Policy Briefs and Recommendations

Rethinking Heritage for Sustainable Development

Sophia Labadi

University of Kent
UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
African World Heritage Fund under the auspices of UNESCO
icomos uk international council on monuments & sites uk
FONDAZIONE FRANCO e MARILISA CALIGARA PER L'ALTA FORMAZIONE INTERDISCIPLINARE

Policy Briefs and Recommendations

Rethinking Heritage for Sustainable Development

Recommended citation: Labadi, S. 2021 Policy Briefs and Recommendations. Rethinking Heritage for Sustainable Development. The University of Kent.

These Policy Briefs and Recommendations are a condensed version of the conclusions of the book: Labadi, S. 2022. Heritage for (sustainable) development. International Framework, local impacts. UCL Press.

Copy-editors:
Felicia Fricke and Ilaria Rosetti

Graphic Design:
Stéphane Douanla (douanlastephane@gmail.com)

Photos:
All the photos are ©Sophia Labadi, except the photo of Robben Island, South Africa ©Albino Jopela

Illustrations:
Pete Morey, liveillustration.co.uk

Acknowledgement
These Policy Briefs and recommendations were discussed at different meetings and received comments from: Haifaa Abdulhalim, George Abungu, Clara Arokiasamy, Pascal Assine, Alioune Badara, Lamine Badji, Tim Badman, Alice Biada, Olga Bialostocka, Annalisa Bolin, Tokie Brown, Catherine Cullen, Susan Denyer, Maimouna Diallo, Ismaila Dione, Alpha Diop, Ismail Diop, Christine Faye, Nicole Franceschini, Francesca Giliberto, Karl Goodwin, Madické Gueye, Stela Gujamo, Alison Heritage, Harriet Hoffler, Didier Houénoudé, Albino Jopela, Annie Jouga, Mohamed Juma, Rim Kelouaze, Keya Khandaker, Nikki Locke, Mouhamed Ly, Angela Martins, Sidonio Matusse, Njeri Mbure, Nazir Ndour, Florentine Okoni, Aylin Orbasli, Arti Pragivandas, Dennis Rodwell, Abdou Sall, Yvette Senghor, Vicensia Shule, Aminata Sonko, Énio Tembe, Ibrahima Thiaw, Souayibou Varissou, Loes Veldpaus, Mark Watson, Ege Yildirim, Daniel Zacarias, Claudio Zonguene.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD 05

PREREQUISITES 06

Integrate heritage into sustainable development challenges 07
Consider heritage as dynamic 08
Stop stereotpying locals 09
Consider heritage in its multiple dimensions 10
Reject heritage as necessarily positive 11
Manage heritage for social justice 12
Disturb the self-serving logic of the international aid framework 13

POVERTY REDUCTION 15

Moving beyond tourism: Addressing the needs of locals beyond the market 16
Linking providers and users 17
Challenging the neo-liberal and neo-colonial machines 18
Defining new maps of heritage and tourism 19
Reinventing tourists 20

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT 22

Gendering heritage for development 23
Abolishing a gender-blind approach 24
Fighting discrimination, one day at a time 25
Redistributing (caring) responsibilities 26

HERITAGE, ENVIRONMENT, AND CLIMATE CHANGE 28

Understanding heritage as an asset and a threat to the environment 29
Acknowledging heritage as adaptation to climate and environmental change 30
Promoting locally-sourced products 31
Decreasing pressure on heritage and the environment 32

BIBLIOGRAPHY 34

FOREWORD

The Policy Briefs summarise some of the conclusions of the project 'Rethinking Heritage for Development: International Framework, Local Impacts', and then present some possible recommendations. 'Rethinking Heritage for Development' was a project that I led between January 2019 and July 2021, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in the UK (Grant Ref. AH/S001972/1), the Caligara Foundation in Italy, and the University of Kent in the UK, with support from ICOMOS-UK and the African World Heritage Fund. A more comprehensive version of the conclusions and the full research analyses and interpretation are being published as an open access/free book by UCL Press.

The project aims to understand why heritage has been marginalised from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015. The conclusions presented here explain some recurring issues when heritage is considered for sustainable development, and some possible recommendations are explained. To produce the document, international narratives promoting heritage for development were analysed, as well as projects implemented in sub-Saharan Africa that aimed to provide evidence of the contribution of heritage for development in time for the negotiation of the SDGs. These projects are: 'Harnessing Diversity for Sustainable Development and Social Change in Ethiopia' (July 2009-December 2012); 'Strengthening cultural and creative industries and inclusive policies in Mozambique' (August 2008-June 2013); 'Sustainable Cultural Tourism in Namibia' (February 2009-February 2013); and 'Promoting Initiatives and Cultural Industries in Senegal – Bassari Country and Saloum Delta' (September 2008-December 2012).

Whilst my case studies are all located in Sub-Saharan Africa, the conclusions and recommendations have been drafted to be applicable worldwide, primarily for heritage sites that benefit from national or international recognition and protection. A broad approach has been prioritised to ensure compatibility with different cases, although it is also recognised that further national and local adjustment will be needed.

I start by presenting seven prerequisites for a better consideration of heritage for sustainable development. These seven ideas are not necessarily new, but they are still areas that should be urgently addressed. They are considered 'prerequisites' because they are fundamental and core issues on heritage for development. Inspired by the main themes emerging from the analysis of the selected projects, the following sections focus on poverty reduction, gender equality, and environmental sustainability.

To ensure its long-term relevance, this document does not focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, which have an end date of 2030, but rather on achieving some of the key pillars on economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

I hope that this booklet will be useful for heritage professionals, academics, governmental and intergovernmental organisations, and the donor community. I look forward to the multiple and creative ways in which the conclusions and recommendations will be implemented.

For more information on the project or to get in touch to implement the recommendations, please contact me, Professor Sophia Labadi, at s.labadi@kent.ac.uk

PREREQUISITES

INTEGRATE HERITAGE INTO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Heritage site managers and other concerned stakeholders too often work only towards the protection and safeguarding of official site values. This approach reflects Sustainable Development Goal 11.4, with its focus on the protection and safeguarding of the world's cultural and natural heritage. However, that this approach is too restricted has been clearly recognised, for example, in the 2015 UNESCO Policy on World Heritage and Sustainable Development, which acknowledges that protecting the values of a heritage site is fundamental, but that 'at the same time, strengthening the three dimensions of sustainable development that are environmental sustainability, inclusive social development, and inclusive economic development, as well as the fostering of peace and security, may bring benefits to World Heritage properties and support their outstanding universal value, if carefully integrated within their conservation and management systems'.

The reasons for such a restricted understanding of heritage preservation as sustainable development are diverse. There seems to be a fear that associating sustainable development with heritage sites will allow any type of development, and there are indeed many examples of problematic development at heritage sites. Other reasons include a limited understanding of the contribution of heritage for sustainable development; the nature of the role of site manager, which requires a focus on the protection of the heritage values; the difficulty of implementing approaches linking heritage to sustainable development; siloed working practices and a shortage of staff, particularly those with wider experience beyond heritage management; and power relations limiting the implementation of projects on heritage for development.

Possible ways forward:

- Advocate for the role of heritage as a potential solution to contemporary challenges beyond its mere conservation and management, using new and existing documents, including the 2021 ICOMOS Policy Guidance on Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2015 UNESCO Policy on World Heritage and Sustainable Development.
- Integrate elements of the 2015 Policy into national legislature.
- Strengthen research on and implementation of limits to acceptable change, as well as environmental, social, and cultural impact assessment tools to identify and avoid the negative impacts of projects on heritage sites.

