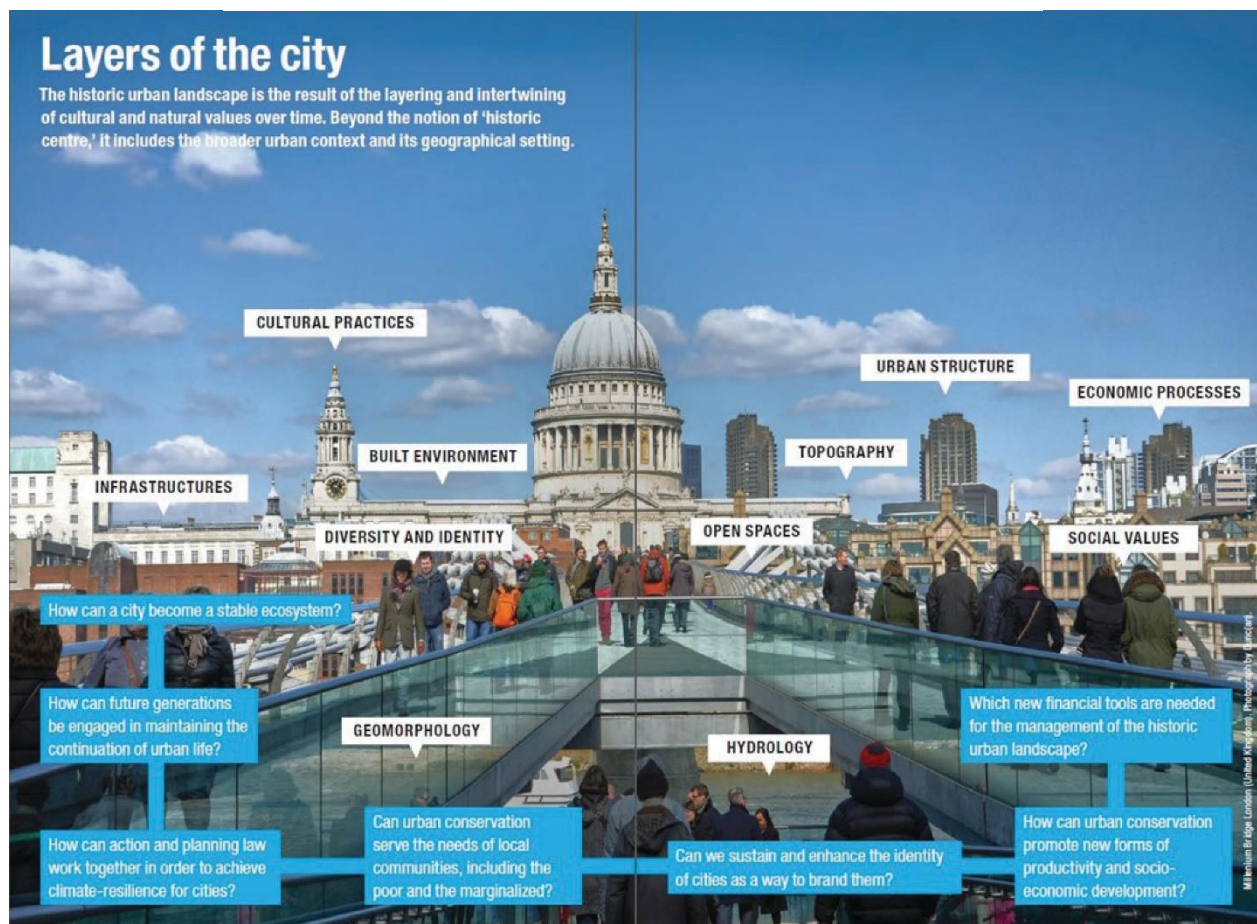


### Topic A: Supporting Preservation of Historic Urban Landscapes

#### Introduction

Preserving the heritage of historic urban areas is central to UNESCO's mission. The World Heritage Convention calls for "the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity."<sup>1</sup> The UN's Sustainable Development Goals also call for strengthening "efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage." (Target 11.4)<sup>2</sup> UNESCO's approach has been to integrate heritage conservation with sustainable development through its World Heritage Canopy.<sup>3</sup> Traditionally, historic preservation in cities has focused on the protection and maintenance of particular buildings or monuments. While such projects can preserve pieces of history, they often provide little context or connection to the broader – often intangible – cultural landscape. The term *landscape* encompasses both the physical appearance of a locality, as well as the cultural imprints on that locality evident throughout a history of use and re-use by successive socio-economic groups.<sup>4</sup> As such, preserving *historical landscapes* involves more than just buildings.

