



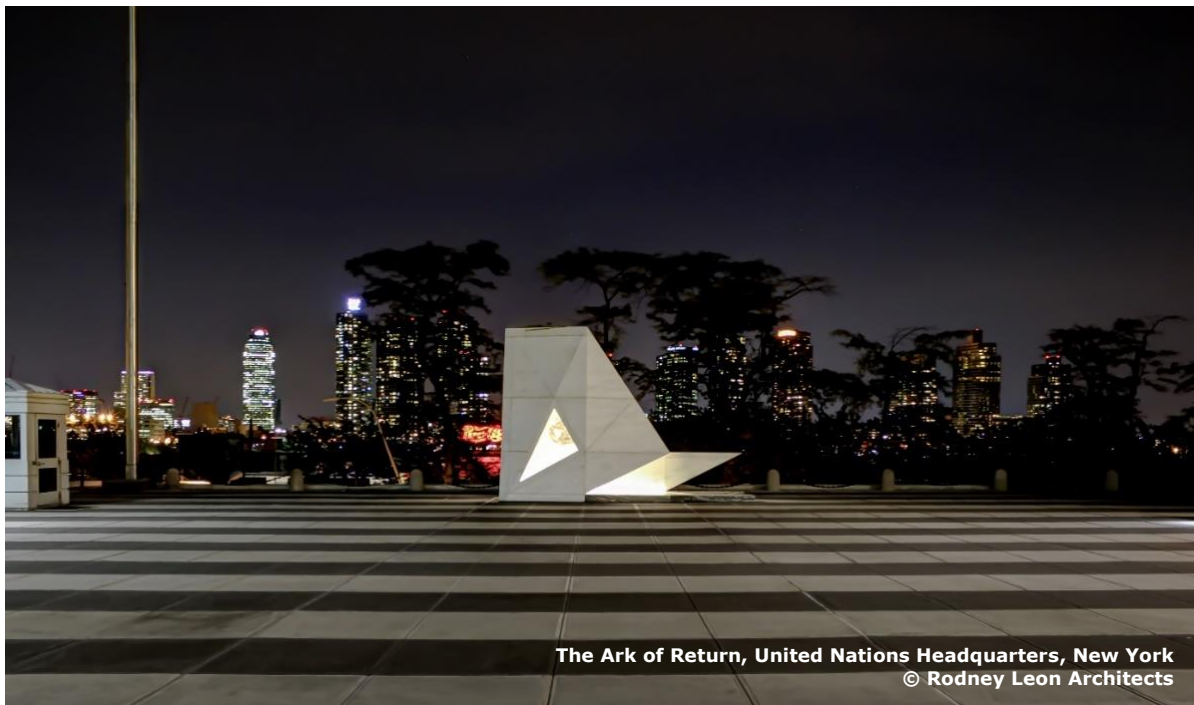
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



The Slave Route:
Resistance, Liberty, Heritage

Legacies of Slavery

*A Resource book for Managers of Sites
and Itineraries of Memory*



The Ark of Return, United Nations Headquarters, New York
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A UNESCO Endeavor
The Slave Route: Resistance, Liberty, Heritage
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Why the Slave Route ?

Aware that ignoring or endeavoring to hide the key historic events can, in itself, be an obstacle to mutual understanding, international reconciliation and stability, UNESCO decided to study the subject of the slave trade and slavery as a means of contributing to the preservation of peace.

By virtue of the universal silence in which it has been shrouded, the extreme violence that accompanied it, the troubling light that it sheds on the ideologies used to justify it, and the paradoxical exchanges and inequalities to which it has given rise, the slave trade is a matter of concern to modern society. It raises some of the most burning issues in today's world, namely human rights, the building of identities, citizenship, cultural pluralism and intercultural dialogue.



Aerial view of Citadel la Ferrière, Haiti
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At the suggestion of Haiti and the African countries, UNESCO launched the *Slave Route Project* in September 1994 in Ouida, Benin, to break the silence on the subject of human trafficking from Africa, slavery and its abolition in various regions of the world. The main objective of the project is to contribute to a better understanding of the deep-seated causes of slavery, its forms of operation, its consequences on modern societies, in particular the global transformations and cultural interactions among peoples affected by this tragedy. The Project was implemented through five immediate objectives: research, development of pedagogical tools, preservation of documents and oral traditions, promotion of living cultures and the diverse contributions of African diaspora and promotion of sites and itineraries of memory.

