

Opportunities to leverage World Heritage Sites for local development in the Alps

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Abstract

In recent years research within the EU project CHERPLAN and the Global Regions Initiative studied a total of 33 natural and cultural heritage sites in South-Eastern Europe and the Alpine Space with over-used and unused development opportunities. The *key success factors analysis* was applied to nine pilot sites in the CHERPLAN project to better understand the opportunities and bottle necks of heritage sites, to contribute to local and regional development and to create benefit for local communities. A follow-up study extended the investigations to 24 World Heritage (WH) properties within the Alpine Space, based on the WH Convention's nomination files, management plans and the documents of the Periodic Reporting 2nd cycle (2013/2014). The studies evaluated the key success factors and the potential to use heritage sites as resources for local development. The studies focuses on identifying the state-of-the art, bottlenecks and solutions to optimize impact and to contribute to sustainable development processes in and around heritage sites. The four historic centres and the five serial nominations of the Alpine Space in the WH list are situated on the rim of the Alpine Convention area and, because of their particular characteristics, have little impact on local development and create limited added value for local communities. The other 15 sites are situated in rural and remote areas and present considerable unused development opportunities. All the WH sites have very high *Natural and Cultural Capital and its Accessibility* due to their *Outstanding Universal Value*, their uniqueness, accessibility and the established education and research facilities. The sites in the high Alps perform rather less well in terms of *Limits and Pre-requisites for Development*, either because of the remote location and difficult environmental conditions or because of limited marketing and promotion prospects of their brands. The main weaknesses and opportunities emerged in the third key factors group *Strategy, Cooperation and Sustainability*: lack of public private cooperation, strategic planning, integrated management plans, sustainable development concepts and involvement of stakeholders. The holistic development approach, targeted at sustainable growth and benefit for local people, and stakeholders involvement, is not yet considered adequately in WH strategies and in the Periodic Reporting.

Introduction

Natural and cultural heritages are considered key resources in the ever-growing sustainable tourism market. UNESCO is increasingly promoting the World Heritage (WH) as a tool for development, especially with regard to sustainable tourism. UNESCO (2012–2014) has dedicated several volumes of the WH review to sustainable tourism (no. 71), sustainable development (no. 65) as well as a WH paper series to community involvement (no. 31, 40). Nevertheless, the implementation of strategies and management plans to reduce the negative impacts on cultural and natural heritage and foster local development are advancing very slowly.

Recent publications point to a changed paradigm of natural and cultural resources as substantial drivers of sustainable local development. A new understanding of the opportunities of natural and cultural heritage for contributing to local sustainable development is needed to improve the conditions for heritage sites. Many heritage sites or protected areas are situated in remote areas with less favourable topography and infrastructure and therefore disadvantaged for socio-economic processes. Being certified as WH site does not automatically result in enhanced publicity, increasing income and new job opportunities. Even sites with

an extremely intensive stream of visitors often have not introduced legal instruments and management tools to realize local sustainable development. Such *bit-and-run tourism* sites frequently do not have a return on investments and face considerable problems with respecting carrying capacity, managing visitors flows and guaranteeing the conservation and restoration of the heritage (Ruoss & Alfarè 2013 a).

A high number of the recently studied sites have great potential to stimulate local and regional development. Heritage sites with over- and unused development opportunities were studied within the CHERPLAN project and the Global Regions Initiative with the aim of enhancing local development based on natural and cultural heritage. The CHERPLAN project (Enhancement of Cultural Heritage through Environmental Planning and Management), implemented between 2011 and 2014 within the EU's South-East Europe transnational cooperation programme, aimed at ensuring compatibility and synergy between cultural heritage conservation and socio-economic growth by adopting modern environmental planning approaches in selected sites throughout South-Eastern Europe (SEE). The partners from Albania, Austria, Greece, Italy, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Slovenia used common methodologies to develop strategies, environmental management plans

based on GIS, action and business plans, as well as efficient participatory processes. The result was a Model for Environmental Management Plans for SEE, which included recommendations for managing cultural heritage sites throughout the region (Nared & Razpotnik Visković 2014). The sites studied for their contribution to local / regional development were: Berat (Albania), Hallstatt (Austria), Cetinje (Montenegro), Nafaktos (Greece), Aquileia, Venice (Italy), Dubrovnik (Croatia), Bitola (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and Idrija (Slovenia) (Ruoss & Alfarè 2013a, b; ZRC SAZU 2014).