CONSIDER HERITAGE AS DYNAMIC

Heritage properties are too often understood as static, unchanging, and frozen in time. One reason for this is that heritage must be considered 'authentic' (that is, in its 'original' design, materials, workmanship, and setting) if it is to have any value. Another reason is the political use of heritage as a static embodiment of nationhood. However, most heritage properties have actually changed over time, often because of alterations in function or fashion or to improve people's living conditions.

A static view of heritage is problematic for at least two reasons. Firstly, external circumstances are often overlooked, as is the case with climate change at some heritage sites. In Senegal, for instance, there has been a drop in rainfall of around 300mm and a 1.7˚C rise in temperature over a 30-year period, as well as more intense rainfall of shorter duration. Negative impacts are multiple, including the advance of the sea; coastal erosion; desertification; loss of mangroves; loss of arable land and pasture; and a reduction in the availability of water for irrigation[1]. This has obvious impacts on heritage sites. Secondly, because heritage is considered as frozen in time and as belonging to the past, its potential contributions to sustainable development, including solutions to climate change, are often ignored or overlooked. For example, at the Sine Saloum Delta, a World Heritage property in Senegal, seashells had historically been used as barriers against the rising sea, until recently when they have been used as construction materials.

Possible solutions:

- Recognise that heritage values and authenticity change over time. Promote examples that have understood heritage values as comprehensive and dynamic. Consider whether 'authenticity' is a relevant concept to use or whether it should be discarded.
- Recognise traditional heritage management practices that have often adopted dynamic solutions to challenges.
- Collate examples of how heritage has adapted dynamically to contemporary challenges and explain how these challenges and solutions have not remained static over time.

1. Amadou Thierno Gaye et al., Sénégal: revue du contexte socioéconomique, politique et environnemental. Rapport d'étude. IED Afrique. Innovation, environnement, développement, 2015.

STOP STEREOTYPING LOCALS

Communities living in and around heritage properties are often positively considered only when presented as 'authentic', or frozen in time. This is dangerous because it essentialises and stereotypes individuals and communities, particularly in Africa. There are many examples of such archaic, simplified, and stereotyped understandings. One example is the treatment of ethnic minorities in the Bassari Country, Senegal, in the nomination dossier for the inscription of this property on the World Heritage list and its evaluation. In 2012, the Bassari Country was inscribed on the List under criteria (iii), (v), and (vi), to acknowledge the rich heritage, complex cultures, and interactions among environmental factors, land-use practices, and social rules that have shaped the landscape. In the dossier, local people are described as follows:

'The external influences that have distorted the nature and culture of many regions of Senegal are absent here. Despite the difficult living conditions, the populations of the area proudly defend their traditions, which means that architecture, natural resource management, and cultural practices are respected [...] that landscapes, masks, hairstyles, costumes, and all other physical manifestations of these cultural practices have not changed (...)' .

The evaluation by ICOMOS (2012) echoes these comments when it states that local ethnic minorities have lived away from 'modernity' (sic), with the sole exception of the adoption of 'Western' clothes. However, this static presentation is divorced from reality; the different ethnic minorities living in the Bassari Country have indeed changed, and they are, for example using mobile phones and satellite dishes.

Possible solutions:

- Develop and deliver training to international, national, and local practitioners and authorities on (implicit) biases, stereotyping, and systemic racism in heritage practices.
- Ensure that documents on heritage sites, including nominations for inclusion on the World Heritage List, have followed a participation process and that they have received the free, prior, and informed consent of communities, which can be recorded and made publicly available.

CONSIDER HERITAGE IN ITS MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS

Heritage is still too often compartmentalised as tangible or intangible, natural or cultural. These categories were created in Europe and used to structure and support colonial systems. Unfortunately, the different UNESCO conventions and programmes that consider tangible and intangible heritage and nature and culture as separate have had the negative long-term effect of maintaining these inaccurate separations on the ground. In addition, heritage legislation in many African countries, often inherited from colonial times, still uses these categories. It is only through a holistic and comprehensive understanding, bridging tangible and intangible aspects and natural and cultural features, that heritage can contribute to sustainable development. For example, the Bassari Country was nominated on the World Heritage List so that its multiple heritage manifestations could be used as a catalyst for sustainable development. This included support for the economic growth of fonio, the local couscous, whose associated manifestations were inscribed on Senegal's intangible heritage register in 2019, and which is more adaptable to climate change than other crops as it can withstand both drought and heavy rain, thus having the potential to address SDG 2 (zero hunger).

However, fonio was not recognised in the values for which the Bassari Country was inscribed on the World Heritage List and has not benefitted from the inscription.

Possible ways forward:

- Use the term 'heritage' to bridge boundaries between different heritage forms and manifestations, as was consciously done in the ICOMOS Policy Guidance on Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2015 UNESCO Policy on World Heritage and Sustainable Development. This would help us to move beyond the divide between 'cultural', 'natural', 'tangible' and 'intangible' heritage.
- Identify how the divide between nature and culture, and between tangible and intangible heritage, can be dissolved through measures such as revising the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention and the working practices of international, regional, and national NGOs and legal systems. Publish case studies of heritage sites that have moved beyond those different divides.

Sine Saloum Delta, Senegal, illustrating the inseparability of nature, culture, tangible and intangible

REJECT HERITAGE AS NECESSARILY POSITIVE

SDG 11.4 reinforces the idea that heritage protection and management is intrinsically good, neutral, and benevolent. Heritage is and has always been contested, and has often been appropriated by powerful groups for their own benefit and to achieve political aims. Basic human rights are often violated in the name of heritage protection and safeguarding. The right to access and enjoy heritage is still jeopardised by land-grabbing politicians; the livelihoods of people are threatened by tourism development programs; and the dignity of women is trampled to continue intangible heritage practices. These different examples demonstrate how many of the structural inequalities and injustices highlighted in the SDGs are actually perpetrated in the name of heritage and culture. By only acknowledging the positive dimensions of heritage, we are complicit in maintaining and perpetuating these inequalities and injustices.

Possible solutions:

- Promote a human rights-based approach to heritage for sustainable development. Human rights here relate to the dignity of people in the different ways in which the concept can be understood, and not as narrow philosophical principles from the West.
- For example, under this principle, all concerned groups and communities should have the equal right to decide which cultural traditions to keep, change, or discard, including the right of women not to participate in heritage practices if they are considered discriminatory.
- Encourage academics to document how heritage is used to maintain, but also to address, structural inequalities and injustices in different parts of the world.

MANAGE HERITAGE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

My research has detailed attention to the conservation and management of heritage only for the benefit of a small number of people. Heritage can contribute better to the Agenda 2030 goal of 'leaving no one behind' if it also benefits disfranchised local communities and rights holders. For this to happen, heritage protection and safeguarding need to be concerned not only with human rights, but also with social justice. A social justice approach is a commitment to social equality and equity, and reveals and disrupts systems of domination, discrimination, and exclusion. It cannot be externally imposed, unlike most of the international aid projects I have analysed. On the other hand, some of the most successful social justice projects I recorded on the ground had a respected leader who provided the vision or the support for a project, who worked through local power relations and dynamics, and who ensured that the project was developed by locals in cooperation with long-term financial partners, providing regular sources of funding (whether from private or international donors).

Possible ways forward:

- Ensure that projects are entirely led by locals, or co-produced, and are not externally imposed (see below for further suggestions). For this to happen, funding should be available to local experts and NGOs rather than being channelled through national and international institutions.
- Promote and document mechanisms to ensure compensation (including but not limited to financial mechanisms) for people affected by cultural and biodiversity preservation decisions.

