

The national value of UNESCO designations to the
United Kingdom

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methodology. UK00003373610



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Introduction

A key measure of the wider value of UNESCO designations to the UK is their contribution to the internationally agreed United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The UK National Commission for UNESCO survey has found that the UK's UNESCO designations are adding to the fulfilment of the SDGs in the UK and beyond through a diverse range of projects and programmes. Based on the designations' own assessment, the survey identifies key trends in designations' contribution to the SDGs which complement UNESCO's global priorities and reflect their focus on conservation, research, education, capacity building, management and planning.

However, the survey also confirms that many designations are struggling to fulfil their potential. The different geographical, political and financial environments in which UK designations are operating significantly affect their approach and ability to pursue their objectives and, in turn, their contribution to the 2030 Agenda.

In this chapter, we summarise how UNESCO has positioned its programmes globally to engage with the SDGs, illustrate the contribution of designations in the UK using the survey data and case studies, and offer suggestions for how designations could be further supported to align their work with the SDGs and generate resources to help maximise their impact.

The SDGs

In September 2015, United Nations Member States unanimously agreed on an ambitious new blueprint for peace and prosperity for all people and the planet.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development marked a critical turning point in the international development landscape – it is the first time that world leaders have pledged common action across such a broad and universal policy agenda.

Building on the lessons of the previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDGs are the culmination of many years of international collaboration overseen by UN agencies, including UNESCO. The goals seek to truly galvanise worldwide action to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable development.

The bold framework for action is based on shared ethical principles: the right to development for every country; human rights and social inclusion; convergence of living standards across countries; and shared responsibilities and opportunities. These are translated into 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets with indicators that are forming the backbone of global and national development action until 2030.¹²⁶

However, the international community has recognised that progress towards achieving the SDGs is currently too slow. The UN General Assembly Resolution of October 2019 acknowledges that advances have been made but also calls for a renewed programme of holistic action across UN bodies.

We recognize the urgent need to accelerate action on all levels and by all stakeholders, in order to fulfil the vision and Goals of the 2030 Agenda....we need to do more and faster.¹²⁷



¹²⁶ UNESCO. (2019). Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Retrieved from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

¹²⁷ Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly (RES/74/4) Oct 2019

UNESCO's Global Role

UNESCO was actively involved in the development of the 2030 Sustainability Agenda and has a unique role to play in its delivery.

Through its normative and standard-setting functions, programmes, policy advice, and a worldwide network of designations, UNESCO contributes to the achievement of nine SDGs¹²⁹ and is the custodian of seven SDG targets and indicators.¹²⁹

This unique contribution to the monitoring and delivery of the SDGs was recognised in the recent international Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network's (MOPAN) assessment of UNESCO's performance: "UNESCO is unique for having the mandate and space to bring together experts, practitioners, citizens and governments to develop solutions to the global problems embedded in the SDGs. It has rare expertise and a degree of authority that enables it to influence governments across the world."

UNESCO has taken significant steps to place the SDGs at the centre of its strategy and programmes. The SDGs are embedded in UNESCO's strategic plan, with tailored indicators for each major programme of work and the majority of UNESCO designations are now required to integrate the SDGs in to their activities and reporting.¹³⁰ Its priority programmes focusing on Africa and gender equality are also inextricably linked to the achievement of the Goals.

¹²⁸ SDG 4 (Education, lead role); SDG 5 (Gender Equality); SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation); SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure); SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities); SDG 13 (Climate Action); SDG 14 Life Below Water); SDG 15 (Life on Land); SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)

¹²⁹ UNESCO. (2019). Working with UNESCO guidebook. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000368533>

¹³⁰ UNESCO. (2019). UNESCO 40 C/5 Strategy Document 2020/21. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000367155>



UNESCO has a clear strategic vision aligned to global normative frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.¹²⁷

→ Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network [MOPAN]

Initial consultations on UNESCO's new strategic framework (which will run from 2022-29) emphasise the importance of UNESCO's role to achieving the SDGs and the need to keep the SDGs at the heart of the organisation's vision and planning. However, there is an understanding that success will require more effective inter-sectoral planning and management.¹³²

National Commissions play a crucial role in helping UNESCO to deliver the 2030 Agenda at the national and local level and aid cross-sector dialogue. They build and strengthen the relationship between UNESCO's strategic lead and the work of designations on the ground and could help to increase the opportunities for designations to work together.

¹³¹ UNESCO. (2019). 40 C/5, volume 1: Draft Resolutions, second biennium 2020-2021, volume 2: Draft Programme and budget, second biennium: 2020-2021. Retrieved from <http://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/unesco2017-18/>

¹³² UNESCO. (2019). UNESCO towards 2030 and beyond: major challenges and opportunities. Retrieved from https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371398_eng/PDF/371398eng.pdf.multi

UNESCO's Leading Role in Education

UNESCO's centrality to the SDGs is amplified by its lead role in education (SDG 4).