The Alpine Convention Conference established a Working Group UNESCO World Heritage to harmonize national tentative lists and produce recommendations for successful new nominations within the Alpine Space. The Working Group' report (Alpine Convention 2014) aimed at collecting and updating existing studies on the feasibility of potential transboundary and serial transnational nominations. A total of 24 sites in six countries included in the WH list are situated in or near the perimeter of the Alpine Space (Table 1). They are predominantly cultural properties (15), only 5 natural and 4 cultural landscapes sites are listed (maps: Annex 2 of the report; UNESCO 2015a).

Heritage and development studies are often connected to monitoring, one of the main task of the WH properties according to the Convention, with the aim of assessing and measuring the impact on the state of heritage conservation. Increasingly they are also used to understand and assess the conservation – development interface (Gasser & Wiesmann 2010). A recent project, Benchmarking World Heritage & Tourism (BWT), established a benchmarking system which allows comparing the quality of heritage sites in terms of heritage conservation and tourism management (WNF 2013). The e-tool combines WH typology with monitoring and *bench-learning* and can be used as a modular and flexible platform for monitoring, quality check and strategic decision processes linked to WH tourism. In this context Conradin & Wiesmann (2014) concluded that *“clearer policies and management guidelines, as envisaged by UNESCO, are crucial to achieving a balance between conservation and development”*.

Cultural heritage properties facing problems such as economic decline, development restrictions and emigration, increasingly involve local communities and stakeholders into the planning, decision and development processes. Such Integrated Environmental Planning Concepts have recently been proposed by the municipality of Hallstatt in the WH site Hallstatt – Dachstein / Salzkammergut Cultural Landscape (Austria) and Idrija (Slovenia) to work out shared solutions for the future (Nicolics et al. 2014; ZRC SAZU 2013).

The present paper presents and discusses challenges, opportunities and limits to using heritage as resource and capital for local development. Based on the results and the methodologies of the CHERPLAN project, the 24 WH properties within the Alpine Space

were evaluated to understand the current state and the bottlenecks faced by the properties in their contribution to the sustainable local development. The relevant data resulting from the key success factors analysis were used to identify the main challenges and tools to enhance and optimize the impact of heritage conservation on local development. Three examples of successful change and development processes illustrate concrete achievements in valorizing heritage for development.

Methodology

SWOT, carrying capacity and key success factors analyses were applied to a total of 9 heritage sites within the framework of the CHERPLAN project (2011–2014) (Ruoss & Alfarè 2013b). Based on the outcomes of the investigations, a further 24 WH properties within the Alpine Space were studied using the key success factor analysis and, in recent years, empirical information was also collected during visits and meetings with site managers. Websites of the properties and the documents of the WH Centre of the 2nd Periodic Reporting Cycle (2012–2015) were analysed as was the Final Report for the Europe Region and Action Plan (UNESCO 2015b).

Key success factors for heritage destinations

In the report published by the European Commission *“Using natural and cultural heritage to develop sustainable tourism”*, 10 strategic success factors were identified as instrumental for sustainable tourism (EC 2003, 33–37). Given today's focus on holistic and sustainable strategies, the factors have been used not only for tourism development but adapted to the entire local development of the area of the designated heritage sites. Therefore the method has been applied in a broader context of local development for the current study. The key success factors fall into three groups:

- Natural and cultural capitals and their accessibility: significance; distinctiveness; clustering; accessibility and education / research facilities.
- Limits and prerequisites of development: branding and networking; access (travel and transport); seasonality.
- Strategy, cooperation and sustainability: partnerships; strategic planning; sustainability.