The Slave Route Project: Resistance, Liberty, Heritage have contributed to the acknowledgement of the slave trade and slavery as 'crimes against humanity' – World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Durban (South Africa, 2001) – and the proclamation of the International Decade for people of African descent (2015-2024) on the theme of "Recognition, Justice and Development", by the UN General Assembly.

Why a Resource book?

This Resource book is designed for managers of sites and itineraries of memory related to the history of human trafficking from Africa. It provides a comparative analysis of experiences in the preservation and promotion of such sites across the world and proposes practical guidance for their management and their development taking into account the sensitivity of this painful memory. It is the first book on this specific issue to be published by a United Nations agency.

Designed in two parts, the resource book contains conceptual and practical information for managers. It also showcases concrete examples of sites, itineraries and museums implementing particular strategies for the preservation promotion and interpretation of heritage related to the slave trade and slavery. Moreover, it offers advice and recommendations for the development of memory tourism, responding to the growing demand from citizens to better know this history.

Its main purpose is to contribute to capacity building for the benefit of site managers and memory itineraries, and to raise awareness on the ethical issues posed by these historical sites and history-laden spaces. It also proposes sites for setting up training modules for those who want to become professionals of this sector.



Elmina Castle, Ghana
© Dave Ley, CC-BY-SA 3.0

How to manage sites linked to painful memories ?

Carrying a strong emotional and symbolic burden, the historical and memorial sites and places referred to in this guide convey emotions generated by a painful past with lasting consequences. This emotional burden requires that government agencies (such as cultural and tourism organizations), local development partners (local communities, government authorities) and visitors (national and international tourists and school audiences) develop a special approach.

Owing to the existence of cross-border memorial sites, networks have been created to reflect the transnational dimension of the theme of human trafficking from Africa, slavery and their abolition.

However, many places of memory have anchored themselves in history, identity and local culture, which gives them a unique quality, linked to specific moments in time.

The resource book provides us examples of the necessary precautions to adopt and, in particular, examples of methodologies and approaches, historic research, technical management, organization of events, financing, planning cultural events and training modules adopted to the sensitiveness of this issue.



From a duty to remember... to the right to History?

The UNESCO's Slave Route Project: Resistance, Liberty, Heritage launched this handbook to respond to the imperative of "[forging] a close link between the ethical exigency of preserving the memory of the slave trade, which historians now consider to be 'the biggest single tragedy in the history of man on account of its scope and duration', and the current requirements of economic and social development" (Accra Declaration on the Joint UNESCO-UNWTO Cultural Tourism Programme on the Slave Route, 1995). The Accra declaration also advises States "to make an inventory, evaluation, appraisal of the sites, monuments, and records in their territories".

While all of them bear witness to a world history, many sites today belong to the common heritage of humanity because of their inclusion on UNESCO's Heritage List. The UNESCO's Slave Route Project encourages States not only to identify, assess, restore, preserve and promote their memorial sites and itineraries, but also to identify the heritage sites considered to be of Outstanding Universal Value. The project also grants a label, "Site of memory associated to the Slave Route", to encourage the identification and recognition of sites and places with a particular significance.



Le Morne Cultural landscape, Mauritius
© Jasmina Sopova / UNESCO

How to respond to the new demands for memory tourism and places of memory ?

In recent decades, several needs have emerged that require an adjustment to memory responses:

- The new trend for seeking family origins and genealogy research.
- The involvement of local communities in the interpretation, protection and development of this heritage.
- The growth of cultural tourism centered mainly on the discovery and knowledge of the history and culture of a country which allows development of radically different offering from that aimed at mass tourism and leisure markets.
- The discovery of new sites related to specific aspects of this history.



It is essential for the field of memorial sites linked to the slave trade and slavery to be open to new dynamics, to become stronger in terms of geographical coverage, in-depth historical research, repossession of the history and mobilization of new audiences. However, new memorial sites and monuments must be carefully managed.

To that end, it is important to revisit the concepts, redefine the cultural and ethical challenges, build capacities for managing sites, develop professional networks, develop lively interactive activities and regularly assess the experiences and practices.

This is the ultimate goal of this Guide that UNESCO has developed following extensive consultation of experts and professionals involved in the study, preservation, promotion and management of sites and places of memory.

The Slave Route:

Resistance, Liberty, Heritage

<https://en.unesco.org/slave-route-project>

#slaveroute

UNESCO

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