

VOLUNTARY WORKCAMP ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA

CONTRIBUTION OF VWAN TO THE 2003 WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

INTRODUCTION

The advent of heritage is monumental with historical significance that links to ancient history. The concept of heritage can simply be understood as legacy from the past that subsequently becomes what we live with today. It is also an inheritance that present generations will bequeath to future generations. From days immemorial, heritages have been part of history and seemingly pointed to the origins of ancestors. Our cultural and natural heritages are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. They constitute our touch stones, points of reference and our unblemished identity, without which history may be thwarted.

In medieval period, customarily and traditionally, heritages were valued with much importance to the value and gallantry they provided to the community, as should be the case today. The growing concern for protection, preservation and promotion of several heritage sites became relevant when it was realized that local and national interests in this area are declining. In attempt to forestall incessant damage to the heritage, a convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, an international agreement was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on the 16th of November 1972. This was founded in the premise that certain places on Earth have outstanding universal value and as such should form part of the common heritage of humankind. Whilst fully respecting the national sovereignty without prejudice to property rights provided by national legislation, the states parties to the Convention recognize that the protection of the heritage is the duty of international community as a whole. The Convention is profoundly original in that it links the heritage together in a single document (i.e. the concept of nature conservation and preservation of cultural sites).

In the process of all these formalities, the United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) also met in Paris from **29 September to 17 October 2003, at its 32nd session**, seeking to encourage the identification, **safeguarding**, protection and preservation of both cultural and natural heritage around the world having considered them to be of outstand-

ing value to humanity. It is also imperative to mention that the UN policies on ***Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs)*** also consider the importance and value that Culture contributes to poverty reduction and community development. It also constitutes essential elements in the next-generation of global sustainable development within the framework of formal and non-formal education. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also gave credence to this concept.

The efforts of World Heritage Centre at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris to embark on different projects and activities through various international Non-Governmental-Organizations and government institutionalized groups to protect, preserve and promote the heritage all over the world are credible.

COMMUNITY, GOVERNMENT, YOUTHS, AND TRADITIONAL RULERS INVOLVEMENT IN HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

Apparently since the ownership identity of heritage is important and critical to world heritage recognition; it becomes imperative that all the stakeholders mentioned above should be conscious of their responsibilities and at all times seek the means of preserving the heritage. Individual groups concerned have primary functions towards the management/maintenance, promotion and security of the heritage.

DEVELOPMENTAL NGOs AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

In 2007 as a response to the growing interest of young people to undertake concrete actions and to play an active role in the promotion and preservation of heritage, CCIVS and World Heritage Centre (WHC) in France initiated the World Heritage Volunteers (WHV) Projects throughout the whole world.

In the framework of UNESCO World Heritage Education programs and considering already recorded positive results obtained by WHV projects since 2008 through the coordinating efforts of CCIVS in Paris, the Voluntary Workcamps Association of Nigeria (VWAN) proactively involved the youngsters and local youths to actively and collectively put efforts together to implement various actions at the Ancient Oke Idanre Hills, Ondo State thus inculcating active citizenship and participation in the mind of the community. Over the years the projects of World Heritage at Oke Idanre Hills has grown up to attract volunteers from all walks of life.

NATIONAL STAKE-HOLDERS/TRADITIONAL RULERS & LOCAL COMMUNITY

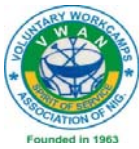
The World Heritage Global Volunteers transcend beyond borders to share their cultures and unite together to preserve, promote and protect the heritage especially Ancient Oke Idanre Hills. The prominent traditional rulers, High Chiefs, Site Managers, UNESCO Commission in Nigeria, National Commission for Museums & Monuments, Ondo State Chapter of National Commission for Museums & Monuments, State Ministry of Culture & Tourism, Site Managers. Community Based Organisations, Universities Students as well as Volunteers and Management of VWAN in Nigeria have been very supportive and all have contributed immensely to the protection, preservation and promotion of the Cultural Heritage Oke Idanre Hills at Odode in Ondo State.

VOLUNTARY WORKCAMP ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (VWAN) NGO

VWAN was Founded in February 26, 1963 as NGO by Late Prof. Justin Yole Labinjo and few other members. The NGO strives to inculcate the attributes of active citizenship and participation into the minds of people and seek to promote inter-cultural learning and exchange among youths of diverse nationalities without bias to creed, race, belief, sex, color, religion, cultural backgrounds and other differences. We organize various exchanges of youths across the globe. These exchanges offered the space for co-operation among young people of diverse backgrounds and orientation; they live, learn and work together on their projects. Through the series of projects that were held in this context, we gained some recognition to implement several global actions and campaigns.

Besides the Long term programmes, we also receive short term and middle term exchanges all year round from several partner organisations in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa. The volunteers are placed on our recurrent social and community projects including World Heritage projects. Through this projects volunteers come in contact with the local community and people, cultural barriers are broken.

VWAN, as an accredited NGO in Nigeria yearly organizes 2-3 weeks Workcamp that aims at engaging young people and entire local community in learning about World Heritage, sustainable development, biodiversity and stressing the importance of protecting, preserving and promoting the Ancient Idanre hill through practical hands-on collective actions.