UNESCO was entrusted with the leadership of the Education 2030 agenda through the Incheon Declaration, endorsed by 1,600 participants at the World Education Forum in May 2015.¹³³ In September 2015, the UN Sustainable Development Summit committed to SDG 4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' – with seven targets and three means of implementation. The Education 2030 Framework for Action, which was adopted by UNESCO Member States in November 2015, outlines how to translate global commitments into practice at the national, local and global level.¹³⁴

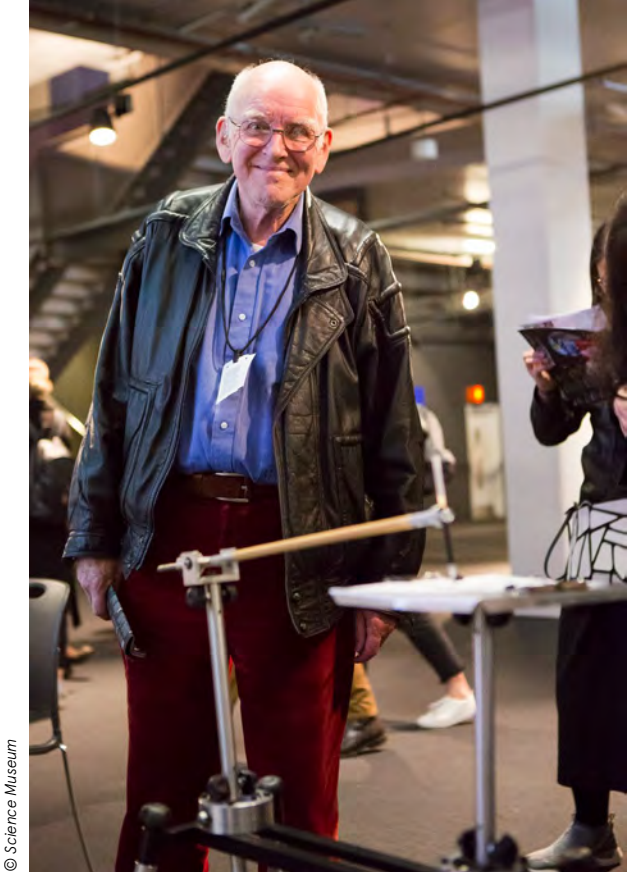
The key role of education in delivering the other SDGs was recognised in the original Incheon Declaration:

“Our vision is to transform lives through education, recognising the important role of education as a main driver of development and in achieving the other proposed SDGs.”

→ Incheon Declaration

¹³³ UNESCO. (2019). Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656>

¹³⁴ UNESCO. (2019). Education 2030 Framework for Action. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656>



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Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is recognised as a key element of quality education and a crucial enabler for sustainable development. Target 4.7 of SDG 4 on education specifically addresses ESD and related approaches.

UNESCO's Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD, the follow-up programme to the Decade of ESD (2005-2014), seeks to generate and scale-up ESD and to accelerate progress towards sustainable development. It aims to contribute substantially to the 2030 agenda through:

- Reorienting education and learning so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to a sustainable future.
- Strengthening education and learning in all agendas, programmes and activities that promote sustainable development.¹³⁵

The Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, hosted and published by UNESCO, provides independent monitoring and reporting on SDG 4. The report aims to inform and influence national and international policies in education by reviewing progress and offering a balanced analysis of the most critical challenges facing countries and other stakeholders. UNESCO's lead role in promoting and monitoring education (SDG 4) places it at the nexus of the 2030 Agenda.

¹³⁵ UNESCO. (2019). Education for Sustainable Development. Retrieved from <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development>



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Inclusion of Culture in the SDGs

UNESCO was also instrumental in ensuring that, for the first time in history, the vital role of culture in achieving sustainable development was formally recognised in the international development agenda.

A leading voice in demonstrating the importance of culture to sustainable development in the years running up to the agreement of the 2030 Agenda, UNESCO helped to realise the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions on integrating culture into development (in 2010 and 2011), which called for the mainstreaming of culture into development policies and strategies.

Although culture is not given its own specific goal, the 2030 Agenda includes the protection and safeguarding of the world’s cultural and natural heritage as an identified target in SDG 11.¹³⁶ Culture is also directly mentioned in the targets associated with SDG 4 (Education)¹³⁷ and recognised as a driver and enabler of many of the other goals, including creating decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), reducing inequalities (SDG 10), promoting peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16), and gender equality (SDG 5).

As the only United Nations agency with a mandate for culture, UNESCO is centrally placed to lead on the implementation of culture in the 2030 Agenda and the associated New Urban Agenda. Adopted by the United Nations in 2016, the New Urban Agenda places special emphasis on the role of culture in building sustainable cities. With projections of up to 70% of the world’s population living in cities by the year 2050, UNESCO developed the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR). UNESCO and ICCAR helped to secure the agreement of the New Urban Agenda by the UN Conference for Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III).

Continued on the next spread...

¹³⁶ 11.4: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage

¹³⁷ 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development



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Skinny Pelembe at York Mediale 2018, York Creative City of Media Arts

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The New Urban Agenda sits alongside and complements the Sustainable Development Goals, articulating a vision for sustainable urban development with inclusion, human rights and freedom from all forms of discrimination in cities as cross-cutting themes.¹³⁸

There is a danger that the diffuse nature of the references to culture in the 2030 framework could limit its ability to deliver or demonstrate impact, but UNESCO is taking steps to help give concrete shape to the culture agenda and develop meaningful indicators to measure progress.

Crucial to UNESCO’s leadership are its six key Culture Conventions, including the 1972 World Heritage Convention, which governs the activities of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The Conventions are implemented through a variety of mechanisms including operational guidelines and directives, technical assistance, periodic reporting and monitoring, capacity-building programmes, projects in the field, and elaborating and adapting cultural policies and measures.