Analysis of Alpine WH properties

The investigations related to the Alpine WH sites (Table 1) were conducted in 2014, mainly based on documents of the World Heritage Centre (WHC, UNESCO 2014) and the analysis of the Periodic Reporting, 2nd cycle of the European properties in 2013 / 2014. Every six years the States Parties of Europe and North America are invited to carry out a Periodic Reporting for the WH properties on their territory to assess the application of the WH Convention, to facilitate the update of information and to record

Table 1 – The World Heritage properties in or at the border of the AC area (state 2014, based on reports of the Alpine Convention 2014, Annex 2, 3).

World Heritage properties	Year of inscription	WH category	Type of property
Transboundary and Transnational Nominations			
Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps	2011	Cultural	Transnational A/CH/F/GER/IT/SLO, serial property of 111 small individual, archeological sites
Monte San Giorgio	2003/2010	Natural	Transboundary CH/IT, palaeohistory, fossils from Triassic period
Rhaetian Railway in the Albula/Bernina Landscapes	2008	Cultural Landscape	Transboundary CH/IT, Alpine landscape, mountain railway
Austria			
Historic Centre of the City of Salzburg	1996	Cultural	Historic centre
Hallstatt – Dachstein Salzkammergut Cultural Landscape	1997	Cultural Landscape	Town of Hallstatt, salt mines and Alpine landscape
Semering Railway	1998	Cultural	First mountain railway
France			
Great Saltworks of Salins-les-Bains to the Royal Saltworks of Arc-et-Senans	1982/2009	Cultural	2 salt mines and museums
Fortifications of Vauban	2008	Cultural	Serial, 12 monuments all over France, 1 in the Alps
Germany			
Pilgrimage Church of Wies	1983	Cultural	Single monument
Monastic Island of Reichenau	2000	Cultural	Convent and 3 churches
Italy			
Rock Drawings in Valcamonica	1979	Cultural	Serial, archaeological parks with rock paintings
Residences of the Royal House of Savoy	1997/2010	Cultural	Serial, 21 palais in Piedmont
Sacri Monti of Piedmont and Lombardy	2003	Cultural Landscape	Serial, 9 holy places, monuments and their environments
The Dolomites	2009	Natural	Geological landscape
Longobards in Italy, Places of the Power (568–774 A.D.)	2011	Cultural	Serial, 7 sites with their monuments all over Italy, 3 sites in the Alps
Slovenia			
Skocjan Caves	1986	Natural	Cave system, geomorphology
Heritage of Mercury, Almaden and Idrija	2012	Cultural	Mercury mines
Switzerland			
Benedictine Convent of St. John at Müstair	1983	Cultural	Single monument
Convent of St. Gallen	1983	Cultural	Part of historic centre, library
Old City of Berne	1983	Cultural	Historic centre
Three Castles, Defensive Wall and Ramparts of the Market-Town of Bellinzona	2000	Cultural	Historic centre, castles and city wall
Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch	2001/2007	Natural	Alpine landscape, geomorphology
Lavaux, Vineyard Terraces	2007	Cultural Landscape	Traditional land use, human made landscape
Swiss Tectonic Arena Sardona	2008	Natural	Geological park and alpine landscape

possible changes in the state of conservation of their properties (WH Periodic Reporting 2012–2015). Additional documents and data sets consulted:

- Documents from the WH properties: nomination files, management plans, mission reports, periodic reporting, decisions (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>).
- Websites of the WH properties (accessed between September 2014 and January 2015).
- Field visits and interviews: Within the past 12 years almost all sites have been visited by the author during visits or evaluation missions. The topics addressed with governing bodies and site managers related mainly to governance, management, funding, participatory processes and development opportunities.