A symbol of social justice on the island of Gorée, Senegal

DISTURB THE SELF-SERVING LOGIC OF THE INTERNATIONAL AID FRAMEWORK

Heritage and culture-led projects have been unable to challenge the logic of international aid and international development. Whilst a heritage and culture-based approach to projects should take account of local specificities, wider issues of asymmetrical power relations between donors and receiving countries have not been successfully addressed. One reason for this is that the international aid system, despite reforms, still responds to self-serving logics where projects benefit donors, which tend to be Western powers instead of targeted communities[2]. In addition, a lot of the funding for the projects considered was used to cover the costs of UN organisations or consultants, or pay for national civil servants to attend meetings, some of whom did not make a significant contribution to the success of the events. The result was that only a small portion of the funding reached targeted populations, often with limited impacts.

Possible solutions:

- Gather project evaluation data from participants themselves. Currently, projects funded by international or bilateral aid are rarely evaluated by beneficiaries or project participants. With beneficiaries becoming the main project evaluators, donors and implementing actors would then focus on addressing beneficiary concerns, as they would report to and be held accountable by them.
- Ensure that any subsequent funded project takes account of the beneficiaries' comments and the needs expressed, rather than those imagined or observed by external donors. This would help reduce the repetition of mistakes, as has been documented in my research, and may also lengthen the duration of projects for long-lasting impacts.

Rusty boards of international aid projects in Sine Saloum Delta, Senegal

2. Sophia Labadi, ed., The Cultural Turn in International Aid. Impacts and Challenges for Heritage and the Creative Industries. London: Routledge, 2019.

RETHINKING HERITAGE for SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

INTEGRATE HERITAGE into SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CONSIDER HERITAGE AS DYNAMIC

REJECT 'HERITAGE' AS NECESSARILY POSITIVE

- PROMOTE A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

BRIDGE 'NATURE' & 'CULTURE' DIVIDE.

HMM WE MUST PRESERVE THIS!

- REMOVE the CRITERION of 'AUTHENTICITY'?

CONSIDER HERITAGE in MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS!

BUT I LIVE HERE! AND I NEED MOBILE PHONE SIGNAL!

GATHER PROJECT EVALUATION from PARTICIPANTS THEMSELVES!

- ADVOCATE for the ROLE of HERITAGE

STOP ESSENTIALIZING LOCALS

selfie

VALUES

MANAGE HERITAGE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

- PEOPLE ARE NOT FROZEN in TIME!

LOCAL-LED

& FUNDING for LOCALS!

DISTURB the LOGIC of the INTERNATIONAL AID FRAMEWORK!

- ACTUAL NOT PERCEIVED NEEDS

Poverty Reduction

Lúrio University, Island of Mozambique, Mozambique

MOVING BEYOND TOURISM: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF LOCALS BEYOND THE MARKET

Most of the projects considered in my research, and indeed most heritage projects in general, focus too much on the supposed benefits of international tourism, in the neo-colonialist view that the West (where most tourists in Africa come from) can bring an end to poverty. In other words, heritage as poverty reduction follows a model based on tourism, which first and foremost addresses the needs of Westerners. The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the fragility of such a system. Current tourism models mainly benefit international and foreign companies and individuals, with the core tools of air travel, hotels, and e-commerce concentrated in the Global North. Projects must move beyond a sole focus on tourism and external markets by using heritage to address local needs. Heritage, if some or all the prerequisites are considered, can help to address the many dimensions of poverty, such as food security or a healthier environment.

Furthermore, any approach to poverty reduction need to go beyond income and employment, especially since heritage workers often neither receive the living wage nor experience secure employment conditions. Most heritage workers are employed in the informal sectors, and this is particularly true in Africa. I therefore argue for the importance of providing licensed workers with a number of basic rights, including labour rights, access to health care or social protection benefits, and the respect of a decent wage.

Possible solutions:

- Support heritage-based projects that address local needs, first and foremost. In Mozambique island, for instance, a university has recently opened. Why not provide goods and services for students, rather than focusing on tourism development?
- Conduct research to identify heritage employment models that can provide basic rights, social protection, and decent wages, as well as innovative funding mechanisms to support them, which can be adapted to local situations.

Empty craft space, unused by locals, Sine Saloum Delta, Senegal

LINKING PROVIDERS AND USERS

A key shortfall of all the projects was a lack of connection with the needs of local people on the ground, as well as with local businesses, individual entrepreneurs, local organisations, and universities (as hubs for research and development). Not only can they be important sources of local solutions, if they are involved, but they can also bring long-lasting social and economic benefits. Businesses can assist in the development of models for such linkages. Yet, they are rarely part of heritage projects, for many different reasons. The first is an assumption that businesses are crass and only interested in profit, and thus locals are often reluctant to engage with them. I have also noted business owners displaying distrust of local products and services, even for simple products such as jam, which are often imported. Yet, in various African countries, some companies have made a difference. In South Africa, for example, some tourism businesses source their supplies and services locally, from laundry services to gardening and landscaping, as well as local products for restaurants and cafes. In addition, programmes do exist to encourage companies to have a more ethical approach to business, but uptake is often low due to a lack of awareness, information, and incentives or real benefits for locals.

Possible ways forward:

- Publish case studies on how existing public and private sectors have addressed local needs both separately and in cooperation, how innovative funding mechanisms have been created, and how these can be adapted and improved.
- Assist in the creation of certification programmes and in their long-term sustainability, addressing their known shortcomings, as well as developing incentives for their adoption.

Community-run ecolodge, Sine Saloum Delta, Senegal

CHALLENGING THE NEO-LIBERAL AND NEO-COLONIAL MACHINES

Most of the projects I assessed did not challenge existing power relations and structural inequalities. One reason for this is that projects often start from scratch and are externally imposed rather than built on what already exists, and they do not challenge neo-liberal frameworks. Tourism, for example, is usually the sector chosen for heritage-led poverty reduction in countries regarded as 'low-income'. This sector, at least until the Covid-19 pandemic, was still very much constructed around neo-colonialist and neo-liberal hierarchies and relations. In my research in different countries in sub-Saharan Africa, locals were trained to remain in low-level and precarious jobs such as tour guiding or selling souvenirs. Meanwhile, at the other end of the scale, lodges, tour guiding companies, and restaurants remained predominantly owned and managed by white foreigners and foreign companies. Attempts have been made to challenge these hierarchies and power relations and assist, for instance, with the creation of community-owned guest houses, tour guiding companies, and restaurants. However, these attempts faced many challenges, including appropriation by local and national governments for personal gain, the remote locations and low levels of occupancy for guest houses, and inadequate promotion and marketing.

Some suggestions for change:

- Provide funding, training, and support for existing structures and initiatives that have challenged hierarchies and power relations, such as community-owned guest houses or tour guiding companies. Often, regular training and additional funding are what these structures need to thrive.
- Facilitate the creation of mutually supporting networks for locally-based projects, to allow sharing of experiences, communication strategies, expenses, resources, and skills. Indeed, several projects, be they on the creation of hotels or on guiding companies, share common approaches and face similar issues.