Figure 1: Components of the Historic Urban Landscape



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It links such physical objects with the social, economic, and cultural history of a place. Further, cities are not static. Historic urban landscapes (HULs) are not meant to be museums, but rather dynamic resources that interact with, affect and are affected by the city as it grows and changes (Figure 1).<sup>5</sup> Studies show that such visions of the HUL are preferred by residents and that they create a sense of community and continuity with the past.<sup>6</sup>

The implementation and sustainability of historic urban landscapes face many challenges. Rapid urbanization and poor planning control often obliterate such areas before they can be identified and preserved.<sup>7</sup> Economic forces and increased urban land values make it difficult to keep historic districts out of the hands of private developers.<sup>8</sup> The adverse effects of climate change threaten the existence of historic districts – particularly those close to waterfronts.<sup>9</sup> Even success in preservation creates its own challenges as mass tourism can damage historic sites and have numerous negative impacts on local populations.<sup>10</sup> In considering this topic, advocates are consistently debating questions such as: What should be preserved? Who decides? Preserved for whom? By whom?

### **Current Situation**

In 2011, UNESCO adopted the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (the Recommendation).<sup>11</sup> According to the Recommendation:

“Urban heritage, including its tangible and intangible components, constitutes a key resource in enhancing the liveability of urban areas, and fosters economic development and social cohesion in a changing global environment. As the future of humanity hinges on the effective planning and management of resources, conservation has become a strategy to achieve a balance between urban growth and quality of life on a sustainable basis.”<sup>12</sup>

This strategy explicitly links the practice of historic preservation with the goals of sustainable development through the implementation of several actions to be taken by member states and city governments.<sup>13</sup> Since its adoption, the Recommendation has undergone three rounds of member state consultation and reporting.<sup>14</sup> The latest consultations in 2023 surveyed over 69 member states and solicited information from local authorities for the first time.<sup>15</sup> The report reveals that HUL is considered an important strategy, though its effectiveness and impacts are only beginning to be felt. Cities reported difficulties in preserving landscapes in the face of private sector forces for economic growth.<sup>16</sup> Also, national and local governments are still more likely to prioritize the preservation of physical structures over recognizing the broader cultural landscape.<sup>17</sup> In addition, preservation can lead to gentrification or excessive tourism – processes that run counter to the objectives of the SDGs.<sup>18</sup>

One potential reason for the slow progress in HUL is the lack of concrete indicators to measure success. SDG 11.4 has only one target indicator and that is “Total per capita expenditure on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by source of funding (public, private), type of heritage (cultural, natural) and level of government (national, regional, and local/municipal)”<sup>19</sup> While the level of funds appropriated to HUL might indicate its importance, it denotes little about processes or outcomes. Advocates of HUL have begun to call for more concrete targets and indicators to help guide governments and communities. One idea

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suggests expanding target 11.4 and replacing its single indicator with multiple ones that will better guide communities and policymakers in HUL and better measure its success. (Figure 2).<sup>20</sup>

**Figure 2: One Proposed Revision of SDG Target 11.4**

**Target 11.4.** Protect the world's cultural and natural heritage: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage through identifying, conserving, and managing historic areas within their urban contexts. Recognize the different values attributed to heritage by various stakeholders and promote participatory urban management strategies. Indicators:

**11.4.1.** Number and quality of efforts to promote the innovative and sustainable reuse of architectural monuments and sites, and value creation through respectful restoration and adaptation.

**11.4.2.** Number of engaged Indigenous people and local communities in the promotion and dissemination of knowledge of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and protection of traditional expressions and languages, including using new technologies and techniques.

**11.4.3.** The increase in cultural promotion of museums, indigenous cultures, and languages, as well as traditional knowledge and the arts, highlights how culture plays a role in rehabilitating and revitalizing urban areas and strengthening social participation and the exercise of citizenship.

**11.4.4.** The level at which urban heritage, including its tangible and intangible components, constitutes a key resource in enhancing the livability of urban areas and fosters economic development and social cohesion in a changing global environment.

**11.4.5.** Number of initiatives that harness the potential of cultural heritage to enhance the identities, and sense of belonging to create job opportunities and sustainable livelihoods, stimulate dialogue across different communities, and encourage social inclusion, especially of the most vulnerable and marginalized.

It appears that the slow implementation of HUL stems more from a lack of technical knowledge and a clearly articulated set of outcomes than from a lack of desire. Providing a better framework for member states and localities to adopt HUL can help the heritage areas of cities serve as catalyst for sustainable development.

**Questions to Address**

- How can UNESCO encourage wider adoption of the HUL model?
- What efforts should UNSECO make to balance HUL with tourism and development?
- Should UNESCO push for a revision to SDG Target 11.4?