The investigations were inspired by the Forum Alpinum 2014 in Darfo Boario Terme (Italy), based on

the outcomes of the workshop session 1.1 “*Valorization of natural and cultural heritage for local development*” and supported by the International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps (Ruoss 2015).

3. Results

3.1 Natural and cultural capitals and their accessibility

Significance

All the sites selected from the Alpine area are recognized as WH properties, listed for their Outstanding Universal Value and therefore highly significant for their heritage values (Table 1).

Distinctiveness

All the sites are highly distinctive, representing different and very particular heritage types in the Alpine

area, in Europe and worldwide, giving them a unique selling position. They represent a range of different types (Table 1).

Hence the WH sites of the Alpine Space are quite complementary and together represent a unique selling product of human history and its environment in Europe.

Clustering

Natural and Cultural Heritage sites in the Alpine area mostly testify to particular, small-scale history or local and distinct cultural traditions and represent a mixture of tangible and intangible heritage or an amalgamation of natural and cultural heritage, combined with human land use. The cultural landscapes, with their interaction between people and their natural environment, are good examples of heritage clusters. The different types of heritage sites pooled together may provide interest and attract a critical mass of tourists and other stakeholders and define an important contribution to local development.

Accessibility and education / research facilities

The WHC defines education, presentation and research as main duties of the State Parties (Art. 5).

All the WH properties put an emphasis on providing access to their heritage as well as tools and information for visitors to learn from their visit in an understandable and enjoyable way. Excellent examples are museums and visitor centres (all properties), maps (Prehistoric Pile Dwellings), monument presentations (Residences of the Royal House of Savoy, Fortifications of Vauban), interactive apps (Patrimonio mondiale Ticino, Great Saltworks), interactive tour planning IT tools (mySwissalps.ch of the Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch), archaeological parks (Rock Art in Valcamonica, Prehistoric Pile Dwellings).

3.2 Limits and pre-requisites of development

The second group of key factors represent the framework conditions and particular circumstances of the properties which often limit local development.

Branding and networking

The WH is the most prestigious heritage brand worldwide. How effective its use in marketing and promotion is depends on the site's management and differs considerably from site to site. Some of the WH properties are certified with other brands interlinked with their particularity. Two sites are also designated as part of biosphere reserves (Val Müstair, Skocjan Caves), one site as a Ramsar wetland (Skocjan Caves), two as geoparks (Idrija, Tectonic Arena Sardona) and several also include Natura 2000 sites. This allows the promotion of different brands and the participation in different networks. Even so, only 8 properties indicated other brands than the WH in their Periodic Reporting.

An example of excellent branding and networking is the internet platform Swiss Parks and UNESCO

WH sites, created by MySwitzerland.com (2015) by the Swiss Travel Agency. The platform provides joint access to all the designated national sites and a mobile application, App of the Swiss Parks, which helps the visitors to *“immerse into the breath-taking diversity of the landscapes of the Swiss parks and discover a different side of Switzerland far off the beaten track”*. In addition, the platform Swiss World Heritage Experience Switzerland (formerly UNESCO Destination Switzerland) was established to improve cooperation and joint promotion of all UNESCO designates sites in Switzerland.

Access

Sites located at the rim of the Alpine Space mostly have excellent access, with high connectivity to airports, highways, main railway connections (Bellinzona, Berne, Salzburg, Lavaux, St. Gallen, Monte San Giorgio, Skocjan Caves). Other sites are difficult to access because of their remote location and poor connectivity or particular conditions mainly related to the topographic situation in the Alps (high altitude, exposed position), which create further obstacles (e.g. snowfall, natural hazards). Sites with missing or badly established public transport systems find it even harder to attract visitors. Examples of WH sites with difficult access conditions are the Dolomites, Val Müstair, Tectonic Arena Sardona, Rhaetian Railway, Idrija. Sites with poor access usually face socio-economic decline and emigration and need special efforts to attract visitors or to provide favourable conditions for inhabitants and economic activities.

