

WHY | World Heritage Youth

On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and the 20th Anniversary of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Italian Youth Association for UNESCO presents WHY | World Heritage Youth.

WHY will represent an opportunity for discussion and the construction of shared proposals for the future of the two "Sister-Conventions," which are increasingly dialoguing instruments, and for their application by young people involved in various capacities in the field of cultural and natural heritage. Other cross-cutting themes that will be addressed by the event will be youth activism, ecotourism and environmental sustainability.

When: 9 September 2023

Where: Palazzo Guadagni Strozzi Sacratì - Florence

Outcomes: The event focuses on thematic connected to World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage, through debating on young professionals and youth organisations experiences and skills in order to achieve the followings:

- Defining an innovative proposal for a "Youth Charter" to present for the World Heritage Convention 50th Anniversary, "*The Next 50*", and the Intangible Cultural Heritage 20th Anniversary; The Charter will be endorsed by AIGU as the promoter and all participants of the initiative.
- Create a systematic network of youth individuals and youth organisations dedicated to World Heritage (WH) and Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), aiming to be proactive and influential through regular meetings.

The event will be focusing on the following topics:

1. New professions and professionals for World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage
2. The role of Youth for Natural Heritage
3. World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists which equally represent sites and elements worldwide.

Target audience: youth organisations of any kind, young professionals and any young person involved in World Heritage sites and Intangible Cultural elements management, enhancement and preservation.

The Event Programme

The event will take place in two stages over the course of a day, divided accordingly between morning and afternoon.

Morning: (10:00 am - 1:00 pm)

Several international youth best practices that, through their daily commitment, contribute significantly to the conservation and/or enhancement of World Heritage and/or Intangible Cultural Heritage will be presented. In addition to members of the Italian Youth Association for UNESCO, young people active in the field and youth representatives from foreign National Commissions for UNESCO will be present at the event.

Lunch Break (1:00pm - 2:30pm)

Afternoon (2:30pm-5:30pm)

Three workshops will be organised to allow all participants to be actively involved in the event. Each workshop, moderated by AIGU members, will include the presence and testimony of realities active on the two Conventions and on the participation of young people in Heritage. After an initial introduction to the workshop, there will be a Q&A session, followed by a general discussion among all participants in order to elaborate a documentation in Charter format. The aim is to transform all suggestions and ideas from each workshop into concrete proposals, which will then be summarised and presented to all WHY participants at the final moment of the workshop day.

Workshop 1 - New professions and professionals for World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage

In Italy, as in some other countries around the world, students can follow an educational and training path to become specialists in heritage, which includes both tangible sites, belonging to the UNESCO World Heritage List, and living heritage, belonging to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. However, in several sites and elements, management problems may occur, which do not allow new interventions and recruitment, so new graduates and young professionals are forced to pursue their profession without any guarantee of obtaining a stable job, working in an uncertain and temporary environment. What kind of obstacles are students and young professionals dealing with? Which solutions and ideas are available from international realities that have managed to combine social-cultural change with a modern and dynamic management system? What can youth people do to propose and create tangible change through community engagement?

Workshop 2 - The role of Youth for Natural Heritage

Natural World Heritage sites are the least represented within the WH List, and due to current challenges, especially related to the effects of Climate Change and the Covid-19 pandemic, they are the most fragile heritage sites in need of greater attention and protection. In response to these issues, two different tourism-related concepts arise, with the objective of enhancing and protecting destinations. Sustainable tourism, which aims to have as little negative impact as possible, contributing to the conservation of the destination, in contrast to mass tourism; and "regenerative" tourism, which further aims to actively revitalise and regenerate the visited environment. In this context, young people, who are today more involved in environmental preservation issues, emerge as key players in the conservation of Natural Heritage. What could be the strategies to increase their awareness of the importance of the protection and enhancement of Natural World Heritage? Is it possible to start with projects that involve young generations as early as school age, strengthening ties with their roots and local communities? How can management and fruition systems be developed in a sustainable way? What is the new role of young travellers in regenerative tourism?

Workshop 3 - World Heritage List and Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists which equally represents each sites and elements worldwide

The debate on the future challenges for World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage cannot ignore the specific needs and deployment of specialised resources and expertise for heritage enhancement in non "Western" regions of the world. In these cases, in particular, critical issues and conflicts of various kinds severely limit the potential of these sites and living heritage as drivers of positive and sustainable socio-economic development.

The use of youthful and "democratic" communication tools, as social networks, can offer new perspectives in this regard. The work of travel bloggers, for example, can help discover little-known and lesser-known World Heritage sites and Intangible Cultural Heritage elements among tourist destinations. In this respect, synergistic work between these and other professionals can make it possible to investigate and act on specific critical issues, tackling them proactively and exploiting the potential of tourism.

What actions can be implemented to this end and how can the new frontiers of digital communication help to protect and enhance the heritage of regions in conflict and/or with reduced access to resources?

ABOUT US

[AIGU - Associazione Italiana Giovani per l'UNESCO](#) is a Youth Association of volunteers, established in 2014 as the Youth Committee of the Italian National Commission for UNESCO and officially recognised in 2018 as a **Member of the Associations and Clubs for UNESCO**.

AIGU comprises 300 young people between the ages of 18 and 35, including students, researchers, artists, professionals, managers and entrepreneurs, who offer their contribution to improve the fields of culture, science, education, communication and information in their country, Italy. AIGU is organised into regional teams managed by a national board to operate both locally and nationally, creating events and opportunities throughout Italy with the goal of informing and engaging new generations on **UNESCO principles and values**.

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