottbus University, Germany, in October 2014). During the second workshop on World Heritage and Sustainable Development (held in Vietnam, 22-24 January 2015), she presented a second draft of the text on 'Inclusive Social Development'. With Boccardi and Jane Thompson (an independent consultant), and drawing on background papers and comments received, in February-March 2015, she finalised the draft policy. She then worked with Boccardi to integrate comments received from government stakeholders after the draft policy was presented to the World Heritage Committee in June 2015. In total, 191 governments were invited to submit feedback on the draft policy [a].

The WH-SDP was presented on 19 November 2015 to the 20th General Assembly of the States Parties to the WH Convention and was fully adopted [b]. The policy represented an historic change to the WH programme, as it identified, for the first time, specific mechanisms to ensure that WH sites comply with, and are managed and interpreted according to principles of inclusive economic development, social responsibility, environmental protection, and peace and security. The policy aligned the WH Convention with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) adopted by the United Nations in September 2015, and its adoption was described in a UNESCO press release (November 2015) as representing 'a significant shift in the implementation of the Convention and an important step in its history' [b].

At a meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan, in July 2019, the UNESCO WH Committee noted the significant progress that had been made towards implementation of the WH-SDP. The Committee reviewed a progress report which described how community-based conservation projects, in Benin, Lesotho and Botswana, had strengthened the capacity of local communities to safeguard their heritage by integrating the principles of WH-SDP [c]. Labadi had, in particular, contributed to the drafting of the policy section on gender equality in the WH-SDP, and the progress report noted that in response to the WH-SDP, the 'World Heritage Centre [the coordinator within UNESCO for all matters related to World Heritage] has made structured efforts to ensure a gender-sensitive and gender-balanced approach to the implementation of its activities' [c]. The progress report also provided examples of specific projects with a strong focus on gender equality. At Lake Ohrid (on the North Macedonia-Albania border), women were clearly represented in leadership positions in an EU-UNESCO funded project to protect natural and cultural heritage, with female participation in workshops and meetings reaching 56%. In Madagascar, a UNESCO-led project had provided education, training and opportunities for women in the sustainable tourism sector, thereby improving livelihoods and helping them become more financially independent. In Makli, Thatta (Pakistan), women from local villages were being trained in ceramics production and tile making. It was noted that 'these outreach and income generation activities have improved the lives of local women, who now play a crucial role in the conservation of the property, thereby gaining a sense of ownership, pride and identity, in addition to the material benefits they derive from the production and sale of the ceramics' [c].

In addition, the 2019 Operational Guidelines – the key document for the implementation of the Convention – requests States to comply with the principles of the 2015 Policy, including on gender equality (paragraph 15); ensuring benefits for heritage and society (paragraph 112); and using research for conflict prevention and resolution (paragraph 215). In addition, the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting Exercise (2018-2024) requests States to detail how the principles from the 2015 Policy have been implemented at property level. Periodic reporting is the key official monitoring mechanism of the Convention, undertaken by governments every six years. Before 2015, states did not have to integrate sustainable development principles in site management, now this must happen and be reported upon [c].

### **Implementing sustainable development policy: practical, real-world management and interpretation of World Heritage Sites**

UNESCO has recognised the need for improved knowledge, planning and guidance to enable stakeholders to harness the potential of World Heritage properties to contribute to sustainable development. UNESCO also recognises the importance of stakeholders having the

opportunity to share good practice and experiences of implementing WH-SDP into operational activities and processes in different regions of the world [b, c]. Labadi has responded to both these drivers in her work with stakeholders in Europe, Africa and, as of August 2020, Korea [d, f, g]. Throughout this work, as detailed below, Labadi has developed opportunities for knowledge sharing; provided tools to enhance community engagement; created detailed guidance for broad audiences; and ensured sustained engagement with governments, practitioners, advisory bodies, civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