Seasonality

Sites with good access are all-year tourism destinations, especially if they combine holiday and business tourism, if they are living and work places of resident people (e.g. historic cities), frequently visited by school classes or are places of religious expression (e.g. Sacri Monti). Remote sites with difficult access present significant seasonal fluctuations with high frequencies in the summer season (Val Müstair). Other sites have two distinct tourism seasons, a summer recreation season and a winter sports season (e.g. Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch, Swiss Tectonic Arena Sardona or Hallstatt-Dachstein Salzkammergut). Even though the sites show clear seasonal peaks, they can overcome seasonal visitor flows and focus their marketing on periods with low tourism.

3.3 Strategy, cooperation and sustainability

The third group includes key factors influencing development, such as governance and management frameworks, involvement of local people and stakeholders, planning processes and funding. The indicators extracted from the Periodic Reporting documents are: Cooperation with economic sectors, funding sources, and economic benefits for local communities (Table 2–4).

Partnerships

WH properties are usually nominated and managed by national, regional or local public bodies primarily interested in the conservation of the natural or cultural heritage. The transnational, transboundary and serial sites establish joint steering committees at international, interregional or intercommunal level. Private bodies or NGOs rarely get involved in governance or management of WH properties, the WHC defines State Parties as key actors. The cooperation partners, such as professional and educational organizations, cultural institutions, nature conservation organizations, are usually linked to conservation and dissemination issues. Very few inter-sectorial partnerships are established, the most frequent cooperation is with tourism organizations. Asked about the cooperation with other economic sectors (e.g. forestry, agriculture, mining), only three site managements stated in the Periodic Reporting regular contacts and important cooperation with industry in the site management (Table 2).

Strategic planning

In the WHC (Art. 5) planning and implementation are defined as main duties of the State Parties. In the Operational Guidelines of the WHC (updated version 2013: II.F, para. 108–111) further detailed regulations are given: *Each nominated property should have an appropriate management plan or other documented management system which must specify how the Outstanding Universal Value of a property should be preserved, preferably through participatory means.* The purpose of management systems is to ensure the effective protection for present and future generations and, depending on the type, characteristics and needs of the property. Effective management should include short-, medium- and long-term actions. An integrated approach and impact assessments are considered essential for guiding the evolution of the properties.

All countries of the Alpine Space have developed laws and strategies for heritage conservation as well as

Table 2 – Number of answers from site managers to the question 4.3.10 “Cooperation with economic sector” (Periodic Reporting 2nd Cycle 2013/2014).

Is there cooperation with industry (i. e. forestry, mining, agriculture, etc.) regarding the management of the WH property, buffer zone and/or area surrounding the WH property and buffer zone?	Number (out of 24)
There are no or little contacts	5
There are contacts but no ore little cooperation	4
There are contacts but only some cooperation	12
There are regular contacts and important cooperation related to management	3

for territorial development. Most of them have adopted master plans at local and regional level, where natural and cultural heritage sites are included as special or protected areas. The WH management plans, however, are generally restricted to the conservation of the properties and thus poorly integrated and harmonized with the master plans and do not include local development as a target. The information on Management System / Management Plan in the Periodic Reporting (Chapter 4.3) is very fragmented and governance, roles and competences, accountability, as well as participatory and decision processes, remain unclear.

Sustainability

According the WHC the State Parties have the duty to contribute through the heritage to the local development (Art. 5). Governance and funding of heritage sites management and activities are still key tasks of the State Parties and the regional and municipal bodies (Table 3). On average, the WH properties in the Alps are 76% funded from public and 26% from private sources. Public funding by country: Austria (75%), France (66%), Germany (95%), Italy (90%), Slovenia (53%), Switzerland (64 %). Public funding was crucial for the conservation of heritage in the past, but in periods of

Table 3 – Number of answers from site managers to the question 4.4.1 “Funding sources for conservation” (Periodic Reporting 2nd Cycle 2013 / 2014).

