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WORKING ON THE FUTURE

WORLD HERITAGE VOLUNTEERS >

CALL FOR PROJECTS 2025

"You cannot ensure the future of World Heritage without the youth, the next caretakers"

Lazare Eloundou Assomo, Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre

The World Heritage Volunteers Initiative (WHV Initiative) was created in 2008 within the framework of the World Heritage Education Programme at the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the World Heritage Volunteers (WHV) to leverage the power of volunteering and to mobilise and involve young people, organisations, institutions and communities in concrete actions at World Heritage sites towards their preservation and promotion, beyond territories and boundaries.

Initiated with the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) the Initiative is coordinated today with Better World.

Between 2008 and 2024, the WHV Initiative coordinated the work of over 200 implementing organisations in 84 countries to engage over 10,000 national and international volunteers in heritage preservation and promotion. Activities took place at 230 different properties inscribed on the World Heritage List or a State Party's Tentative List, with a total of 737 action camps having been selected to be part of the Initiative.

It is in this context of empowerment of youth and to pursue the volunteer efforts for heritage from the past years, that we are pleased to launch the **Call for Projects** for the **'World Heritage Volunteers 2025 - Working on the Future'**.

We look forward to welcoming historic partners and new actors to be part of the activities that make this dedicated community a solid pillar to sustain all future work for World Heritage conservation, preservation and awareness work around the world.

This Call is an invitation for organisations and institutions to apply for the WHV 2025 Campaign with their proposed projects, and implement action camps, ideally between April and December 2025, in their communities. The proposed projects should help build stronger cooperation and valorise the engagement of local communities and young people at UNESCO World Heritage sites, through their rich field activities and intercultural encounters; in line with **the goals of the World Heritage Volunteers Initiative**, they should aim to:

● **Raise awareness**

among young people, volunteers, local communities, and concerned authorities on the need to protect and promote World Heritage

● **Involve young people**

in World Heritage preservation through concrete projects at sites

● **Empower young people**

by allowing them to learn skills, basic preservation and conservation techniques and raise their capacity as future decision-makers and global active citizens



● **Identify best practices**

and develop non-formal education tools to facilitate stakeholder participation in World Heritage education

● **Strengthen sustainable cooperation**

between non-profit organisations, site management, communities and authorities

The Initiative also supports all actors in **mainstreaming gender equality** in all stages of the projects and in promoting geographical diversity, balanced volunteer exchanges and regional and inter-regional cooperation among the UNESCO World Heritage sites where the action camps take place.

SELECTION CRITERIA

In order to be eligible for selection, both the applying organisations and the proposed projects must fulfil the set of mandatory criteria detailed below.

ORGANISATIONS

- a. The applicant should be legally registered as a public or private organisation or institution in the country where the project takes place;
- b. All activities of the organisation related to WHV should be non-profit. All local, national and international partnerships developed by the applicant in the framework of WHV should be submitted for approval to the WHV coordinators;
- c. First time applicants should submit two letters of support from recognised organisations and/or institutions recommending the applicant on the basis of past or current proven cooperation;
- d. First time applicants should submit a copy of their Constitution / Bylaws of their most recent activity report in one of the UN official languages.
- e. Each organisation is eligible to apply for a maximum of 4 projects to be carried out at different sites (you may apply to run several projects at the same site: these will be counted as one project unless they involve a completely different set of local partners and differ substantially in terms of activities and theme).
- f. In order for the new WHV proposals to be considered in 2025, organisations must have submitted the evaluation form of the projects implemented in the previous years.

PROJECTS

- a. Should be organised in immediate connection to a property inscribed on the World Heritage List or a site on a Tentative List: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list> ; <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists>;
- b. Should have a minimum 10 day duration consecutive or not, (excluding arrival and departure dates); and include the same group of people for the duration of the action camp;
- c. Should ideally start after 15 April and end by 15 December 2025;
- d. Should involve as much as possible, international volunteers;
- e. Should include awareness-raising activities, practical hands-on activities and skills related to UNESCO World Heritage sites where the action camps will be conducted (detailed definitions of awareness-raising and hands-on activities and skills in Annex below);
- f. Should be developed in consultation with site managers and local authorities, reflecting the needs of the sites;
- g. Should include practical hands-on skills training activities as well as reflection on issues related to World Heritage;
- h. Should involve the community in order to deepen their knowledge around issues related to World Heritage and the World Heritage Volunteers Initiative;
- i. Should respect participants' gender balance (ideally equal number of male and female participants) and geographical diversity (ideally representing different countries and regions).