### **Topic B: Assuring Continued Education in Areas of Conflict**

#### **Introduction**

The right to childhood education is a human right, but all too often children in areas of conflict are prevented from attending school. Attacks on education in war zones have both direct and indirect causes. Clearly, one major cause is the destruction of schools (intentional or unintentional) due to artillery bombardment or aerial bombing.<sup>21</sup> When schools are intentionally targeted, it is often due to the perception that they are being used for military purposes by combatants.<sup>22</sup> Even when not destroyed, military use of school buildings prevents education from occurring.<sup>23</sup> Indirect causes stem from destruction of transportation infrastructure and the general danger of getting to school.<sup>24</sup> Even when children are taken out of harm's way, they often lose access to education in displacement centers or refugee camps.<sup>25</sup> The loss of childhood education is tragic both for individual students and for society as a whole as long-term impacts impede development.<sup>26</sup> As the UN body charged with monitoring issues of education, UNESCO has been asked to examine and make recommendations on protecting education from attack.

International rules for conducting warfare are mainly codified in the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, and the Geneva Conventions of 1949, with their Additional Protocols of 1977.<sup>27</sup> Much of the 1949 Geneva conventions focused on the humane treatment of civilians in occupied areas and the protection of hospitals, medical personnel and humanitarian aid.<sup>28</sup> Additional Protocol I specifically outlaws "indiscriminate attacks on civilian populations and destruction of food, water and other materials needed for survival."<sup>29</sup> Also outlawed are attacks on dams, dikes, nuclear power generating stations, cultural objects or places of worship.<sup>30</sup> Additional Protocol II outlaws attacks on "objects essential for human survival".<sup>31</sup> There are no rules that expressly mention protection of schools, but such protection has been derived from the general norms protecting civilian objects and children.<sup>32</sup>

"As civilian objects, schools cannot be the target of attacks. However, they may still be affected, as collateral damage, by non-direct attacks. In such cases, according to the principle of proportionality, the damage caused must be weighed against the concrete and direct military advantage expected, and the belligerents must take all possible precautions to avoid or minimise such collateral damage to civilian objects."<sup>33</sup>

To more explicitly protect schools, students, and teachers in conflict zones, Norway and Argentina led the way in the creation of the Safe Schools Declaration in 2015.<sup>34</sup> While not a UN treaty, the declaration commits states that endorse it to strengthening protections for schools, students and teachers and to restrict the use of schools for military purposes. Thus far, the declaration has been endorsed by 120 member states.<sup>35</sup> (Figure 3.) Unfortunately, several states that are currently in conflict are noticeably absent from the list. In 2021, the Security Council reiterated its interpretation that attacks on schools are in contravention of international humanitarian law (IHL) and called on all states and combatants to protect schools and children from harm.<sup>36</sup>

**Figure 3: States That Have Endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration**

Afghanistan	Denmark	Macedonia	Saint Vincent and the
Albania	Djibouti	Madagascar	Grenadine's
Algeria	Dominican Republic	Malawi	Samoa
Andorra	East-Timor	Malaysia	San Marino
Angola	Ecuador	Maldives	Senegal
Antigua and Barbuda	Equatorial-Guinea	Mali	Serbia
Argentina	El Salvador	Malta	Seychelles
Armenia	Estonia	Marshall Islands	Sierra Leone
Australia	Fiji	Mauritius	Slovakia
Austria	Finland	Mexico	Slovenia
Belgium	France	Moldova	Somalia
Benin	Gambia	Monaco	South Africa
Bolivia	Georgia	Montenegro	South Sudan
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Germany	Morocco	Spain
Botswana	Ghana	Mozambique	Sudan
Brazil	Greece	Namibia	Sweden
Bulgaria	Guatemala	New Zealand	Switzerland
Burkina Faso	Guyana	The Netherlands	The United Kingdom
Cameroon	Haiti	Nicaragua	Togo
Canada	Honduras	Niger	Tunisia
Central African Republic	Iceland	Nigeria	Ukraine
Chad	Iraq	Norway	Uruguay
Chile	Ireland	Palau	Vanuatu
Colombia	Italy	Palestine	Vietnam
Congo, Brazzaville	Jamaica	Panama	Yemen
Costa Rica	Jordan	Paraguay	Zambia
Cote d'Ivoire	Kazakhstan	Peru	
Croatia	Kenya	Poland	
Cyprus	Lebanon	Portugal	
Czech Republic	Liberia	Qatar	
Democratic Republic of Congo	Liechtenstein	Romania	
	Luxembourg	Rwanda	