Costs related to conservation, based on the average of last five years (relative percentage of the funding sources)	Number (out of 24)	Range (%)	Average (%)	Comments
Multilateral funding (e.g. GEF, World Bank)	1	0 (25)	0	Only one site (salt mine)
International donations (e.g. NGO's, foundations)	1	0 (2)	0	Only one site (Salzburg)
Governmental (national/federal)	21	5–50	31	Three sites 0% (Dolomites, Lavaux, Bellinzona)
Governmental (regional/provincial/state)	23	5–98	35	One site 0% (Skojan Caves), one site 98% (Dolomites)
Governmental (local/municipal)	19	2–50	17	Five sites 0%
Total public funding	24	28–100	74	10 sites indicate > 90%,incl. all transboundary and transnational sites
In country donations (e.g. NGO's, foundations)	8	2–30	12	Including sponsoring
Individual visitor charges (e.g. entry, parking, camping fees)	8	1–48	18	One site 48% (Skojan Caves), others < 23%
Commercial operator payments (e.g. filming permit, concessions)	2	0,1–3	2	Two sites (Val Müstair, residences of Royal Houses of Savoy)
Other grants	13	2–75	20	One site 75% (Berne), including projects funding
Total private funding	19	2–75	26	Five sites 0%

Table 4 – Number of answers from site managers to the question 4.4.5 “Economic benefits to local communities” (Periodic Reporting 2nd Cycle 2013 / 2014).

Does the World Heritage property provide economic benefits to local communities (e. g. income, employment)?	Number (out of 24)
Does not deliver any economic benefit	1
Potential economic benefits	3
Certain economic advantages	7
Some flows of economic benefits	10
Important economic advantages	2
Major flows of economic benefits	1

economic crisis, public bodies are less able to cover the costs for conservation, restoration and maintenance. Even though private co-funding is still very low, 19 properties already report some kind of private funding through donations, visitor charges, commercial operator payments, sponsoring and project activities.

WH designations may be important sources of benefit for local communities from activities in and around the properties. The site’s management bodies are still very hesitant to make the creation of benefit to local communities a priority. In the Periodic Reporting only three properties indicated *important economic advantages* or *major flows of economic* benefits to local communities (Table 4), all others indicated *no*, *potential* or *some benefit* and *certain advantages*. Even though the WH/sustainability issues are increasingly discussed within the framework of the World Heritage Convention and among experts, concrete strategies and action plans are not yet recognized or adequately implemented at individual sites.

3.4 Examples of development-oriented strategies

The three following examples document good practice, based on their activities related to the key success factors group Strategy, Cooperation and Sustainability.

Successful transformation

Idrija (Slovenia) has already undergone a considerable transformation from mining town to small high-tech centre and will further develop its cultural and eco-tourism offerings (Nared et al. 2013). The discovery of mercury ore in 1490 and its exploitation were decisive for Idrija’s industrialization. After the Second World War, mining operations declined and the mine was finally closed in 1990. Since then Idrija has undergone a smooth transition into one of Slovenia’s most successful centres for electronic products and is well known for its global high-tech firms. Over the coming decades, Idrija will face three challenges with significant risks: a mono-structural economy, lack of space, and poor access. An influx of tourists due to Idrija’s status as a WH site will allow the surrounding rural areas to help drive social and economic development. The designation offers the city an important opportunity to diversify its mono-structural economy.

The case of Idrija confirms that conserving tangible and intangible cultural values (mercury mine and lace manufacture) is important for the development of the entire region. Governance and management frameworks, public private partnerships and strong leadership are considered key factors of a successful transformation (ZRC SAZU 2013).

