Assessment of Regional Curricular Gaps and Heritage Competences

RESULTS OF THE WORKSHOP ON EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES IN THE PROJECT REGION

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"Expanding the Socio-economic Potential of Cultural Heritage in the Caribbean" Project

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INTRODUCTION

Project's Approach to Cultural Heritage

The concept of cultural heritage has expanded considerably over the last half century and now encompasses much more than historic monuments and museum objects. Today heritage includes historic and archaeological objects and sites, ethnographic materials, cultural landscapes, whole cities or parts of them. It also includes intangible elements, defined by UNESCO as "traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts."[1] In short, heritage is everything, tangible and intangible, to which a group or groups in society attribute cultural significance or meaning.

Although we often refer to "the heritage industry" it is more accurate to speak of "the heritage world," where heritage is the central concern and many contribute their knowledge and skills to its preservation and appreciation. In this world where the primary objective of all efforts is to sustain the cultural significance, authenticity and integrity of the historic asset for present and future generations, many disciplines contribute their expertise.

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[1] Unesco, "What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?" at
http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00002 accessed 2/10/2015

An important objective of this OAS project is to increase the capacity of the region to protect and enhance its heritage in a professional and efficient manner. Heritage professionals have made clear that while capacity building must strengthen "the knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes of people with direct or indirect responsibilities for heritage conservation and management", it must also improve "institutional structures and processes by empowering decision-makers and policy-makers, as well as introducing a more dynamic relationship between heritage and its socio-economic context. It involves an inclusive approach, so that the relevant missions and goals are met in a sustainable way."[2]

Cultural heritage preservation has become a collaborative effort involving different professionals as well as communities and the general public. Aside from the knowledge and skills traditionally required of heritage professionals, managerial competence is an additional requirement of most heritage jobs. Moreover, heritage preservation has attracted professionals from other areas such as public relations, fund-raising, information technology, and marketing, among others to cover all the tasks now involved in heritage management.

Heritage preservation is a social process and thus, requires the involvement of many segments of society, not only experts. Understanding how various stakeholders attribute value and significance of the heritage is essential for the sustainability of

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[2] ICOMOS International Training Committee, Draft "Guidelines for Education and Training – Practical Instructions for Practitioners", October 2012 at http://cif.icomos.org/pdf_docs/CIF%20Meetings/Guidelines/ICOMOS_CIF_UK_DRAFT_Guidelines_Practitioners.pdf last accessed 3/12/2015

preservation efforts. As more groups with different values, interests and expertise become an integral part of these processes, it has become important to define the role of the various participants as well as the knowledge and skills expected of each of them. Given the complexity of the field in which architects, scientists, archaeologists, administrators, historians, curators and conservators, engineers and ecologists must collaborate and interact with the general public it is impossible to establish a common curriculum. Instead, many organizations have identified competences that are relevant to their particular practitioners.[3]

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[3] See, for example,

American Association of Museums "Committee on Museum Professional Training Standards and Best Practices Guidelines at http://www.compt-aam.org/resources/standardsguidelines.html last accessed 3/7/2015

American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC), "Defining the Conservator: Essential Competencies", 2003 at http://www.conservation-us.org/docs/default-source/governance/defining-the-conservator-essential-competencies.pdf last accessed 3/12/2015

European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organizations (E.C.C.O.), "E.C.C.O. Professional Guidelines III", 2004 at http://www.ecco-eu.org/about-e.c.c.o./professional-guidelines.html last accessed 3/12/2015

International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) International Training Committee, Draft "Principles for Capacity Building through Education and Training in Safeguarding and Integrated Conservation of Cultural Heritage", 30 September 2013 at http://cif.icomos.org/pdf_docs/CIF%20Meetings/Guidelines/ICOMOS_CIF_PrinciplesCapacity_EN_20130930.pdf last accessed 3/12/2015

International Council of Museums (ICOM) International Committee for the Training of Personnel, "ICOM Curricula Guidelines for Museum Professional Development" at http://museumstudies.si.edu/ICOM-ICTOP/ last accessed 3/12/15

National Parks Service, "Cultural Resource Specialist – Essential Competencies" at http://www.nps.gov/training/npsonly/RSC/crmspec.htm last accessed 3/12/15

Reynolds, T. R., "Training for Entry-Level Museum Professionals A Report Prepared for the Committee on Museum Professional Training, American Association of Museum April, 2000" at www.compt-aam.org/images/Reynolds_Survey.doc last accessed 3/8/2015

Workshop Activities

A workshop was held in Barbados on May 6-18, 2015, to identify gaps that may exist in the training opportunities of the region and competencies relevant to cultural heritage work in the Caribbean region, and to establish priorities for future educational efforts. Participants invited by the OAS are listed in Annex I. In order to facilitate the discussions received a document listing competencies that have been identified by international and professional organizations as being part of cultural heritage work. It should be noted that the competencies in the lists omitted those associated with a particular discipline or profession outside the heritage field. For example, not included were the competencies required in the archaeological or architectural professions. It is assumed that an archaeologist or architect involved in the protection of the cultural heritage would be competent in his or her discipline. Most of the competencies in our lists can be considered supplementary to those germane to those of other professions.