All UNESCO Culture Conventions have now incorporated the relevant SDGs within their implementation and monitoring mechanisms and identified specific SDGs or targets to be integrated into their results framework.¹³⁹

The centrality of culture to the most pressing challenges facing humanity has also been embedded in UNESCO’s budget, management, and strategic plans. The current strategic plan includes cross-cutting objectives for the culture programme, accompanied by tailored indicators for the different sectors within it, including World Heritage Sites and Creative Cities.

¹³⁸ Habitat III.(2019).The New Urban Agenda. Retrieved from <http://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda>

¹³⁹ In its Medium-Term Strategy (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/bureau-of-strategic-planning/resources/medium-term-strategy-c4/>), UNESCO recognises that heritage is inextricably linked to the most pressing challenges facing humanity: climate change and natural disasters, loss of biodiversity, safe water, conflicts, unequal access to food, education and health, migration, urbanization, social marginalization and economic inequalities.

Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey including Saint Margaret's Church World Heritage Site



@philipp_pley

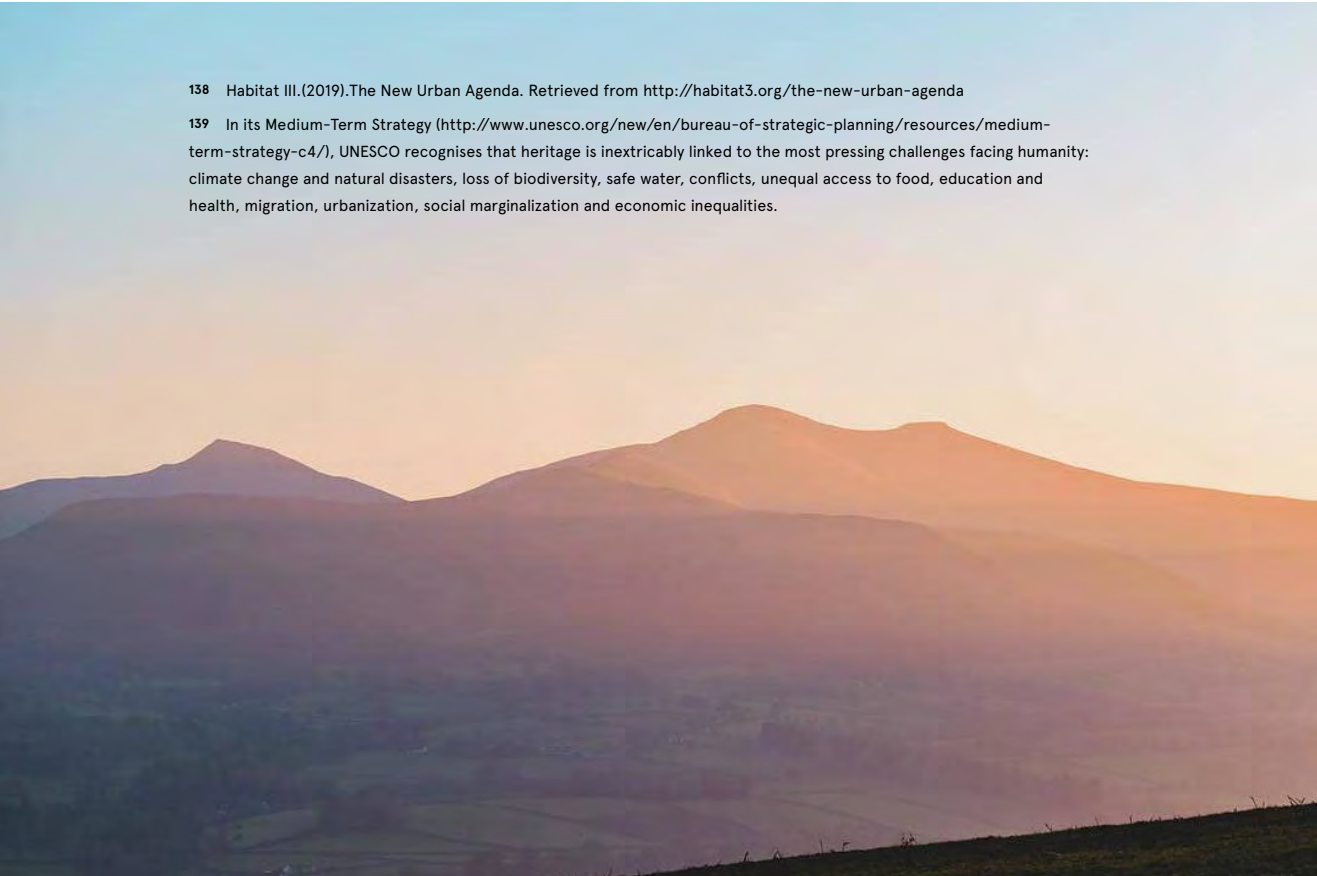
The enabling contribution of culture to the SDGs is promoted, demonstrated and strengthened, in particular

through its integration in country-level development frameworks, strategies and programmes, and effective streamlining of the SDGs across the implementation of cultural policies and frameworks, including Conventions and Recommendations.¹⁴⁰

→ UNESCO Strategic Objective, Culture Programme

¹⁴⁰ UNESCO strategy document 40 C/5

Fforest Fawr Global Geopark



@sianlyd



Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)

UNESCO's global lead on the SDGs is also incorporated into the work of its Natural Sciences programme. The IOC is the recognised UN body leading global co-operation on ocean science and the delivery of the standalone SDG 14, calling for the sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources.