DEFINING NEW MAPS OF HERITAGE AND TOURISM

The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the acute need for heritage and tourism to target national and regional visitors for 'staycations', rather than international visitors. Changing the maps of heritage may become even more relevant as regional tourism attempts to mitigate the downturn in international arrivals that could result from the pandemic and to address some of the issues already discussed. However, colonial heritage and its preservation is currently given priority in Africa, over more national and local forms. Africa is constructed mainly as a place of wilderness for the enjoyment of Westerners. As a result, ownership of and pride in heritage is often foreign to locals and nationals. A reappropriation of the maps and heritage of Africa is in line with the 2006 Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, which aims to eliminate all forms of alienation, exclusion, and cultural oppression in the continent. Such reappropriation is already happening in South Africa with the recent Liberation Heritage Route. Whilst a shift in focus from foreign to national heritage might exacerbate the uses of the past for national political gains, in reality, most heritage sites all over the world are already used for political gains and the representation of the nation. Such redefinitions will help Africa to write its own history, past, and collective memory, rather than Europe dictating what should be conserved, and for whom. New tourism destinations can also be an opportunity to shift tourism benefits from foreigners to locals, although diversification between tourism and non-tourism activities might be necessary.

Possible ways forward:

- Consider how existing examples, such as the Island of Gorée (Senegal) and Robben Island (South Africa), have been defined as new sites, and adopt and adapt these steps for future destinations. Use failed attempts to change heritage and tourism maps as cautionary tales.
- Research how localised destinations (including pilgrimage or religious sites) can be better adapted to the needs of residents, as well as national and regional tourists, and bring greater benefits to locals.
- Develop formal education provisions that can lead to decent employment and income-generating activities.

Robben Island, South Africa on the Liberation Heritage Route

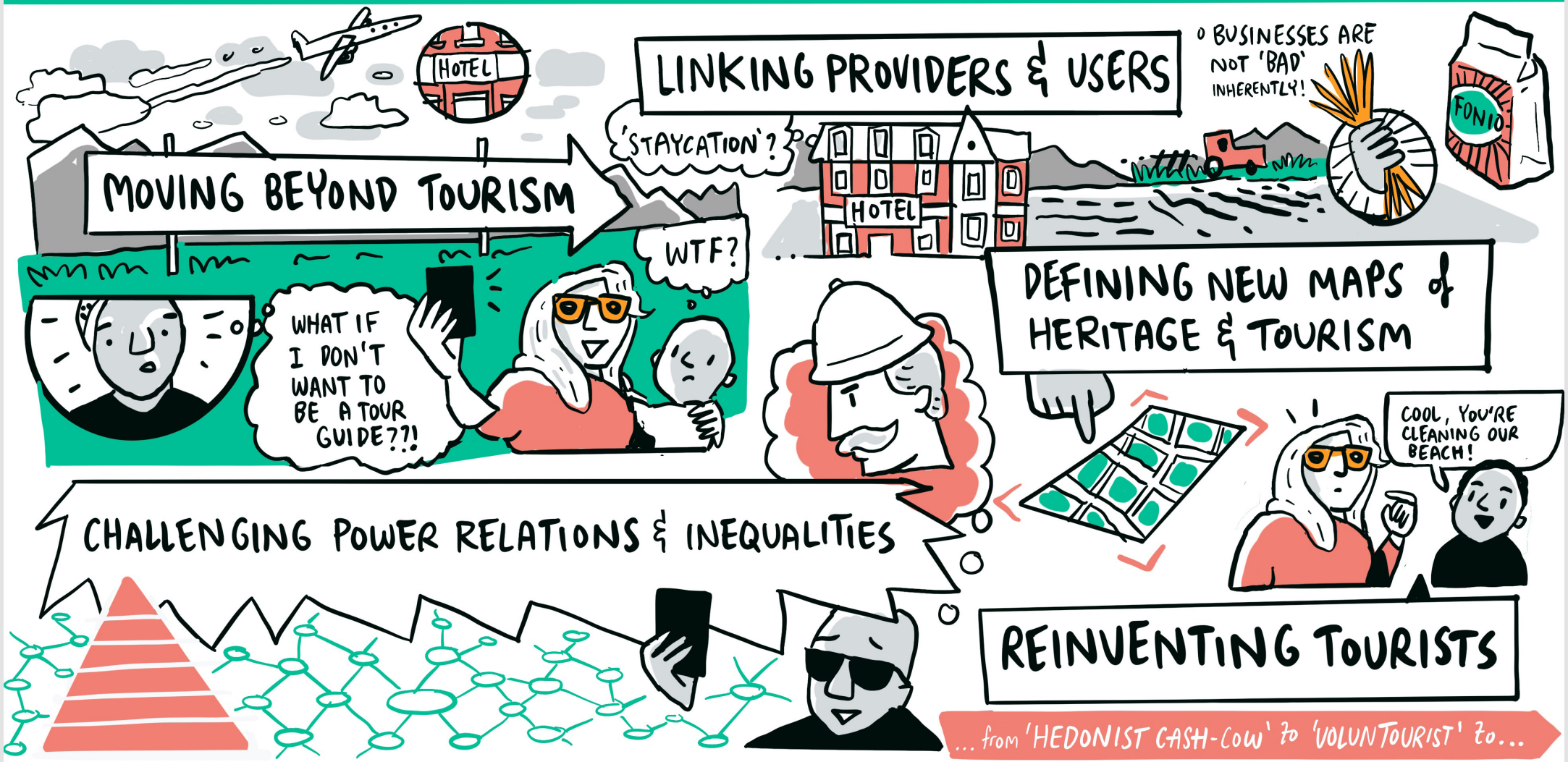
REINVENTING TOURISTS

Tourism will never change if tourists do not change. Tourists may have very different profiles, with, at one end of the scale, the hedonists who want to enjoy life as superficial customers. There are hundreds of tours or attractions all over the world that are shallow, and that consider tourists as cash cows or as people who are looking for instant gratification and fun. At the other end of the scale, there are 'ethical' tourists who attempt to do good, with volunteerism being one of the fastest-growing sectors of tourism until the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet, volunteerism is problematic for numerous reasons, with volunteers often taking the jobs of locals, and the paternalistic, neo-colonial, and white saviour view that local people need to be 'helped' or 'looked after'. Additionally, tourists often want to give money, but they themselves make the decisions about what and where to give, which limits their usefulness and short-circuits significant local priorities and initiatives. If more powers are provided to locals regarding how they would like to shape tourism, then the behaviour of tourists might also change. Changing these power dynamics may also improve the usefulness of philanthropic donations, and a bottom-up approach to tourism projects may help to dismantle the exoticisation of local communities.