Environmental Management Plan

Local authorities in Hallstatt (Austria) estimate that the village, with a resident population of 800 people, receives over 800 000 day visitors per year. As a result, the WH nomination Hallstatt-Dachstein / Salzkammergut Cultural Landscape is seen as more of a burden than a boon for the village. Preserving the value of a site that has such a large and transient tourist population poses significant challenges. The restrictions imposed by the WH status also create challenges for local people in the absence of adequate financial support. Based on activities carried out within the CHERPLAN project (2011–2014), an environmental management plan was developed for the municipality of Hallstatt (BOKU & Municipality of Hallstadt 2014). It sets out three fields of action with 19 measures mainly connected to tourism development, inter-municipal cooperation and management of the property, and a concept for local value creation and transfer of financial benefits from day tourism to the community.

Management Strategy for the WH region

The 23 communes and the cantons of Berne and Valais have defined development objectives for the WH property Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch (SAJA) in the Management Strategy (Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn WH Association 2005), based on the Charter of Konkordiaplatz signed by the municipalities (2001 and 2005), which calls for sustainable development of economy, community and ecology of the WH region. Despite the fact that most of the area covered by the property is not subject to direct use by humans, the site plays an important role as tourist attraction and recreational space. The Management Plan aims at preserving the integrity of the diversity and uniqueness of the natural and cultural landscapes, natural and quasi-natural ecosystems, and flora and fauna. Three more aims focus on ensuring appropriate economic and social use, and stress the importance of awareness raising and communication. The approach to conservation is dynamic rather than static and incorporates natural changes as well as human-induced developments. The overall aims were formulated during participatory processes involving local people, institutions and stakeholders for the following target areas: natural and cultural landscapes; flora and fauna; agriculture and forestry; hunting and fishing; industry, trade and commerce; energy and transport; tourism and visitor management; culture, education, information and research.

Main achievements since 2005 include the implementation of monitoring, education and promotion tools, tourism marketing, tourist packages for trips to or around the WH site, and the internet platform www.myswissalps.ch linked with a GIS containing major background information for visitors. The monitoring programme related to the aims and indicators defined in the Management Plan was implemented in cooperation with the Institute for Geography and the Centre for Development and Environment of the University of Berne (Gasser & Wiesmann 2010). The project Benchmarking World Heritage & Tourism (BWT) is in place and a WH network and *bench-learning* tools established for monitoring, quality check and strategic decision processes linked to WH tourism (WNF 2013). The World Nature Forum (WNF) will open in 2016, hosting the information and visitors centre and the UNESCO Chair Natural and Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Mountain Development, planned in partnership with universities, institutions and WH sites around the world involved in the activities of WH Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch (SAJA 2015).

Discussion

The analysis of the key success factors for heritage destinations confirms that the WH properties in the Alps are exceptional places with high community development opportunities. The first factors group of significance, distinctiveness, clustering, accessibility and education/research facilities form an important natural and cultural capital for the local development of unique properties with outstanding universal value.

The second factors group, representing limits and pre-requisites of development, include branding and networking, access and seasonality. These factors make up an advantage for properties on the rim of the Alps, but they are less favourable for properties further into the Alpine Space due to their remote and isolated position and the high risks related to weather conditions and natural hazards. With some efforts the disadvantages can be reduced, but the factors will remain obstacles for properties within the Alpine Space.

The indicators of the third factors group of partnerships, strategic planning and sustainability return very high discrepancies. The reasons are the different legal, institutional and financial conditions, as well as varying governance and management approaches, participatory processes and stakeholder involvement. The historic centres (or parts thereof) as well as serial properties do not follow the same rules as single sites in terms of their impact on local and regional development.