The IOC is the custodian for two SDG 14 targets and related indicators: ocean acidification (Target 14.3) and marine scientific research (Target 14.A). IOC also provides technical support and advice to UN Environment, responsible for the development of the indicator methodologies for Target 14.1 and 14.2. The upcoming UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), will also provide Member States with the enabling framework to achieve the SDG 14 targets by fostering scientific research and technological innovation toward a healthier, more sustainable ocean.¹⁴¹

The Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) is co-custodian of target 6.5.2 on transboundary water cooperation, together with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The IHP has created the IHP Fund for its contribution to the implementation of SDG 6. The fund is designed to enable the IHP to support Member States' requests for research and actions that support their implementation of SDG 6 related targets.

UNESCO can make a significant contribution to the huge challenges posed by climate change and the achievement of the associated SDG 13 (Combat Climate Change) through its science policies and programmes on biodiversity, water, and the ocean. Opportunities for designations to contribute may be enhanced by giving greater priority to SDG 13 and recognising its inter-sectoral nature in future strategies.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ UNESCO. (2019). Measuring progress on SDG 14 indicators. Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/ioc-oceans/single-view-oceans/news/measuring-progress-on-sdg-14-indicators/>

¹⁴² In its Medium-Term Strategy (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/bureau-of-strategic-planning/resources/medium-term-strategy-c4/>), UNESCO recognises that heritage is inextricably linked to the most pressing challenges facing humanity: climate change and natural disasters, loss of biodiversity, safe water, conflicts, unequal access to food, education and health, migration, urbanization, social marginalization and economic inequalities.



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The UK's input to the IHP is led by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in Wallingford which represents the UK on the IHP's intergovernmental committee. The Centre also coordinates the UK Committee for International Hydrology which includes representatives from the UK's UNESCO Category 2 Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science in Dundee.

UNESCO is monitoring global progress towards three SDGs through its global reporting in the Science Report (SDG 9), Global Ocean Science Report (SDG 14) and the United Nations World Water Development Report (SDG 6).

National Contexts

National Contexts Influence the Contribution of UNESCO Designations to the SDGs.

As well as being shaped by UNESCO's global lead, UK designations' contribution to the SDGs is also influenced by their national context. The Department for International Development (DFID) within the UK Government provides overall leadership and policy oversight of the 2030 Agenda, and each government department has embedded the Goals in their single departmental plan.

However, some key areas of government policy which directly relate to the SDGs and the work of UNESCO designations are devolved to the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Governments, including education, tourism, culture and heritage, environment and planning, and agriculture, food and fisheries.

The Welsh Government has taken the pioneering step of putting sustainable development into national legislation. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015¹⁴³ localises the 17 Goals into domestic legislation through Wales' own seven sustainable development goals and established an independent Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. At a local level, partnerships have been formed to plan and deliver long term change through Public Services Boards. UNESCO designations in Wales could play a significant role in helping to shape local activities which support the delivery of the seven goals.

¹⁴³ Legislation.Gov.UK. (2019). Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/contents/enacted>

Shetland Global Geopark



@lunivuk



In Scotland, the National Performance Framework¹⁴⁴ is the overall mechanism for delivering and reporting on the Goals. The NPF is underpinned by law and is intended to inform discussion, collaboration and planning of policies and services across Scotland. NPF embeds the Goals through mapping to the National Outcomes and has created the SDG Network Scotland – an open coalition which brings together over 300 people and organisations. It is highly desirable that the UNESCO designations in Scotland should be represented in this network.

Northern Ireland has incorporated the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – into the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) strategic plans. This has resulted in the principles of sustainable development being embedded in the Northern Ireland Executive's highest-level strategy, the draft Programme for Government (PfG).¹⁴⁵

There is also great potential for Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies to incorporate the SDGs in to their own policies.

¹⁴⁴ Scottish Government. (2019). National Performance Framework. Retrieved from <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>

¹⁴⁵ The Executive Office. (2019). Programme for Government/Outcomes Delivery Plan. Retrieved from <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/making-government-work/programme-governmentoutcomes-delivery-plan>

Monitoring the SDGs

In addition to the 17 Goals, the SDG agenda includes 169 Global Targets and 244 Global Indicators.

The indicators are designed to be used as measures of progress towards the targets and goals – fulfilment of the indicators will be the ultimate test of how successful the international community has been in delivering the ambitious 2030 Agenda. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has overall responsibility for collating SDG-related data in the UK, working with other national reporting mechanisms that have been established. ONS data is reported on the ONS National Reporting Platform.¹⁴⁶

Led by the Department for International Development and using ONS data, the UK Government also published its own National Voluntary Review of progress towards the SDGs in June 2019.¹⁴⁷

UNESCO UK designations should be encouraged and enabled to engage in these reporting mechanisms and ensure their activities are linked to the appropriate indicators. It is also vital that the role of culture in helping to deliver the SDGs is captured and represented in ONS data. If not, bodies like UNESCO UK designations are and will be under-represented and undervalued. Although there is an indicator for target 11.4 which measures how much each country spends per capita to protect their cultural and natural heritage, the wider role of culture as an enabler and driver of sustainable development cannot be fully measured in the SDG indicators.

¹⁴⁶ Github. (2019). Sustainable Development Goals. Retrieved from <https://sustainabledevelopment-uk.github.io/>

¹⁴⁷ GOV.UK. (2019). UK's Voluntary National Review of the Sustainable Development Goals. Retrieved from. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uks-voluntary-national-review-of-the-sustainable-development-goals>

To help address this, UNESCO is in the process of developing the UNESCO Thematic Indicators for Culture (Culture|2030 Indicators). These build on previous work, including the Culture for Development Indicators Suite – a study in 17 countries which sought to assess the contribution of culture to the MDGs. The framework will draw upon other reporting mechanisms where possible, such as the periodic reporting required by Member States who are signatories to the relevant culture Conventions.