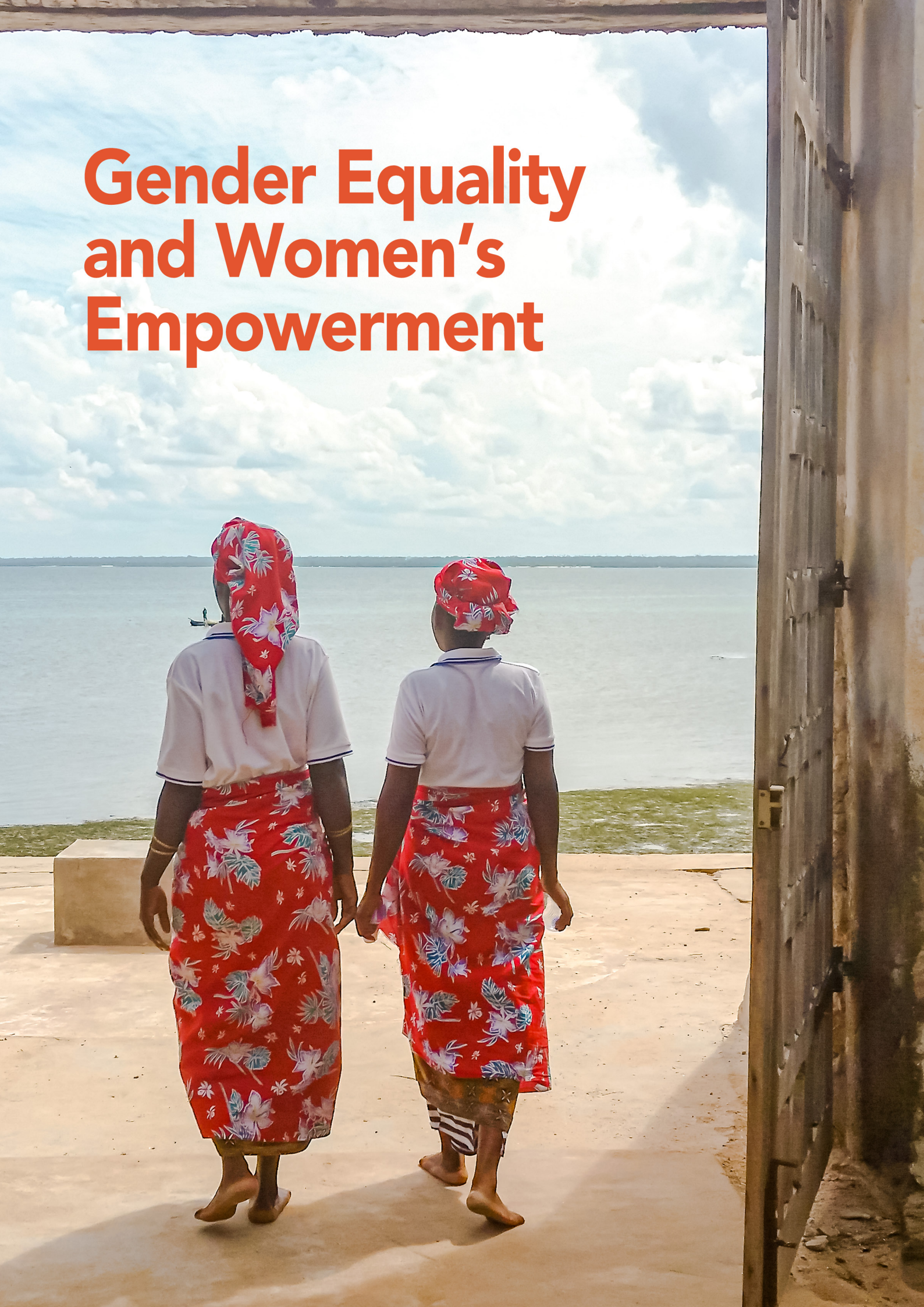
Some ways forward:

- Promote projects where tourists have made positive changes. For instance, some destinations invite tourists to clean beaches and other popular spots, whilst others invite tourists and visitors to plant trees.
- Research and implement mechanisms that better align tourists' attempt to 'do good' with the needs of locals. For example, brochures have been released to inform tourists of the harm they cause as a result of their 'white saviour' approach, which tries to improve or change a local situation without understanding its specific context.

RETHINKING HERITAGE for SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment



GENDERING HERITAGE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Women and other genders are still marginalised in projects on heritage for development. In many of the cases examined in this research, the concerns of women and other genders were not integral to project design and implementation. However, no key international challenge can be thoroughly addressed without a full consideration of gendered perspectives. Women, for instance, are often maintaining resilient agricultural practices, considered intangible heritage, which help protect ecosystems and strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, and drought. Fishermen's wives have also been targeted for alternative livelihood programmes based on their traditional or intangible heritage, to provide additional income and combat overfishing, thereby contributing to fulfilling Sustainable Development Goal 14 on sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources.

Possible ways forward:

- Involve local organisations working on gender and women's empowerment that can provide a local understanding and move beyond Western definitions of these concepts, taking into account intersecting notions of race, (dis)ability, age, marital status, and other identities.
- Ensure that projects take better account of the diversity of genders beyond Western considerations, and when appropriate, beyond the men/women binary.

Festival of the fonio, Kédougou, Senegal, 2019

ABOLISHING A GENDER-BLIND APPROACH

Many efforts to 'improve' the prospects of women, including short-term capacity building activities, have failed because they were gender-blind. With a gender-blind approach, activities are provided to both women and men indiscriminately. In this process, a simplified view of 'gender equality' as merely an equal number of female and male participants is applied. Projects are deemed to be even 'more successful' when there are more women than men participating in these activities. However, in most cases these training courses and related activities have been imposed onto women and men, without their input into the content. Besides, Western conceptions of women and men were applied without taking account of local gender complexity, for example in the various matrilinear societies found in some African countries.

This blind approach leads to train women in fields where they do not want to or cannot work (e.g. tour guiding in countries where this is considered a man's area). What is the point of training women to be tour guides if this is not what they want to do or if they cannot do it? Would activities not be more effective if women and other genders were first asked which skills they want to gain or which activities they want to take part in? One should also not assume that all women want to work, and so their voices matter. Of course, women's choices are not free. Instead, they are shaped by ingrained and widely held stereotypes and discriminations. For this reason, any project that aims to ensure gender equality must seriously consider and fight systemic discrimination and stereotypes in public, social-economic, and cultural spaces. This is in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063, which requires that all forms of violence against women and harmful social norms should be reduced or ended by 2023. One way forward is for power brokers such as local elites, site managers, business owners, and government and local leaders to be involved in challenging and changing stereotypes in the heritage and tourism sectors, particularly as concerns gender-segregated employment. Workshops can be organised to discuss hard questions around who is at the table, who decides, who acts, who strategizes, and who benefits. Such an approach would refocus discourses of inclusion away from the 'poor communities' onto the organisations and their structures, to highlight inequalities and discriminations.

Possible solutions:

- Stop using gender-blind statistics as a measure of the 'success' of projects, including training programmes. These figures often record who registers for rather than who attends a course and therefore do not reflect the usefulness of the programmes. Instead, ensure equality of outcomes as well as equality of opportunity. Conduct qualitative surveys of participants, gathering data on how useful the programmes were and how to improve them.
- Ensure that women decide the themes and content of activities targeting them, including training programmes, to align them with their own localised needs. These activities, too often externally imposed, do not consider women as empowered subjects and instead reflect stereotypical beliefs held by Westerners about Africans.
- Encourage women and other genders to take on leadership roles, so that they can take part in decision-making processes. Provide positive and encouraging examples as a way forward. For example, 97 of the 250 Members of Parliament at the Assembly of the Republic in Mozambique are women.

FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION, ONE DAY AT A TIME

The different projects analysed did not take account of or address the different stereotypes, discriminations, and barriers women and other genders face in Africa. They did not adequately challenge and rework some common colonial stereotypes, perpetuated by previous development projects, including that of African women as wives and mothers belonging to the private sphere, rather than as empowered subjects capable of making their own decisions on income-generating activities. Moreover, revealing and deconstructing stereotypes and discriminations should not occur only inside Africa. Women, men, and other genders from the wider African Diaspora and their allies have a role to play in making visible the multiple, intersectional, and mutually constructed aspects of identity that contribute to public and private stereotyping of and discrimination against women and other genders, including ethnicity, class, age, and level of education. Academia, as a creator of knowledge and power, for instance, has been an important forum for perpetuating, justifying, and amplifying the discrimination and stereotyping of women. Academic women from Africa and the diaspora, despite an increasing number of them in academia or working professionally in heritage and archaeology, are still marginalised, silenced, and made invisible. In the UK, for example, official figures on who receives public funding for research highlights the persistent marginalisation of applicants from ethnic minorities. This has resulted in academic and non-academic projects perpetuating neo-colonial and Orientalist representations of African women, as well as the continued 'saviour' approach by Western researchers and professionals who speak on behalf of and define the communities they work with.