NOTE: Organisations shall commit to implementing their projects as per approved proposals and submitting a full activity report (including images, videos and other results) demonstrating the concrete engagement of young volunteers in the field of World Heritage, along with other requested questionnaires. UNESCO may use these for promotional purposes, among others, for the publication of content on UNESCO's website, the World Heritage Review, UNESCO's social media platforms, and for providing information to the different States Parties and concerned governmental agencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The project:

- a. A group size of minimum 10 volunteers provides a richer working and learning environment for the participants and stimulates more diverse interpersonal and intercultural dynamics.
- b. A group should ideally include international volunteers, with a preferable maximum of two people per country.
- c. Projects should provide an alternative proposal in the scenario that the planned awareness-raising and hands-on activities cannot take place as planned.

2. Applying organisation:

- a. Organisations are highly recommended to join the World Heritage Volunteers meetings that could be organised.
- b. If your project was already part of the past Campaign(s), your organisation must demonstrate a sustainable project by showing the actions that have been implemented in the past and addressing the future needs for the further development of the project.

CONFIRMATION OF SELECTION

Following the selection of the projects, a confirmation letter will be sent to the WHV implementing organisations. The organisations will receive a list of online educational and communication materials as resources to support their awareness-raising activities. An official communication will also be sent out, accompanied by the complete list of the selected projects to relevant National Commissions for UNESCO, Permanent Delegations to UNESCO, UNESCO Field Offices, and site management authorities.

VISITS TO WORLD HERITAGE VOLUNTEERS PROJECTS

Some of the selected projects may receive field visits in order to ensure adequate follow-up and improvement of the overall World Heritage Volunteers initiative. They might also receive the visit of photo/video specialists to document part of the activities in order to produce visual and promotional materials for the Campaign and its partners. The implementing organisations concerned will be contacted directly to schedule the visits.

MEETINGS

If funds are available, the organisations shall be invited to the World Heritage Volunteers meetings, which shall aim to support and enhance the Initiative's implementation. The organisations will be informed about the format and schedule of the meetings in due course.

PROMOTION

The promotion of the projects to a larger audience through print and digital media coverage will be facilitated by the use of common promotional material. The projects selected for the Campaign will also have the authorisation to carry the logos of the *WHV Initiative* and *Patrimonito*, which associate the World Heritage Volunteers projects to the UNESCO World Heritage Education Programme.

Please note that the organisations are **NOT** authorised to use the UNESCO logo and/or Better World logo in this context.

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*The World Heritage Volunteers Initiative
logo*

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Representing a young guardian, the Patrimonito logo symbolises the interdependence of culture and nature. Created on the basis of the World Heritage emblem, the central square is a form created by people (culture) and the circle represents nature, the two being intimately linked. The emblem is round like the world, but at the same time, it is a symbol of protection.

The selected implementing organisations will receive the complete Communication Guidelines for the World Heritage Volunteers, including specific instructions on the utilisation of the World Heritage Volunteers Initiative logo. They will also receive a set of updated presentation materials about the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, the World Heritage Education Programme and the World Heritage Volunteers Initiative, to be used to raise awareness and knowledge about World Heritage. Finally, implementing organisations will receive the common design files for the printing of WHV project banners and t-shirts.

UNESCO and Better World may use these materials for promotional purposes, among others, for the publication of content on UNESCO's website, the World Heritage Review, UNESCO's social media platforms, and for providing information to the different States Parties and concerned governmental agencies.

MICRO-GRANTS AND MOBILITY FUND

The 2025 Campaign will offer again **micro-grants** that are intended to ensure that selected organisations receive at least partial compensation for the basic administration work required by their involvement in the WHV Initiative. The funds will be automatically attributed upon completion of the project activities and reporting, with priority given to projects taking place in Low Income Countries, Lower Middle Income Countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The amounts will be between a minimum of 100 USD and a maximum of 300 USD per project.

