UNESCO-IFESCO PILOT PROJECT:
'Strengthening the Role of Youth in Safeguarding the Diversity of Cultural and Natural Heritage and Tourism Development in CIS Countries'

COUNTRIES INVOLVED:
Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

COORDINATORS:
UNESCO Moscow Office for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation & UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

PARTNERS:
Ministries of Culture, Tourism, Education and Youth of the CIS countries; National Commissions for UNESCO; UNWTO, ICOM, UNESCO Chairs in the fields of Heritage and Tourism; UNESCO ASPnet schools; Russian Institute for Cultural and Natural Heritage named after D. Likhatchev, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia and other specialized and higher Educational and Cultural Institutions.

DURATION: 30 MONTHS (2014 - 2017)
Project Description

The UNESCO/IFESCO Pilot Project aims at reinforcing the capacities of CIS countries in heritage management and in the safeguarding of the diversity of cultural and natural heritage in all of its forms with the involvement of youth in capacity-building and awareness-raising activities for sustainable development, considering the principles of UNESCO 1972, 2003 and 2005 Conventions, UNESCO Programme 'World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism', UN resolutions 'The Future We Want' and 'Culture and Sustainable Development' and contributing to the overarching goal of the 'International Decade of Rapprochement of Cultures' (2013-2022).

The Project activities will include case studies, gap analysis, thematic capacity-building trainings, expert meetings, elaboration of recommendations, strengthening of professional networking and, in particular, the promotion of the key role of culture for sustainable development on both grass-roots and policy levels within CIS countries.

The Project will also contribute to the mainstreaming of culture into development policies of CIS countries at national and regional levels and it will ensure a more effective response to development needs through culture, education and youth with consideration of the post-2015 Development Agenda.

Besides enhancing public awareness on the role heritage plays in sustainable development as repository of knowledge, driver of poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability, and symbolic force for social inclusion and stability, the Project will focus on youth as driver of change, peace, dialogue and inclusive development.

Objectives

✩ Ensuring the protection, conservation and sustainable management of heritage in all of its forms and promoting its role in sustainable development through the effective implementation of UNESCO 1972, 2003, 2005 Conventions;

✩ Promotion of inter-cultural dialogue through cultural/educational/creative and eco-tourism involving youth;

✩ Monitoring of national strategies in the field of cultural heritage and tourism and support in the integration of culture within development policies of CIS countries;

✩ Development within educational institutions of trainings and courses on the safeguarding of heritage through cultural tourism development and educational tours to WH sites in CIS countries in order to strengthen youth's role in heritage conservation and management involving youth within CIS countries.
Expected Results

- The overall social and economic condition of the CIS is improved through the strengthening of a skilled approach to tangible and intangible heritage management and safeguarding and the harnessing of cultural tourism power in sustainable development.

- The role of culture and cultural tourism in sustainable development is promoted together with the integration of cultural heritage protection into national development policies and strategies.

- Youth skills in management of cultural properties and their potential to contribute to sustainable development are strengthened. Youth cooperation is enhanced in culture, education and tourism to support mutual economic development and preservation of shared history.

- Access to and involvement of local communities in heritage preservation and sustainable tourism development is increased.

- Integrated tourism products for CIS countries are developed through the creation of touristic maps of the region. Youth's participation is increased in initiatives related to cultural, creative and eco-tourism;

- Education and research in cultural tourism are increased in the CIS;

- Cultural and creative industries promotion is integrated in national development policies at least in five countries of the project.

UNESCO with Youth

Youth makes 18% of world’s population and, being very vulnerable to nowadays challenges is the primary holder of future’s social and economic inclusiveness and peace. As such, it is an essential part of UN’s strategies and a priority group for UNESCO.

Being UNESCO the only UN agency dealing with culture as a core mission and recognizing its essential role in society, it promotes culture as a vector for youth development. The ‘UNESCO by and for youth’ Programme works on youth through activities, such as Youth Forums, trainings, seminars, and the ‘WH Volunteer Programme’. Youth as an agent of change is integrated in UNESCO strategy through 3 main phases: policy-formulation; capacity development; civic participation.


Project Activities

1. Advisory expert meetings for international and CIS experts organized to strengthen youth’s role in heritage safeguarding and tourism development with the mobilization of cultural resources and for the promotion of inter-cultural dialogue;

2. Case studies, country analytical and comparative reports involving recommendations directed at strengthening the role of youth in heritage preservation and tourism promotion in CIS countries;

3. Development of educational programs in CIS countries on World Cultural and Natural Heritage, diversity of intangible cultural heritage and on cultural tourism based on UNESCO methodical publications. The programs are developed through UNESCO Associated Schools and Chairs Networks;

4. Organization of thematic competitions, trainings and educational tours to create at least 9 thematic routes and new maps on World Heritage Properties within the CIS for the promotion of youth tourism and participation in heritage safeguarding of the region;
Let us acknowledge and celebrate what youth can do to build a safer, more just world.

Let us strengthen our efforts to include young people in policies, programmes and decision-making processes that benefit their futures and ours.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
Message on the International Youth Day, 2010

We must engage the energies, the idealism and the fresh perspective of youth in our endeavors to foster peace and sustainable development.

Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO

UNESCO & the CIS

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was established in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nowadays nine ex-soviet Republics are members of the CIS. There are more than 50 World Heritage sites on the territory of the CIS. Ranging from natural wonders to ancient architectural masterpieces, these sites witness the unique co-existence of several cultures, faiths and traditions and the great extent of inter-cultural dialogue that always characterized this region of the world. Some of the most remarkable sites in the CIS are also cultural landscapes representing the combined works of nature and man. These special sites evoke a sense of pride in our shared heritage and, therefore, our shared responsibility for safeguarding World Heritage.

UNESCO Cluster Offices in Moscow and Almaty, as well as UNESCO Office in Tashkent are committed to the preservation of these Heritage sites through the involvement and education of local communities and, in particular, of youth. Several challenges have emerged in these countries recently, such as lack of regional cultural awareness and decrease in CIS cooperation and, thus, in youth exchanges. The present project, together with several policies and strategies implemented on the national level by CIS countries in regard to tourism and culture, will contribute to the comprehensive inclusion of culture into development policies as a crucial factor in promoting a culture of peace and non-violence. Moreover, it will enhance partnership in the field of cultural tourism and youth policies.