With 22 indicators grouped into four themes, the framework is due to be rolled out in 2020, following the conclusion of a pilot phase in volunteer countries and cities. It will sit alongside the existing indicator for SDG target 11.4, but it will enable the measurement of culture's contribution to the SDGs on a broader scale.

Member States have been consulted on the indicator framework which, for the first time, provides the opportunity for the international community to gather meaningful data on how culture is driving and enabling the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. As part of this process, there is an opportunity for UK and devolved Governments to consider aligning indicators for their heritage sector with the relevant SDG indicators and to review how their statistical frameworks are measured, to capture the full extent of the UK's contribution.

With its strong connection to civil society, universities and UNESCO, the UK National Commission could potentially serve as the body which leads on ensuring the UK fulfils its culture obligations under the SDGs.

Role of UNESCO Designations

UNESCO’s leadership at the global level is reflected in the work of designations who should also align their activities with the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Recognising the essential, practical, role of its designations, UNESCO is taking steps to integrate sustainable development criteria into its vision and management through the relevant Conventions and Recommendations, strategic plans and reporting mechanisms.

Through our survey of designations in the UK, the UK National Commission for UNESCO has developed an initial overview of how UNESCO designations feel they are already contributing to the 2030 Agenda.

In addition to gathering case studies and interviews, we asked representatives from UNESCO designations to assess what level of contribution they feel their designation is making towards the SDGs,¹⁴⁸ taking into consideration their activities and partners. Respondents rated their level of contribution from 1–5 using a Likert scale (with 1 representing no contribution and 5 representing high contribution).¹⁴⁹

- **Graph A** shows the stacked average contribution of the eight designation types across all 17 Goals.
- **Graph B** illustrates the relative contribution of each designation type as a percentage, across the 17 Goals.
- **Graphs 1–17** provide more detail, illustrating the average contribution of each designation type to each of the 17 SDGs

¹⁴⁸ A Likert scale is a qualitative assessment which asks people to rate how they feel about something. It usually uses a numeric scale (eg 0–5), with a choice of standard responses for each question

¹⁴⁹ Survey question: Based on the designation’s activities and partnerships, please rank the designation’s contribution to, or impact on the 17 United Nations SDGs, where 1 is not important, or no impact and 5 is very important or high impact.



This initial aggregate data does not measure the detailed absolute impact of UK designations concerning the SDGs. Furthermore, designations are engaged in monitoring and reporting exercises spearheaded by UNESCO, public bodies and their national governments.

However, the data does help to paint a picture of what is already taking place, alluding to key trends concerning the contribution of UNESCO designations in the UK to the SDGs. By comparing their relative contribution, it highlights the potential of UNESCO designations in the UK to engage further with Agenda 2030, identifies areas where designations may benefit from further support and could be the basis of further studies.

Graph A: UNESCO Designations in the UK:
perceived contribution to the United Nations
Sustainable Development Goals