In addition, a limited amount of **mobility funds** will also be provided to partially cover exchanges between implementing organisations that develop sub-regional and regional cooperation and common activities on key World Heritage cross-cutting themes and programs, such as Climate Change, Forest, Biodiversity, Earthen architecture, Indigenous Peoples, Sustainable Tourism, Intangible Cultural Heritage, etc...

TIMELINE

19 January 2025	Deadline for the submission of project applications.
20-31 January 2025	Additional information may be requested from the organisations.
1 March 2025	Announcement of selected WHV projects. Confirmations will be sent to the selected organisations. Applications for the Mobility Fund will be open.
March/April 2025	Official communication will be sent to the National Commissions for UNESCO, Permanent Delegations to UNESCO, UNESCO Field Offices and site management authorities.
15 April 2025 – 15 December 2025	Project implementation, documentation and monitoring.
By 20 December 2025	Submission of the evaluation form and questionnaires including pictures, videos and a signed copyright agreement by the implementing organisations.
November/December 2025	WHV Call for Projects 2026 will be launched.

APPLICATIONS

In order to get involved in and/or renew your commitment towards the protection, preservation, and promotion of World Heritage through the WHV Initiative, please **download, fill in and send the application form** attached to this Call and available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/whvolunteers/> by e-mail to:

Francesco Volpini at Better World (francesco@1.or.kr) with a copy to Ines Yousfi (i.yousfi@unesco.org) and Erik Eschweiler-Dienerowitz (e.eschweiler@unesco.org) at the UNESCO World Heritage Centre

Please submit your application at the latest by
19 January 2025, 23:59 CET (Paris Time)

Do not hesitate to contact us if you experience difficulties in accessing the form, or if you have any additional questions

ANNEX I

DEFINITIONS

Hands-on Activities and Skills gained from the World Heritage Volunteers projects

The World Heritage Volunteers Initiative promotes the participation of young people in practical activities in a hands-on environment more socially dynamic than in class, in a lecture room, or on the Internet.

A World Heritage Volunteers hands-on environment offers active participation in addition to the theory. Young people get involved through active hands-on participation. Hands-on activities should contribute to improve the preservation of the sites. Doing something means helping and contributing to the state of conservation of the sites. **Hands-on learning is learning by doing.** These activities could range from maintenance works such as cleaning, planting, and painting and/or communication tools to support exhibition mounting; and/or construction works such as building school, toilet and other facilities.

Hands-on learning is not new. It has been taking place both in formal and non-formal educational contexts for decades. For example, in vocational education, if you want someone to learn to drive, you will need a car to drive. If you want to teach someone to cook, you need a kitchen. If you want someone to learn how to swim, you cannot teach them in the classroom. If you want someone to acquire knowledge and skills on heritage protection, the ideal place to do this is at World Heritage sites.

World Heritage Volunteers hands-on activities should give young volunteers a total learning experience. This should enhance the person's ability to think critically – from theories to testing hypothesis, putting the process into motion using hands-on materials, seeing this process into completion and then able to explain the attained results.

As a result of their participation in the WHV action camp activities, young volunteers will gain new skills, which will have an impact on their behaviour.

A skill is an ability to perform an activity in a competent manner; the ability to do something well. Someone having skills means that he or she has gained a particular degree of expertise, competence and efficiency.

Skills can range from knowledge based or cognitive abilities involving ideas referring to one's ability to learn new information and understanding of written material such as camp leadership training; or functional abilities like technical skills involving things which comprise the knowledge and capabilities to perform specialised tasks related to the preservation and the promotion of the World Heritage (for example, the ability to recognise lime stones or the skills to plant rice). It could also be interpersonal skills like communication and interaction with other people both individually and in groups like, learning knowledge from the local communities and transmitting heritage values.

The state of conservation of the site

The state of conservation of the site consists of issues and challenges at stake for the preservation and maintenance of the site which require actions to preserve its sustainability. Such issues of the site are usually already identified by the site managers and should be understood by the Organisations prior to the submission of the proposal project.

