

SECTION 4: Conclusion from the final discussion and conference

The conference focussed on the educational mandate of the World Heritage Convention in the context of climate change challenges. The various contributions clarified this mission from scientific, local and young perspectives and emphasised the link between World Heritage education and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

The final discussion focussed on the challenges that the World Heritage Site is already facing today and will face in the future due to climate change. This includes protection against climate-related environmental changes and extreme weather events, as well as the adaptation and sustainable development of World Heritage sites in a way that is compatible with heritage protection. There was consensus that these challenges need to be emphasised more strongly at a political level and integrated into national and international legislation and climate protection activities.

The conference emphasised the need to integrate and further develop innovative World Heritage education projects into political structures. The practical examples from the presentations demonstrated the already existing diversity of educational projects that address the issue of sustainable development, particularly in relation to climate change. It was emphasised that the visibility of these projects should be increased and networking between World Heritage and education stakeholders should be improved.

A key issue was the conceptual and practical link between World Heritage education and ESD. It was emphasised that World Heritage sites, as extracurricular learning locations, offer authentic and emotional learning experiences that can strengthen the bond with the heritage. The question of how open learning settings can be established to promote creativity, positive emotions and the ability to act was discussed. Conflicting objectives in the management of World Heritage sites, such as the tension between monument and nature conservation and the switch to renewable energies, were emphasised. The development of innovative solutions and qualitative education and communication concepts in line with the conservation and education mandate of the World Heritage Convention was seen as crucial.

The symposium provided a platform for new relationship and learning cultures between schools and World Heritage sites within the framework of Education for Sustainable Development. The presentations by students and teachers emphasised the importance of open-ended questions and student-led processes. There was a general agreement on the need to create networked educational landscapes that integrate formal and informal learning as well as different perspectives.

As a result, the symposium at the heritage fair in 2022 promoted participatory exchange and synergy effects between World Heritage education and education for sustainable development. The participants were motivated to continue and deepen the results in their areas of work.