VWAN history of engagement in World Heritage Volunteers campaign started in 2010 when a group of local and international volunteers were led to Idanre Hill under the auspices of CCIVS-UNESCO in Paris and by express permission of UNESCO Commission in Abuja to commit to restoration work at the old courtyard and tree planting on the site.

In the same year 2010 co-operation was initiated and communication was streamlined for stakeholder engagement towards protecting and promoting the site. The Traditional Rulers, prominent High Chiefs, Local Youths, Site Managers, Federal and State Institutions responsible to the Heritage were all supportive to the initiatives.

Ever since VWAN continually engages the major stakeholders on Idanre Hills in consultation about the issues concerning the site, assessing the varying positions and interests of stakeholders. His Royal Highness, Oba (Dr) Fredrick Adegunle Aroloye JP. OFR, Arubiefin IV, Owa of Idanre Kingdom was very supportive to the cause of projects along with other 3 prominent High Chiefs, High Chief Ojomo, Chief Samuel Agboola Akitan, High Chief Osore Dr. Charles Akinde and High Chief Ojumu amongst other Leaders in the Community. They personally committed their resources and energy to support the project. They tremendously offered a huge service and commitment to salvaging the Heritage. This effort has brought about genuine team and partnership spirit of working together for the common good of the site's preservation and ultimately to see that the site meets the aspiration of stakeholders.

Our WHV action focuses on cleaning the old Primary School, using the local materials that reflect traditional fittings to construct concrete chairs around the old primary school, providing shelter and waste baskets to avoid pollution and etc. In addition, we also organized actions that promote Education about World Heritage among stakeholders, volunteers, youths and the local community in general. Non Formal Education was also applied through the various Workshop activities during the 2-weeks camp and awareness raising activities in the community.



In summary, our role and efforts on the heritage includes but not limited to:

- Engaging young local volunteers in the conservation of Idanre hill;
- Construct concrete chairs and waste separation bins on the site
- Facilitate learning about World Heritage Initiative; the outstanding cultural value history bequeathed at Idanre Hill
- Raising awareness of young people and local community about the importance of promoting and protecting World Heritage
- Fostering exchange and application of transversal practical skills in the protection of Heritage
- Sensitizing young volunteers through activities suitably based on the concrete needs of the site in coordination with other NGOs & Local Youths Orgs.
- Organizing practical activities & Hands-On Action to preserve & protect the Heritage
- *Demonstrating the value of structured education in non-formal sector as an approach to disseminate the heritage values and expertise. Also establishing links between the youth organizations and national and local authorities*
- *Creating synergies between the youth organizations, the local community and the site management authorities*

- Impact of International Voluntary Service through VWAN to support World Heritage Projects

PROMOTION / AWARENESS CAMPAIGN / STREET RALLY ON CULTURAL HERITAGE - 2010-2017

Raising awareness of the local community and encouraging them to reconsider the value of the sites near their homes



Sensitizing young volunteers through activities suitably based on the concrete needs of the site in coordination with other NGOs & Local Youths Orgs.



PRESERVING & PROTECTING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE 2010-2017

Organizing practical activities & Hands-On Action to preserve & protect the Heritage







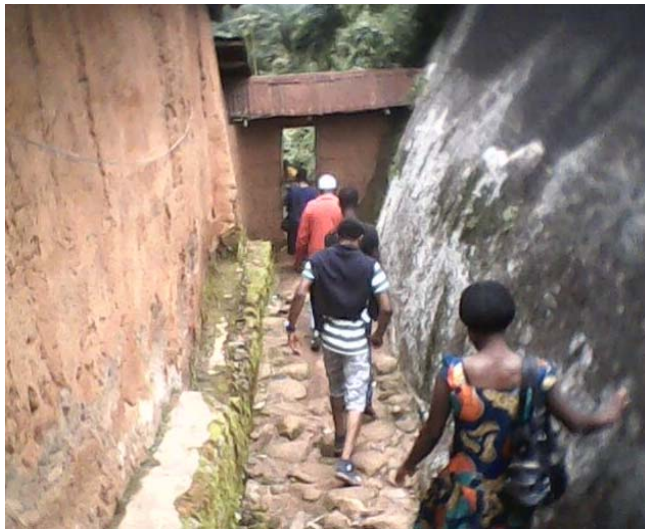
Demonstrating the value of structured education in non-formal sector as an approach to disseminate the heritage values and expertise. Also establishing links between the youth organizations and national and local authorities



Creating synergies between the youth organizations, the local community and the site management authorities



The historical Intangible Cultural Heritage Idanre Hills, Odode Ondo State



UNESCO through the World Heritage Centre in Paris usually declare a theme to implement World Heritage projects in all the Continents every year.

Patrimonito



Find below the lists of past UNESCO WHV Projects Declarations.

No.	Year	Theme
	2009	
	2010	
	2011	
	2012	Beyond Territories & Boundaries
	2013	Patrimonito – Voluntary Actions – <i>Inspiring Change</i>
	2014	Action for Sustainability
	2015	Patrimonito takes a Stand in a Changing Global Environment
	2016	Together for Heritage campaign
	2017	Heritage in Our Hands
	2018	Empowering the Commitment to World Heritage
	2019	Empowering the Commitment to World Heritage

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