The competencies were grouped under the headings of History and Philosophy; Ethics and Professional Practice; Laws, Regulation and Governance; Research and Documentation; Access; Heritage Management; Preservation and Conservation; General Management; and, Heritage and Tourism. During the workshop participants examined and discussed these competencies groups and topics that were considered important for the Caribbean Region. The revised lists are presented in Annex II.

Once the competencies lists were discussed and completed, the workshop participants were asked to rank the groups of competencies in order of relevance to the region.

The result of the relevance vote was:

1. History & Philosophy

2. Heritage Management

3. Preservation and Conservation

4. Laws, Regulations and Governance

5. Research and Documentation

6. Ethics and Professional Conduct

7. General Management

8. Access and Use

9. Tourism

Subsequently, the participants were asked to rank the groups of competencies in terms of the priority that must be given to them in the creation of new educational offerings for the region. The results were as follow:

1. Heritage Management

2. Preservation and Conservation

3. Ethics and Professional Conduct

4. General Management

5. Research and Documentation

6. Laws and Regulations

7. Access and Use

8. History and Philosophy

9. Tourism

ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCES

Throughout the workshop the participants provided very good insight on the topics and their relevance and importance to the English speaking Caribbean. The issues raised during the discussions are summarized here and grouped under the headings used throughout the workshop. However, in the sections that follow, presented in order of importance, the focus will shift to the knowledge and skills that could be developed in educational offerings. Each section will comment on the relevance and importance attributed to it by the participants, and summarize the discussions.

Heritage Management

The topics under this heading correspond to two different areas of cultural heritage work. The first is the management of collections held in museums, archives, documentation centers, archaeological storage depots, etc. The second relates to the management of heritage sites. Each of these areas requires its own set of knowledge and neither is being address by the educational offerings in the region. Both areas were designated as priorities by the participants in the workshop.

The most significant gap in educational offerings identified in the region and the top priority for new course development was the management of heritage sites. In recent decades "site management" has evolved as a separate area of work with its own set of skills. While being given top priority for development of on line courses, participants also felt that "site management" teaching should be incorporated into existing archaeology and architecture programs. It was recommended that site

management be considered a specialization with a university degree, but that it should also be offered as a semester long courses or in modules. The specific topics to be covered are listed in the course section below.

Participants also thought that there is an educational gap in offerings related to collections management, and that new offerings should be directed to individuals already working in institutions, thus they should be designed as professional development opportunities.

Preservation and Conservation

This preservation and conservation heading encompasses two very different areas of activities, and in both it was considered to exist considerable gaps in the region.

The first area of work is the domain of conservators, preservation architects, and conservation scientists. These are individuals with scientific knowledge particularly in the area of material deterioration—as well as the skills to design and implement interventions on the objects or sites. They are the product of very specialized (and generally expensive) education and training programs. The participants in the workshop highlighted an urgent need for these professionals but recognized that it would not be cost effective to attempt to develop these programs in the region. Their recommendation was that funds and scholarships be made available for individuals to attend the programs that already exist abroad.

The other area of work under this heading refers to preventive conservation and maintenance. The maintenance of a cultural heritage structures and sites focuses on preserving the heritage objects in a good state of repair. Many of the activities

associated with maintenance are routine activities designed to preserving the heritage in good state of repair or prevent breakdowns from happening. Since maintenance activities encompass technical interventions as well as administrative actions, maintenance plans are part of the management plans of a site.

Preventive conservation has become the baseline of collections care internationally and was considered both a gap and a priority for the region. This work aims to slow the rate of deterioration through the control of the environment and the proper exhibition, storage and handling of objects. It generally focuses on collections as a whole rather than on individual objects. Preventive conservation programs are generally managed by either conservators or registrars, but are the concern of everyone working in the institution.

Courses on both of these areas could comprise several modules designed for people already working in the field. The topics can also be integrated into long term academic programs.

Ethics and Professional Conduct

Scientific and technological advances present many possibilities for treatment of the cultural heritage. Choices of intervention on the cultural heritage cannot be made exclusively on technical considerations since some can alter fundamentally the nature of the heritage and compromise its integrity. Decisions that have an impact on cultural heritage must take into consideration its particular nature and significance. Thus, the practice of cultural heritage preservation and its ethical implications have received

much attention from professionals and professional organizations. Understanding the standards set by these groups is important for all who work in this field.