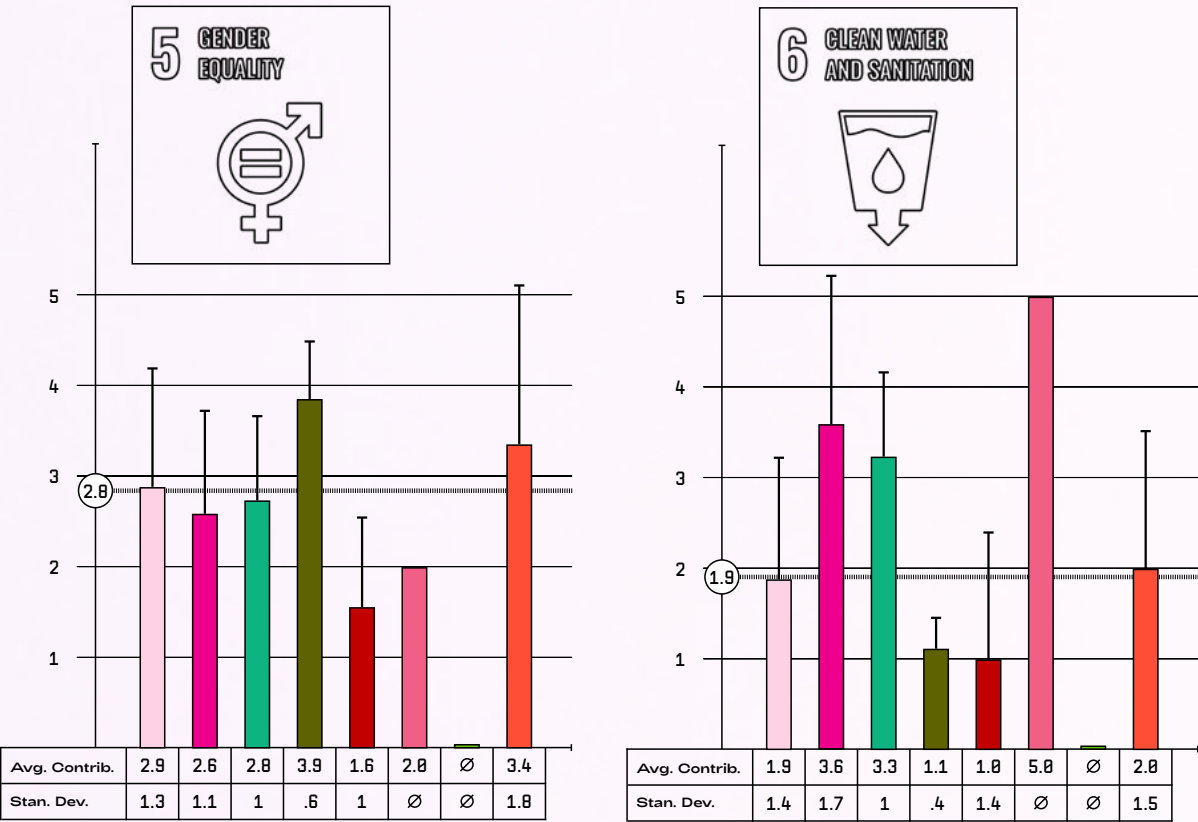
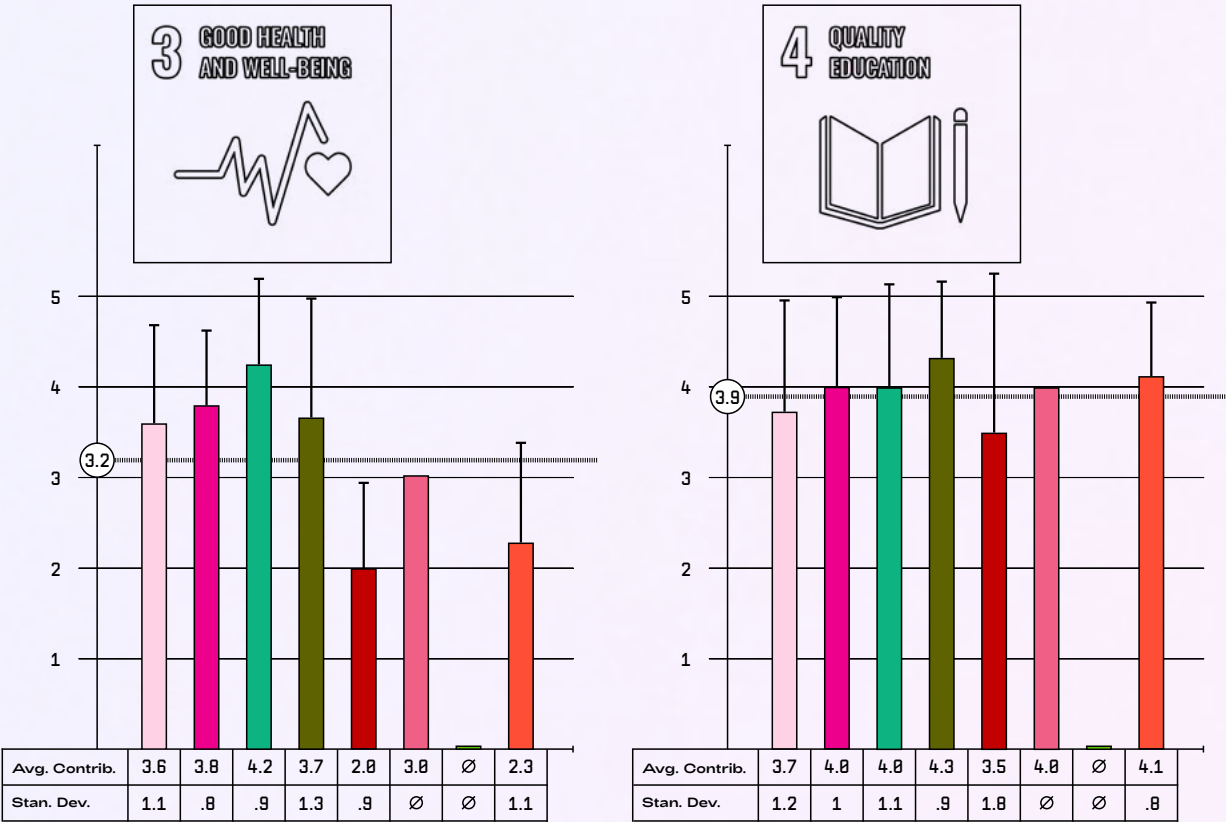