In 2018, Labadi organised a workshop which brought together representatives from 40 civil society organisations involved in the implementation of the WH-SDP. The event was part of the official programme of the European Year of Cultural Heritage (29 March 2018, Brussels) and was organised in cooperation with Europa Nostra (the leading citizens movement on heritage in Europe) and the European Cultural Foundation [g]. The aim was to find innovative ways for civil society actors, who often play a key role in the management of World Heritage sites, to implement WH-SDP. The workshop was attended by the ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) Focal Point for the UN Sustainable Development Goals. ICOMOS is responsible for evaluating cultural and mixed properties for inclusion on the UNESCO WH List and their state of conservation once on the list. Globally, it is the largest NGO on cultural heritage. The workshop made several recommendations which were published in an Action Plan that was widely disseminated to civil society organisations worldwide [h]. Subsequently, the ICOMOS Focal Point reported that the Action Plan was included as part of ICOMOS' Advocacy Kit and was distributed at the 2019 Session of the WH Committee in Baku, as well as at the 2019 UN High Level Political Forum in New York. She further noted that 'The activities undertaken by Prof. Sophia Labadi at the University of Kent, related to the implementation of the Policy [WH-SDP], have been a catalyst for the heightened prominence of the Policy in my advocacy work connecting cultural heritage and sustainable development' [i].

Building on her 2018 workshop, in August 2019, Labadi organised a workshop in conjunction with the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) and Robben Island Museum, Cape Town [d]. The AWHF is the inter-governmental organisation which, as a UNESCO entity, works on the conservation and management of World Heritage sites in 39 African countries. The workshop was attended by WH site managers, heritage practitioners, national authorities and researchers from 18 African countries. It was also attended by the Africa Business Group, ICOMOS, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN, responsible for assessing natural and mixed properties nominated for inclusion on the WH List and their state of conservation once on the List), and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Participants exchanged experiences and identified local-level best practices and approaches for integrating the 2015 WH-SDP. A draft Action Plan was initiated, and a follow-up workshop planned for Cameroon in 2021. Following the workshop, Labadi worked with the African World Heritage Fund and the Robben Island Museum to publish a 109-page policy report, sharing experiences of balancing conservation and sustainable development at World Heritage sites in Africa. The report, which has been widely disseminated, included case studies from seven African countries, highlighted issues and solutions to implementation of the WH-SDP in the context of Africa, and advocated for a pragmatic approach to the integration of sustainable development perspectives into the conservation and management of World Heritage sites [e].

Six months after the workshop, a follow-up survey was conducted, in order to understand the practical impacts of the workshop and whether participants had gone on to integrate principles of the 2015 WH-SDP into the operation of heritage sites in Africa. The results clearly indicated 'that a number of the participants have integrated the principles of the 2015 UNESCO Policy on World Heritage and Sustainable Development into their work' [e]. The AWHF noted examples where the outcomes from the workshop had directly influenced the practice of site management. At the Okavango Delta World Heritage Site in Botswana, the principles of the policy had been used to review their management plan. At Lake Malawi, socio-economic initiatives were being developed to benefit local communities. At Victoria Falls/Mosi-oa-Tunya (Zambia and Zimbabwe) the Lwande Mixed Farming project was helping local communities to

grow and market agricultural produce, thereby creating better food security. The site manager at Victoria Falls/Mosi-oa-Tunya indicated that, as a direct result of the knowledge acquired at the workshop, he had evaluated a number of tourism project proposals and activities to better align them with the principles of sustainable development articulated in the WH-SDP [e].

As a result of her research and publication with Professor Logan [R1], in 2020 Labadi was commissioned by the Korean Government to write a paper on 'Integrating Heritage Interpretation into a Sustainable Development Perspective' (August 2020) [f]. This paper is now informing the Korean Government's discussions on interpretative approaches and plans at World Heritage sites, and their efforts to fully integrate the principles of the WH-SDP into this important work.

#### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[a] Letter from UNESCO Cultural Sector Division for Culture and Emergencies, on Labadi's role in drafting the 2015 World Heritage Sustainable Development (WHSD) Policy.

[b] 20th General Assembly of the World Heritage Convention adopts new policy on sustainable development.

[c] UNESCO World Heritage Committee 43rd Session, Baku: Integrating the principles of the 2015 WHSD Policy into the official implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

[d] Media coverage of the workshop (Robben Island, South Africa), 22 August 2019.

[e] Letter confirming implementation of the WHSD Policy in the African region by the African World Heritage Fund, 13 November 2020.

[f] Position paper commissioned by the Korean Government, August 2020.

[g] Media report of Workshop on World Heritage, Sustainable Development and Civil Society held in Brussels, 5 April 2018.

[h] Action Plan: World Heritage, Sustainable Development and Civil Society Workshop, 29 March 2018

[i] Letter from ICOMOS Focal Point for the Sustainable Development Goals, 2 December 2020.