Possible ways forward:

- Continue to produce research that highlights stereotyping and discriminatory approaches to women and other genders from Africa as perpetuated by spaces of power (e.g. higher education institutions and political parties).
- Challenge the status quo by highlighting different approaches, voices, and visions on heritage for development. For instance, as part of the Our World Heritage project, a series of webinars and a conference on the theme of 'Genders and Diversities' aimed to reveal, expose, and challenge stereotypes and discriminations, as well highlight the contributions of individuals (of different genders) who made (a) contribution(s) at a site. A call for participation welcomed innovative approaches and narratives that could challenge some of the exclusion, discrimination, and violence perpetuated at World Heritage sites.

Mozambican Women's Day (Inhambane, 2019), a public event for political and social claims

REDISTRIBUTING (CARING) RESPONSIBILITIES

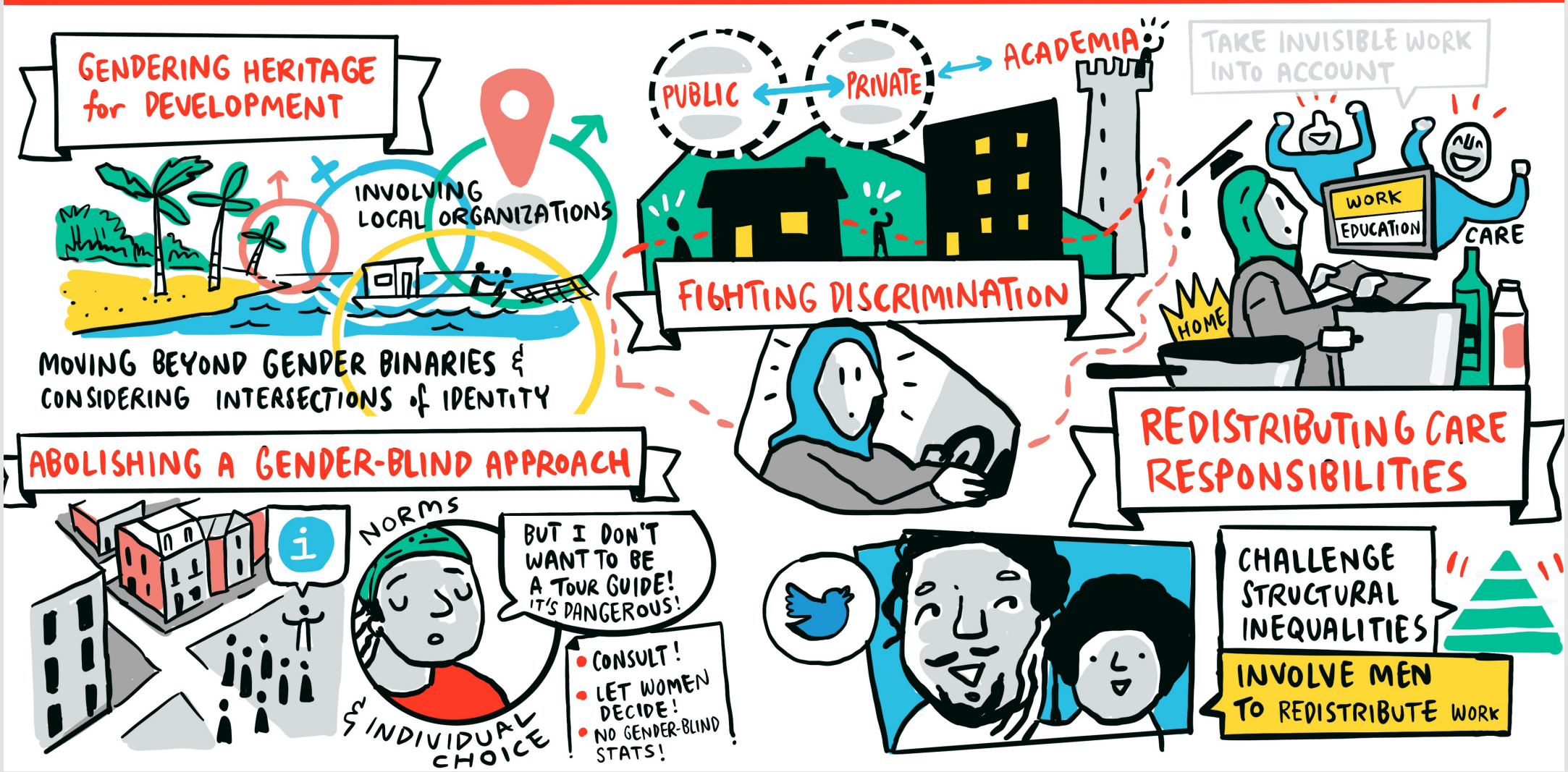
A key problem of heritage for development projects is that they do not take account of structural (and often socio-cultural) obstacles preventing women from participating. Heritage for sustainable development will never occur if there is no redistribution of time, work, and responsibilities between women and men. It is well documented that some women lack time, as they often have many unpaid and unrecognised caring duties and undertake most of the domestic work. There is no point in developing heritage projects targeting women if lack of time and multiple additional responsibilities are not tackled in parallel, as women might register but not attend the events. SDG target 5.4 does request that unpaid care and domestic work be recognised through 'the provision of public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate'. This is an important first step, but such recognition and provisions will take years to be implemented, and projects should therefore already begin addressing the invisible work undertaken by women. When I talked to project participants, it became clear that many registered for training sessions and other activities but had problems attending them regularly. Any engagement from women requires careful discussions with them about what they can commit to and for how long, taking account of intersectional issues, including those of class, ethnic and religious background, age, marital status, and ability.

Most importantly, gender equality in the heritage field will not occur if men are not involved and if they take no responsibility for change. Men all over the world, including in Africa, have been challenging traditional gender dynamics and engrained socio-cultural traditions, including that women should entirely be responsible for childcare, but more work remains to be done, as women are still disproportionately responsible for childcare and household chores. Women are generally viewed as belonging to the private sphere/the house, while men belong to the public sphere, streets. In order to help those women who want to move more towards the public sphere (and also to be freer to attend training courses, etc.), men must spend more time at home, cooking and taking care of the family. However, such changes cannot be externally imposed. They will have to occur internally, taking into account the context and the fact that not all women have the same aspirations. Some are happy to stay at home.