Awareness-raising

Awareness-raising is a process which opens opportunities for information exchange in order to improve mutual understanding and to develop competencies and skills necessary to enable changes in social attitude and behaviour. To be effective, the process of awareness-raising must meet and maintain the mutual needs and interests of the actors involved. (*Principles of awareness-raising for information literacy: a case study*, Sayers Richard., UNESCO Bangkok, 2006)

World Heritage Volunteers awareness-raising activities provide knowledge on the World Heritage sites in order to improve understanding among young people, the local community and the tourists and stakeholders on the importance of heritage protection. Thereby it contributes to nurturing their sense of ownership of World Heritage and for them to strengthen their skills to respond to threats facing World Heritage sites. The aim is to generate synergies to jointly work together to protect the heritage of humankind.

The **World Heritage Volunteers Application Form** attached to the Call provides guidance in order to develop in detail the main aspects of your project in terms of awareness-raising and hands-on activities.

ANNEX II

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

LOGISTICS

Q: I am a first time applicant. How long should my project last? What is the suggested size of the group of volunteers?

A: In order to achieve its learning objectives, a WHV action camp should have a minimum duration of 10 days. Ideally, a project can last between 2 and 3 weeks and hosts a small group of national and international volunteers. The size of the group should be minimum 10 volunteers and can vary according to the activities and to the number of national volunteers who will join the action camp.

Q: What should a hosting Organisation offer to volunteers?

A: WHV project should provide volunteers with meaningful activities, proper coordination, tools for the hands-on activities, safety and accessibility of the living and working place. Organisations should provide participants with food, accommodation and, when needed, local transportation to reach the site, for the whole duration of the project.

Q: Is it possible to receive assistance from the coordinators after the project is accepted?

A: In order to provide Organisations with useful information on how to implement their projects, the coordinators can propose an online meeting (using tools like Skype) which is usually held after the official acceptance of the projects and before their beginning of the action camps. The coordinators will be available throughout the year to share with the Organisations, relevant materials and information about the WHV initiative. They will provide assistance when possible, regarding any questions, starting from the selection process.

FINANCIAL ASPECTS

Q: Do Organisations have to cover volunteers' travel costs to the WHV project?

A: Organisations do not have to cover the travel costs for the international and national volunteers. Each volunteer is responsible for Organising her/his own travel from the country of origin to the country of the WHV project. Organisations should provide volunteers with all the necessary logistic information to reach the venue, including details on what to bring (such as sleeping bags, working clothes etc.).

Q: Can Organisations ask volunteers to pay a participation fee?

Although the participation in a WHV action camp should be free of charge for the volunteers, if needed, Organisations can set a participation fee. However, Organisations should take into consideration that fees asked from the volunteers should not cover all the expenses of the whole project; they should only cover them partially. The rest of the expenses should be provided by the Organisation (via sponsors, partners etc.). Therefore, the amount requested should be reasonable, in order to not be a burden on the volunteers. When present, the amount indicated in the application form should refer to the individual fee paid by each volunteer.

ACTIVITIES

Q: My project does not foresee specific practical activities. Will it be accepted?

A: It is essential to include hands-on activities in the programme of a WHV action camp. Without them, volunteers will not have the opportunity to gain new skills and to live a complete learning experience in contact with the site. The practical activities should be well detailed and meaningful: they could include maintenance, construction and renovations work, such as cleaning, painting, building facilities, when possible, etc. The structure of such activities should be developed in consultation with site managers and local authorities.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS

Q: How can I get volunteers?

A: Organisations can disseminate the recruitment news (through a Call with needed criteria for selection) on their websites or social media, among the contacts of partner Organisations or stakeholders such as schools, by Organising open door activities or info sessions, through other online platforms of volunteering, during external representation etc.

Q: Who is in charge of the recruitment and selection of volunteers?

A: Organisations are responsible for the recruitment and selection of volunteers. After the acceptance, each project is published on the Initiative's website at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/whvolunteers>, together with its description and the contact details of the Organisers. The organisations will be contacted directly by the volunteers who wish to apply to the WHV action camps. It is therefore necessary to prepare a procedure to deal with the applications of the volunteers. Please be reminded that the World Heritage Centre and Better World will not support the placement of volunteers in the WHV action camps.

Q: What to do if a volunteer needs a visa?

A: Organisations can issue an official invitation letter to the volunteers who require a visa to enter the country where the project is being organised. Please be reminded that the World Heritage Centre and Better World will not be able to issue an invitation letter on behalf of the organiser.

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