The historic centres with WH designation, i. e. Bellinzona, Berne, Salzburg, and St. Gallen, are situated on the rim of the Alpine Convention area. They are part of large cities with economic, social and administrative functions, not least as national or regional capitals. Only a small part of the activities are connected to

the designation as WH property. The WH designation may support the promotion of the cities, and the cultural heritage certainly creates a supplementary attractiveness, but it cannot be considered a main driver of local/regional development. The historic centres fulfil most of the key success factors and their cultural capital could be better valorized, but the opportunities to create new added value is rather limited.

The serial nominations are mostly dedicated to a specific theme (e.g. Sacri Monti of Piedmont and Lombardy, Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps) or a historic period (e.g. Residences of the Royal House of Savoy, Longobards in Italy, Places of Power (568–774 A.D.), Fortifications of Vauban). Serial properties as a whole will contribute little to the local/regional development, but individual sites could create significant opportunities. The potential may also differ between serial properties concentrated within a limited area or those distributed over a large area, such as the Pile Dwellings around the Alps, the Fortifications of Vauban in France or the Longobards in Italy.

The remaining 15 WH properties reveal unused potential to increase their impact on the local and regional development and the creation of benefits for local communities. The analysis of the Periodic Reporting documents (chapter 4.3) shows that management strategies and plans focus on protection and conservation of the heritage and rarely include development aspects of the sites. Governance and management are considered a responsibility of public bodies and exclude the involvement of private business or institutions in decision making and funding (Table 2, 3). The local communities receive no adequate economic benefit from the natural and cultural heritage (Table 4). The results are also reflected in the final report for the Europe region and the action plan (World Heritage Periodic Reporting 2015b). Nor did the Periodic Reporting take sustainable local development issues adequately into account. After the final endorsement of the action plan of the Periodic Reporting and the report on WH and sustainable development (UNESCO 2015b, c) at the 20th General Assembly of the State Parties in 2015, more emphasis must be given to assessing the impact of WH on local development.

The results from the CHERPLAN sites and the analysis of the Periodic Reporting reveal a lack of strategic planning, integrated management and sustainable development concepts, public private cooperation or involvement of stakeholders. These critical factors can be seen as main reasons for unused development opportunities. The demand by Conradin & Wiesmann (2014) for clearer policies and management guidelines by the World Heritage Centre can be confirmed by the present study. Nevertheless, the WH Convention clearly delegates governance and management responsibilities to the state parties and the individual properties (World Heritage Convention 1972: Art. 4–6). Future Periodic Reporting cycles should be more concise and

targeted on sustainable development goals to increase both awareness and commitment of the responsible bodies of World Heritage properties to adopting new governance and management approaches. Innovative governance and management concepts and methodologies based on public private partnerships and outcome-oriented public management (Schedler & Proeller 2010) could improve the sustainability of local development. The success of the development and transformation processes of the three good-practice examples Idrija, Hallstatt and Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch can be achieved with concise strategic all-inclusive planning, implementation, monitoring and strong leadership.

Management strategies focused on development, shared between public institutions, local people and stakeholders, will help to prevent overblown development (e.g. hit-and-run tourism) and foster development. The establishment of targeted public private partnerships, balanced holistic approaches of heritage conservation and socio-economic development, as well as long-term funds mobilization and investment concepts will be fundamental to the future contribution of WH properties to local development. The report Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe, prepared by the CHCfE Consortium (2015), showcases interesting and successful examples of holistic approaches leading to increasing impact on local development and benefit for people and stakeholders. The CHCfE Consortium also identified 5 strategic recommendations, including evidence-based policy making, impact measuring and monitoring, data sharing and dissemination and measures to maximize impact. Adoption of integrated approaches to ensure mainstreaming of heritage as well as the inclusion of stakeholders and civil society in developing strategies and policies are preconditions for valorizing heritage and fostering sustainable and inclusive growth as well as innovative and reflective societies. More detailed studies of individual profiles and potentials, measures of heritage sites and new methods, such as the Nexus Model or the Sustainability Profile Matrix (Gløersen et al. 2016), could help to improve policy and support sustainable local development based on natural and cultural heritage.

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