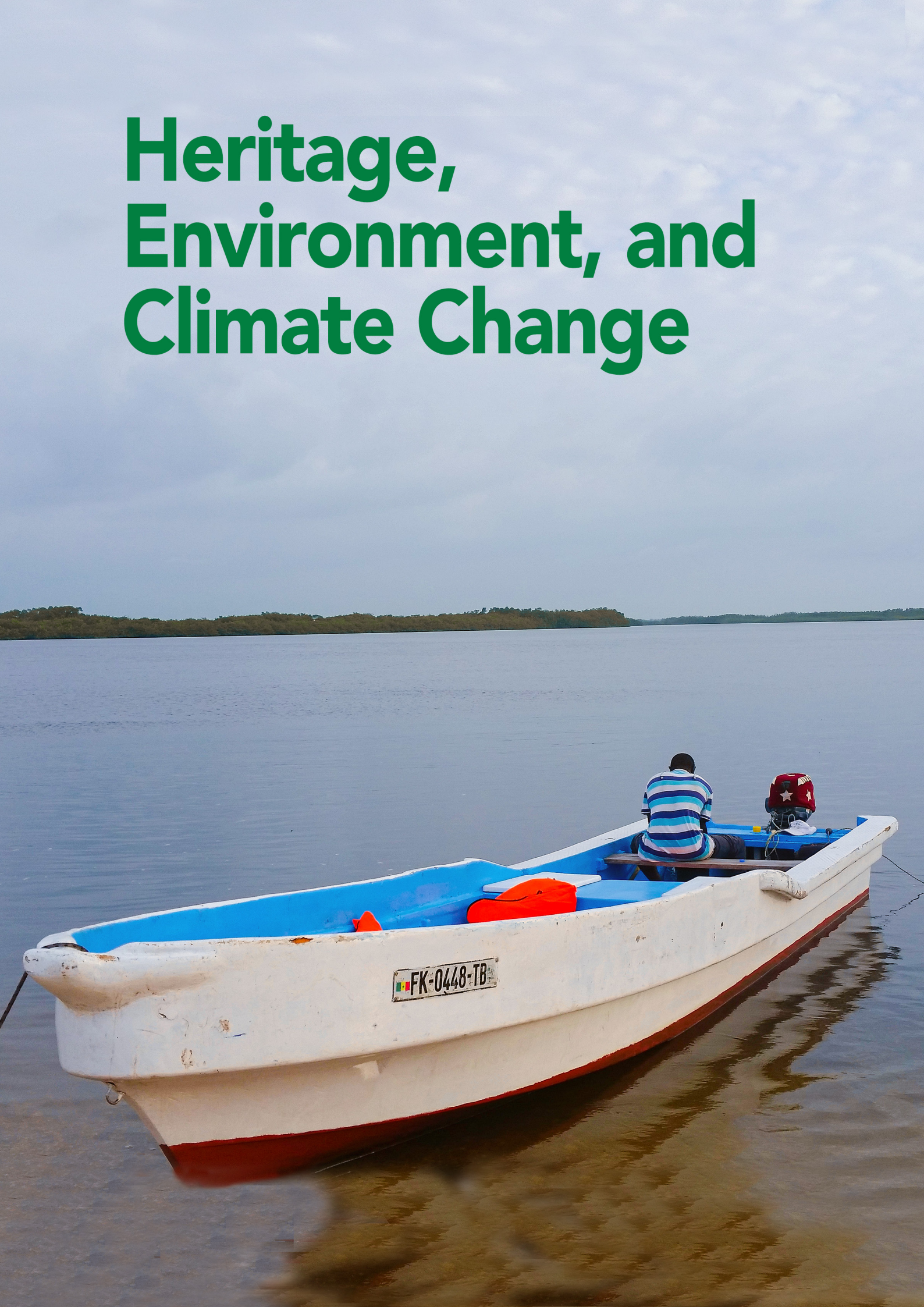
Possible solutions:

- Promote the work done by men to challenge traditional gender roles and dynamics. An example is that of David Moinina Sengeh, a Sierra Leone minister, who during the Covid-19 lockdown posted on social media a photo of himself carrying his 10-month-old daughter and asked other male leaders to share how they worked from home.
- Ensure that projects on the empowerment of women alleviate some of their invisible work on their own terms. This can include the provision of vouchers to cover the costs of childcare or the provision of shared cooking options.

RETHINKING HERITAGE for SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Heritage, Environment, and Climate Change



UNDERSTANDING HERITAGE AS AN ASSET AND A THREAT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

The projects considered, like many similar heritage initiatives, aimed to promote environmental protection. However, they overlooked their own negative impacts, as they were organised around and relied on international experts and on promoting international tourism. International experts and tourists actively contribute to climate change, particularly through air travel, and at times contribute to environmental degradation as well.

Craft production can also cause environmental degradation, for example through the use of resources from endangered species, such as ivory and tortoiseshell in Mozambique. However, craft producers I met in Mozambique made clear that such negative trends will continue until and unless local communities and rights holders are compensated for protecting the environment and are able to pursue sustainable alternative livelihood opportunities, as promoted in SDG 15c. Why would locals participate in heritage and environmental protection if they lose out in the process?

Finally, a number of projects promote small-scale intangible heritage practices without considering their entanglement in wider unsustainable practices. For instance, traditional fishing, which supports intangible heritage skills, is increasingly entangled in issues of ocean resource depletion (although this is often due to industrial fishing coupled with climate change and pollution). Hence, the protection of these intangible heritage practices needs to be understood in the wider context, as local individuals and organisations have done in several African countries.

Possible ways forward:

- Continue to promote online meetings whenever relevant, as well as the greater involvement of national and local experts, to reduce project carbon footprints. Consider how the digital divide impacts on new working approaches. Integrate more sustainable working practices from the Global South.
- Research and implement models to compensate local communities and rights holders for protecting the environment, ensuring that they can pursue sustainable alternative livelihood opportunities, as promoted in SDG 15c.
- Document the entanglement of environmental protection with wider issues of corruption, lack of transparency, and nepotism. Legal mechanisms do exist that intend to promote environmental protection, including the introduction of compulsory fees (for example as an incentive for licensed woodcutting) that return to the communities for investment in certain projects. However, corruption, lack of implementation of the legislation, and a lack of transparency in the selected community projects have all reduced the efficacy of these mechanisms. Such abuses should be reported.

ACKNOWLEDGING HERITAGE AS ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

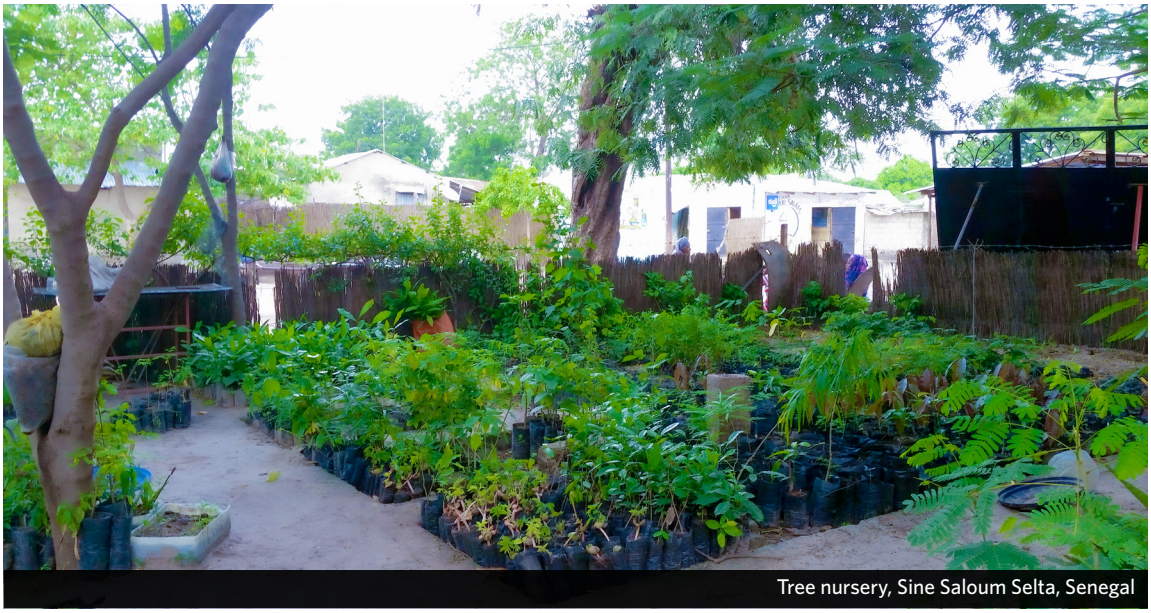
Heritage is still too often considered as being negatively impacted by climate change and as needing to be protected (see for instance the summary report of the COP25 discussions by the leading government in the negotiations[3]). However, heritage, particularly its intangible manifestations, is a resource that can provide innovative approaches and solutions for adapting to and mitigating climate change and related disasters. As already stressed, this will not happen until and unless Indigenous people and local people stop being stereotyped, considered as belonging to the past and as having no knowledge. Whilst recognising Indigenous knowledge and traditional approaches, it should be remembered that they are not static but are always evolving. In the Sine Saloum Delta in Senegal, for instance, I have met individuals who have tried and tested different endogenous and other tree species to assess how they may resist and adapt to environmental and climate change and altered soil compositions.