Workshop participants considered this topic very important to practitioners and thought it should be integrated in the curricula of academic programs in heritage and cultural studies, archaeology, architecture and museum studies. To facilitate this integration into these programs they suggested the creation of case studies and situational exercises.

General Management

General management skills are not exclusive to the heritage field. They were included in the lists because it was considered that they are essential for effective and professional work and can easily be acquired in short offerings from university business departments.

Fund-raising and grant writing, considered general management skills, were identified as being particularly important for the heritage field. It was not known to the participants if there were offering on these topics in the region although it was pointed out that there are many offerings in the world-wide-web.

Research and Documentation

The competencies under this heading are tied to very technical skills associated with positions requiring a degree of specialization. Archaeologists and architects should have obtained some of these skills as part of the training in their disciplines.

Nevertheless, it is believed that all heritage workers should have a basic understanding of the areas listed, particularly as to their application to the work of their institutions.

Research and documentation is an area in which the technology and tools evolve quickly and were considered good topics for short courses to keep professionals up to date.

Laws, Regulations, and Governance

The first level of protection of cultural heritage is provided by legislation and enforceable regulations. Some countries in the region have additional instruments—some without the force of law—that regulate the protection of the heritage.

In addition to local legal protection, cultural heritage is often the subject of international and regional agreements, the implications of which must be fully understood by practitioners. Participants in the workshop considered the UNESCO'S 1972 *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (the World Heritage Convention) of particular interest to the region.

It was mentioned that the laws and regulations that exist are not always enforced. One participant noted that presently regulations are not sophisticated enough to treat all forms of heritage nor that new instruments are being created in a timely basis. Nevertheless, with the expansion of the concept of cultural heritage it is important for practitioners to keep up to date with new regulations that might come into effect, for example, those dealing with the protection of landscapes or underwater heritage. It was also considered that issues related to copyright and WIPO's Geographical Indications.

It was deemed important that heritage practitioners be familiar with the topics under this heading. However, participants considered that it was not a topic for training courses but that the OAS project should consider other forms of information dissemination.

Access and Use

Access and use of cultural heritage refers to two separate areas of work. A first kind of access refers to intellectual and emotional access to the heritage through exhibitions, educational and interpretative programs, community projects, etc. While these areas of work are associated with specialists or institutional positions in the curatorial, interpretation, exhibition specialists, educators, etc., all heritage workers should have a basic understanding of issues.

The second type of access and use is physical, such allowing the public to interact with the heritage through well organized and safe visits. It also entails protecting the heritage from overuse and abuse, such as what can result from uncontrolled tourist access. Knowledge here can encompass the ability to determine that carrying capacity of a site, the protective presentation of objects in a museum or historic house, the safety of visitors, etc. But it can also include managerial solutions, such as routing of visitors within a site, scheduling of admission tickets to exhibitions, differential prizing, etc.

Although there are not many educational offerings in either one of these areas, participants only considered certain topic a priority for new initiatives. Among these

were those related to the management and conservation of sites, such as establishing

carrying capacity, security of visitors, etc.

History and Philosophy

The tenets and acceptable practices in the cultural heritage field today have

evolved over decades a process that is well documented. In order to understand the

origins and reasons behind current beliefs and protection approaches it is essential to

be familiar with this evolution.

Knowledge of the evolution of concepts of cultural heritage and preservation,

nationally and internationally, regionally, and specifically in the English-speaking

Caribbean, as well knowledge of the philosophical underpinning of the historical

development of the English-speaking Caribbean, including the views, beliefs and

languages of minority groups were considered by the participants the most relevant of

all the topics. However, it ranked fairly low when they were asked to considered its

importance in terms of educational priority. The explanation for this separation was that

most practitioners in the region were familiar with the topics under the heading and, as

was in the case of Law and Regulations, more suitable means of communicating

information could be found. It was also suggested that these topics would be best

introduced in existing university programs.

Heritage and Tourism

The competencies under this last heading have only recently been identified

with the cultural field. Tourism, exacerbated by the increased number of cruise ships in

the region, is having an enormous impact on the heritage of the region. Seen as an opportunity by many and as a dangerous threat by others, difficult decisions need to be made regarding access to site and visitor management. The knowledge and skills required to establish protective policies are increasingly important in the region.

However, workshop participants ranked the competencies of Tourism and Heritage the lowest in both relevance and importance. Given the tourism dependency in the region these results led to discussions among participants who explained that they thought these competencies should be included in the area of heritage management. It was pointed out that it is role of the managers of the heritage to identify how the resources should be developed into a touristic product, but recognized that most heritage managers are not trained to do this: to identify a tourist product. Some participants pointed out the importance of working with communities to protect the integrity of the heritage and their culture.

EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES

The educational priorities do not specify the type of courses or the intended audiences. This will be developed in a subsequent document that will consider semester long courses, short refresher courses for practitioners, short introductory courses, and modular courses.

High priority

1. Values-based site management – curriculum for university program and offering in modules

2. Emergency preparedness and response plans

3. Preventive conservation of collections

Medium Priority

1. Case studies and exercises in ethics and professional practice

2. New documentation techniques and tools

3. Collections management

Lower priority

1. Fund-raising

2. Grant writing

3. Design of tourism offerings in communities (train the trainers)

ANNEX I. WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

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ANNEX II. AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE FOR HERITAGE WORK

These areas of knowledge for heritage work were established by the workshop participants. The discussions during the workshop were based on lists compiled from competencies identified by international professional sources. The areas of knowledge are presented in order of importance for the region, as identified by the workshop participants.

1. *Heritage Management*

- Familiarity with collections management methods

- Knowledge of heritage management approaches such as integrated management & values-based management

- Ability to develop and implement clear heritage management plans

2. *Preservation and Conservation*

- Familiarity with scientific principles and examination methods

- Knowledge of causes of decay & deterioration of materials used in heritage

- Ability to design appropriate maintenance programs for the heritage

- Ability to create preventive care programs for collections

- Understanding of treatment methods and criteria for selection

- Familiarity with natural resource management issues and concerns as they affect or interface with cultural resources

- Ability to determine reasonable use and access to heritage and objects while protecting them from physical damage

3. Ethics and Professional Conduct

- Familiarity with the local, regional, national and international professional standards and guidelines, and their application to local heritage resources

- Understanding of professional codes of conduct

- Familiarity with the professional terminology in the individual's area of heritage work

- Familiarity with national and international professional organizations, their aims and roles in heritage practice

- Understanding of the political, economic, social and cultural contexts of heritage in local, national and international arenas; implication of issues such as globalization, environmentalism, sustainable development, biodiversity and cultural diversity

4. General Management

- Ability to prioritize activities and assignments; adjust priorities as required

- Allocation of appropriate time and resources for completing work

- Ability to monitor tasks and activities

- Ability to speak and write clearly and effectively as required by various audiences

- Knowledge of various specialists involved in heritage care and their roles

- Ability to work collaboratively with colleagues to achieve organizational goals

- Ability to work with communities, integrating their needs and concerned in heritage activities

- Familiarity with information technology

- Ability to undertake financial planning and budgeting

- Ability to do fundraising and write grants

5. Research and Documentation

- Knowledge of methods of identification, assessment, documentation and registration of cultural resources, and ability to implement them.

- Ability to undertake research for tangible and intangible heritage utilizing accepted professional methodologies

- Ability to communicate clearly in writing

- Knowledge of the purpose of inventories and methods of creation, and ability to implement them

- Understanding of the importance of provenance of objects (museums) & ability to undertake research in this area

- Understanding, creating and using collection catalogues

6. Laws, Regulation, and Governance

- Knowledge of relevant cultural resource legislation and regulations

- Familiarity with cultural resource management (CRM) policies and guidelines

- Political, economic, social and cultural contexts of heritage in local, national and international arenas (considering elements such as globalization, environmentalism, sustainable development, biodiversity and cultural diversity)

- Understanding of the mission and objectives of the organization where the individual works

- Familiarity with intellectual property laws and their implications for cultural heritage

- Familiarity with WIPO's Geographic Indications

7. Access and Use

- Conceptualization, organization, design and evaluation of exhibitions

- Creation of interpretation for various audiences based on needs assessments

- Creation of outreach programs and events for various audiences, including on-line

- Ability to work with communities and assure their access (physical, intellectual and emotional) to the heritage

- Design, implementation and evaluation of education programs

- Organization of income producing activities

- Marketing of heritage programs and events

8. History and Philosophy

- Knowledge of the evolution of concept of cultural heritage and preservation, nationally and internationally

- Identification of values and significance of heritage sites, buildings or objects

- Familiarity with the history of technology relevant to the heritage under consideration

- Familiarity with criteria for choice of preservation/conservation methods applicable to the heritage under consideration

9. *Heritage and Tourism*

- Ability to discuss with the appropriate authorities the impact of tourism on heritage, and the importance of establishing rational policies supporting sustainability

- Ability to develop, implement and monitor strategies and actions for the protection of sites from the excesses of tourist pressures

- Ability to plan for forms of tourism which are sustainable, appropriate, relevant and able to engage the local community and local cultures

- Ability to evaluate and monitor the processes of environmental, social and cultural change as they affect and are affected by tourism and the behaviors of tourists