### Current Situation

Attacks on children, teachers and schools have increased over the past several years.<sup>37</sup> In the most recent study from the period of 2022-2023, more than 10,000 students were reported as killed or injured and there were over 6,000 attacks on educational institutions or personnel.<sup>38</sup> There were also over 1,000 incidents of combatants using schools for military purposes.<sup>39</sup> Unsurprisingly, these incidents increased in active conflict zones, but also in areas with high degrees of ethnic tension and suppression of anti-government activity. (Figure 4.)<sup>40</sup> In a more recent address to the Security Council, the Secretary-General noted that:

“Attacks damaging or destroying schools and hospitals, notably in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Sudan, deprived children of their right to education and health and of child-friendly safe spaces. 2023 saw 665 incidents affecting access to education across 21 conflicts, including attacks against and occupation of schools, and the death and injury of educators and students. Myanmar, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Ukraine were among the most affected.”<sup>41</sup>

UNESCO has stated that education is an “immediate and essential need in crisis situations, comparable to urgent food and health service provision in humanitarian response.”<sup>42</sup>

**Figure 4**

Attacks on education and military use of schools and universities in profiled countries, 2022–2023



For several years, UNESCO has sought to provide guidance to member states on continuing education during crises and has often provided direct education services in displacement centers.<sup>43</sup> It also assists countries in rebuilding schools and reestablishing educational systems after conflicts.<sup>44</sup> The recent uptick of attacks on schools has prompted a more urgent response. At its 2024 Global Education Meeting in Brazil, UNESCO adopted the Fortaleza Declaration, which identifies access to education as crucial for meeting the 2030 SDGs. It calls on member states to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration and to “protect schools, learners, and educational personnel from attack in all circumstances.”<sup>45</sup> In April 2024, the UNESCO Executive Board adopted a Decision in which it reiterated the importance of endorsing the Safe Schools Declaration and requested the UNSECO Director-General to develop a preventative action plan for the protection of schools for attack.<sup>46</sup> Thus, UNESCO’s focus has broadened to not only provide and rebuild education services, but to prevent their destruction in the first place.

### Questions to Address

- How can UNSECO encourage more countries to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration?
- What measures should be included in producing a “preventative action plan” to protect schools from attack?
- How can the United Nations get combatants to desist from using schools for military purposes?



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<sup>2</sup> “Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.” United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. [https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11#targets\\_and\\_indicators](https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11#targets_and_indicators) , Accessed 30 November 2024.

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<sup>5</sup> *New life for historic cities: The historic urban landscape approach explained*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): Paris. 2013, pp. 12-13.

<sup>6</sup> Kaya, Ayşegül & Demir, Zeki. A Conservation Approach via the UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. In R. Efe, M. Zincirkiran, İ. Curebal (Eds.) *Recent Researches in Science and Landscape Management* (pp.71-86) Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 2018, p. 72.

<sup>7</sup> *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): Paris. 10 November 2011, p. 3

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 4

<sup>10</sup> Dastgerdi, Ahmadrza Shirvani and Giuseppe De Luca, The Riddles of Historic Urban Quarters Inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List, *Archnet-IJAR*, 12:1. 2018, (pp. 152-163)

<sup>11</sup> “UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape” UNSECO World Heritage Convention. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/hul/> Accessed 2 December 2024.

<sup>12</sup> *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape*, p. 1

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 16

<sup>14</sup> *Consolidated Report on the Third UNESCO Member States Consultation on the Implementation of the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): Paris. May 2023, p. 3

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 8

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 12

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 14

<sup>18</sup> El Faouri, Bayan F. and Magda Sibley. Balancing Social and Cultural Priorities in the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for UNESCO World Heritage Cities, *Sustainability* 2024, 16, 5833. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16145833>, p. 2

<sup>19</sup> “Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.”

<sup>20</sup> El Faouri, p.

<sup>21</sup> *The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education*. UNESCO: Paris, 2011., pp. 142

<sup>22</sup> *Education Under Attack 2024*, Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, Oslo, Norway, 2024., p. 11

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 11

<sup>24</sup> “What you need to know about education in emergencies.”, UNESCO, 30 December 2024, <https://www.unesco.org/en/emergencies/education/need-know?hub=84615>, Accessed 4 January 2025.

<sup>25</sup> *The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education*. UNESCO: Paris, 2011., p. 154

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2601, S/RES/2601 (2021), 29 October 2021, p. 3

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>42</sup> "What you need to know about education in emergencies.", UNESCO, 30 December 2024, <https://www.unesco.org/en/emergencies/education/need-know?hub=84615>, Accessed 4 January 2025

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>46</sup> UNESCO Executive Board, Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board at its 219<sup>th</sup> Session. UNESCO: Paris, 26 April 2024. 219EX/Decisions., p. 45