Baobab fruits : an up-and-coming superfood

Possible solutions:

- Record and share different solutions and approaches developed by locals to adapt to climate change and other environmental events (particularly in arid places), using both traditional and scientific knowledge, thereby helping other sites and communities to develop responses adapted to their local circumstances.
- Involve locals and rights holders in developing innovative climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. Ensure that heritage is fully taken into account when devising adaptation and mitigation strategies.

3. Side Event to UNFCCC COP25 on addressing climate change impacts on cultural and natural heritage: the Day After. Madrid, Spain: UNFCCC COP25, 2019.



Tree nursery, Sine Saloum Selta, Senegal

PROMOTING LOCALLY-SOURCED PRODUCTS

A key finding of the research is the importance of local crops, which are often considered to be intangible heritage manifestations because of their significance for social practices, rituals, and festive events. Some of these crops can assist in achieving SDG 2 (ending hunger and malnutrition and achieving food security). Not only are some of these crops 'super foods', but they can also adapt better to climate change than other (imported) crops, because they can withstand both drought and heavy rain and can help to prevent monocultures. They further address the challenge of climate change by encouraging short supply chains, shortening the transport route from producer to consumer, and supporting a zero-kilometre philosophy. However, these crops are endangered, due in part to the popularity of Westernised diets influenced by globalisation and colonialism, but also to Western food imports being sold at very low prices in some African countries. Additionally, there has been a commercial push for the use of genetically modified crops that are patented and privatised, including maize and potato, and a rising number of African countries (including Kenya, South Africa, Sudan, and Egypt) have passed legislation to allow them because they are supposedly (although not really) disease, virus, and insect resistant. These changes in industrial agriculture threaten local crops as well as human and environmental health.

Possible ways forward:

- Encourage the use of multiple internationally recognised designations, such as intangible heritage registers and the World Heritage List, as a way of raising the visibility and prestige of local crops and addressing their lack of popularity amongst locals.
- Research how food distribution companies and international projects on food security can promote local products and local ways of consumption, rather than depending on imports.

DECREASING PRESSURE ON HERITAGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Population growth is one of the major upcoming challenges for Africa. According to UN estimates, its population will reach 2.5 billion by 2050 (about 26% of the world's total population) and will then almost double, reaching 4.5 billion by 2100 (about 40% of the world's total population)[4]. This growth will certainly increase the pressure on heritage. A key issue, as explained throughout my research, is that heritage protection is still too dependent on the goodwill of the population.

Whilst there are compensation mechanisms (sometimes only partially implemented, see above), they neither correspond to, nor include all the voluntary work undertaken by locals on reforestation, on fighting against overfishing or poaching, or on monitoring respect for quotas (for example regarding ecosystem services and benefits). They often do not work because people are disconnected from their heritage and environment and/or are over-burdened.

Possible solutions:

- Integrate heritage and environmental protection education from the earliest age. Such activities have already been implemented in some parts of Africa, to ensure that heritage and environmental protection becomes embedded in everyday activities, from the preparation of tree nurseries to the planting of fruit trees in and around schools, to rehabilitating polluted landscapes and recycling.
- Support national and international political programmes and policies that have a positive impact on environmental and heritage management.
- Ensure that international and bilateral funding supports locally-formed civil society organisations and activists working on environmental protection, who can hold politicians accountable for the transparent implementation of compensation mechanisms.
- Document how social practices around the conservation of sacred sites can be adapted for other areas.

4. 'World population projected to reach 9.8 billion in 2050, and 11.2 billion in 2100', United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs, 21 June 2017.

RETHINKING HERITAGE for SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

HERITAGE, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

UNDERSTAND HERITAGE AS AN ASSET & A THREAT

MARKET

CO_2

FROM ANIMAL PROTECTION...

...TO CARBON FOOTPRINTS

...AND ADDRESSING CORRUPTION IN FINDING SOLUTIONS

THIS KNOWLEDGE IS DYNAMIC

ACKNOWLEDGE HERITAGE AS ADAPTATION to CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

TAPPING KNOWLEDGE BUILT OVER TIME...

X Y Z

PROMOTE LOCALLY SOURCED PRODUCTS

FONIO

- RESILIENT CROPS
- SHORT SUPPLY CHAINS!
- LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS TO BE PROMOTED!

- VULNERABILITY TO INCREASES in GLOBAL DEMAND?
- SUSTAINABILITY FOCUS

DECREASING PRESSURE on HERITAGE & the ENVIRONMENT

- NOT JUST ECONOMICS-DRIVEN

- EDUCATION ABOUT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES:
  - BRIDGE NATURAL/CULTURAL DIVIDE IN HERITAGE PRACTICES.

Bibliography

- Agenda 2063. The Africa We Want. African Union, 2015.
- Charter for African Cultural Renaissance. Khartoum, Sudan: African Union, 2006.
- Evaluation of the Bassari Country. Paris: ICOMOS, 2012.
- 'Gender and Diversities' webinars and conference. Our World Heritage, 2021.
- Liberation Heritage Route. South Africa National Heritage Council, 2009.
- Pays Bassari: Paysages culturels Bassari, Peul et Bédik. Proposition d'inscription sur la Liste du Patrimoine Mondial. Government of Senegal, 2011.
- Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention. Paris: UNESCO, 2015.
- Labadi, Sophia, ed., The Cultural Turn in International Aid. Impacts and Challenges for Heritage and the Creative Industries. Routledge, 2019.
- Labadi, Sophia, Giliberto, Francesca, Rosetti, Ilaria, Shetabi, Linda, Yildirim, Ege, Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals. Policy Guidance for Heritage and Development Actors. Paris: ICOMOS, 2021.
- Side Event to UNFCCC COP25 on addressing climate change impacts on cultural and natural heritage: the Day After. Madrid: UNFCCC COP25, 2019.
- Thierno Gaye, Amadou, Lo, Henri Mathieu, Sakho-Djimbira, Souadou, Sèye Fall, Mor and Ndiaye, Ibrahima. Sénégal: revue du contexte socioéconomique, politique et environnemental. Rapport d'étude. IED Afrique. Innovation, environnement, développemen, 2015.
- 'World population projected to reach 9.8 billion in 2050, and 11.2 billion in 2100', United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs, 21 June 2017.

University of Kent

Arts and Humanities Research Council

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

African World Heritage Fund under the auspices of UNESCO

icomos uk
international council on monuments & sites-uk

FONDAZIONE FRANCO e MARILISA CALIGARA PER L'ALTA FORMAZIONE INTERDISCIPLINARE