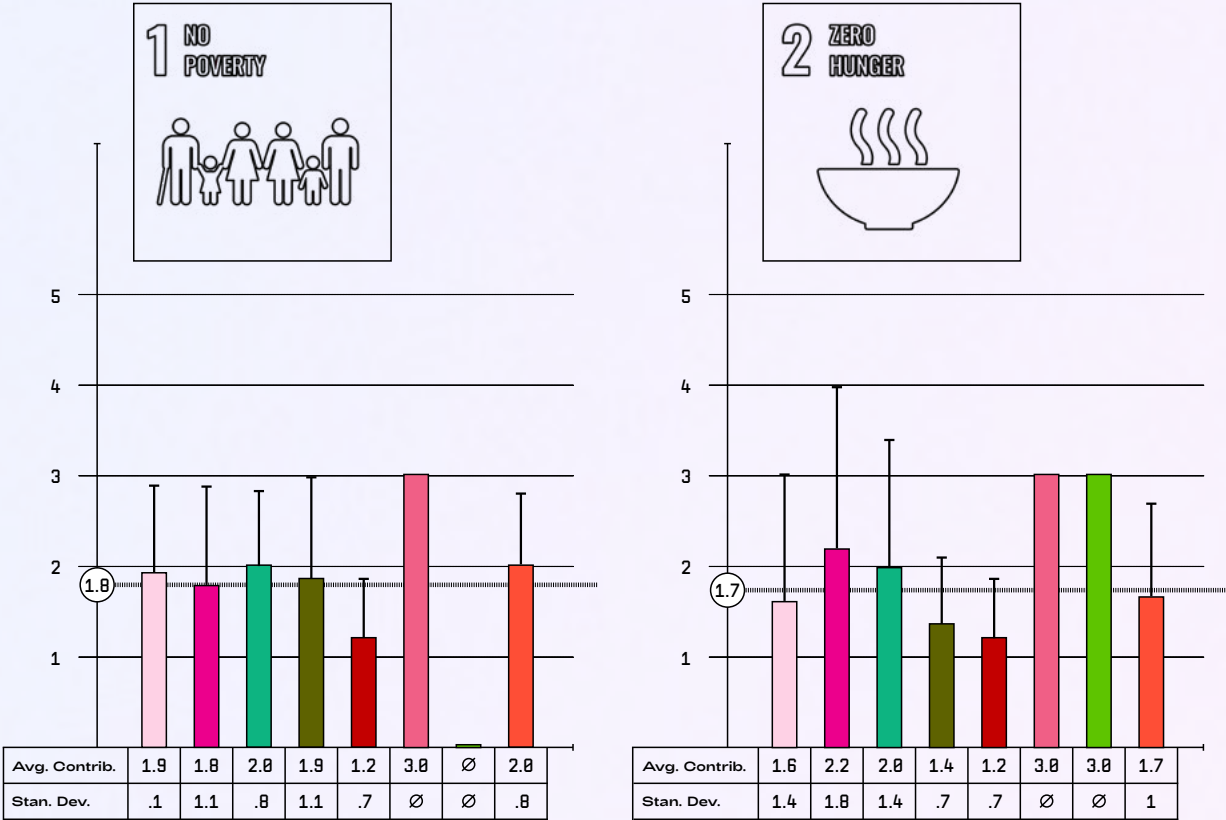
Scale:

1 = no contribution
5 = fully contribute

A NOTE ON THE ANALYSIS

The key findings are taken from Graph A and Graphs 1-17 which illustrate the average contribution of the designations to the SDGs. The number of designations is not equal across the different designation types so using the mean average provides a more consistent representation of contribution across designation type. For example, 23 World Heritage Sites (out of 31) responded to the survey compared to 5 (out of 7) Biosphere Reserves and 1 (out of 1) for the IHP and IOC. If all World Heritage Sites feel they are making little or no contribution to SDG X this would provide a total of 23. If IHP feels it is making a full contribution to the same SDG this would appear as a total of 5. It is therefore important to provide an average to accurately compare the levels of contribution.

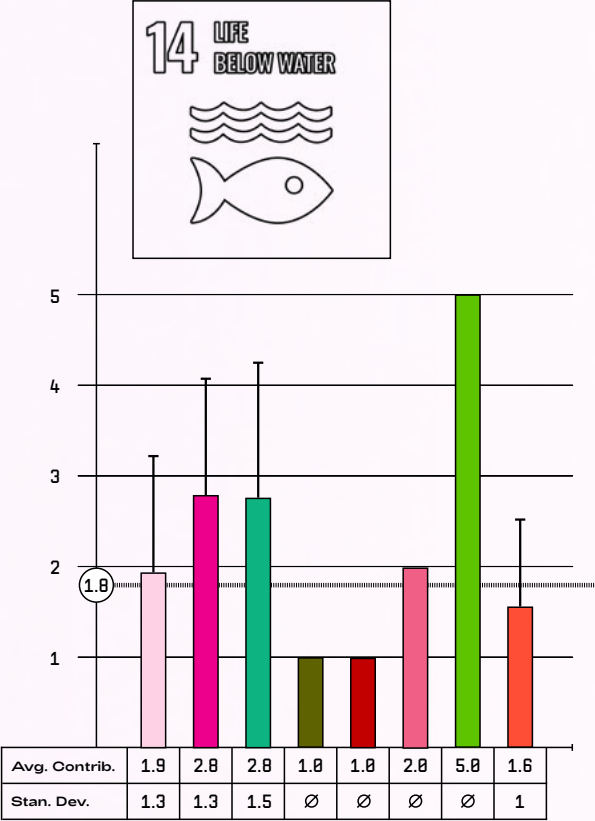
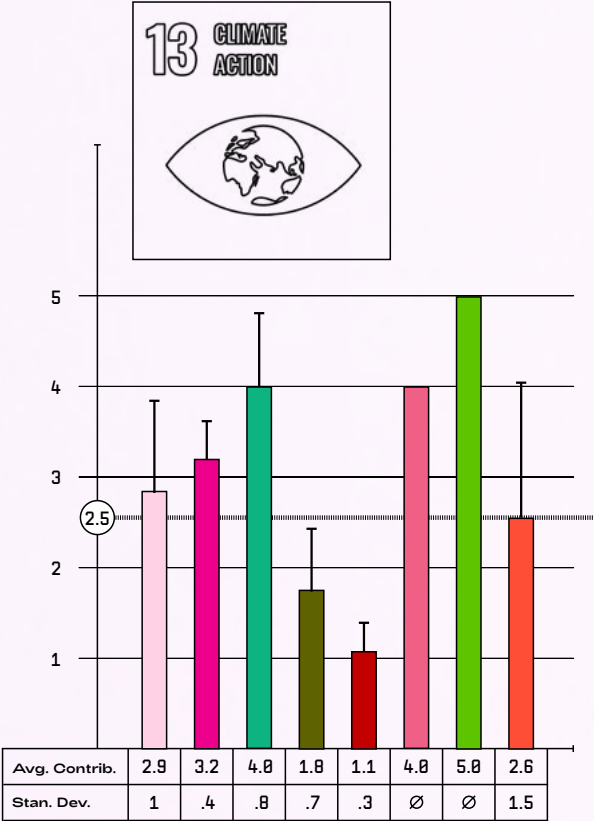
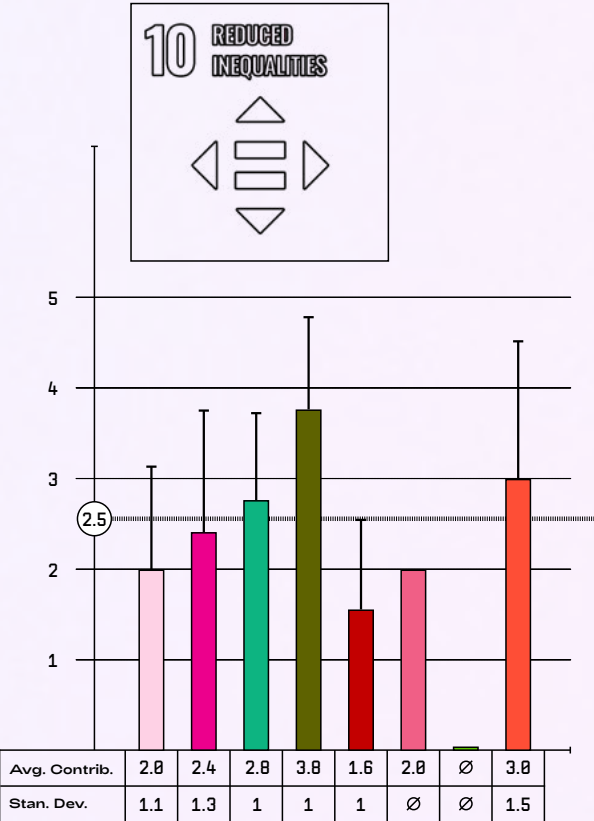
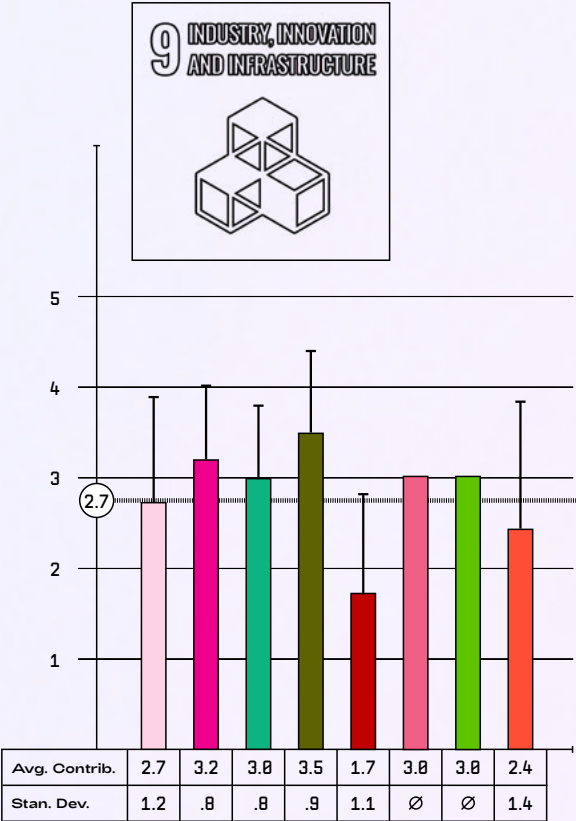
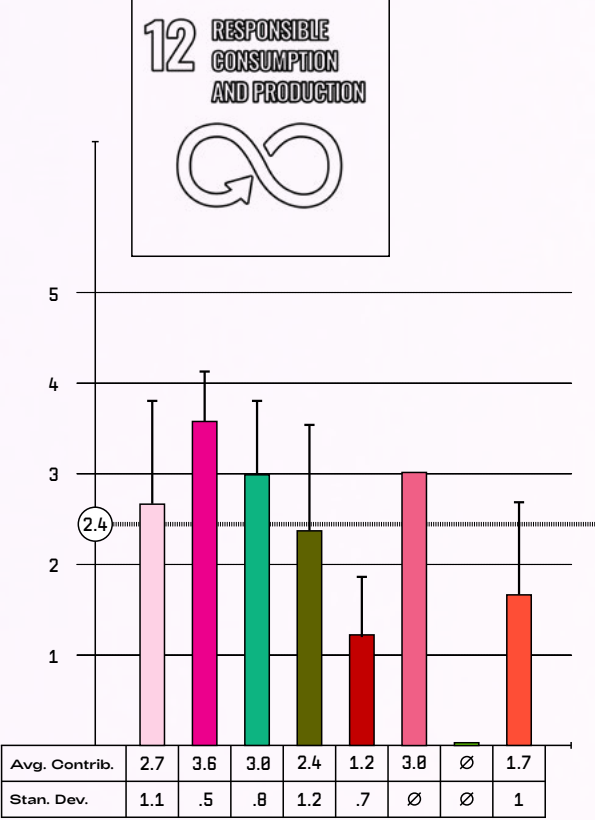
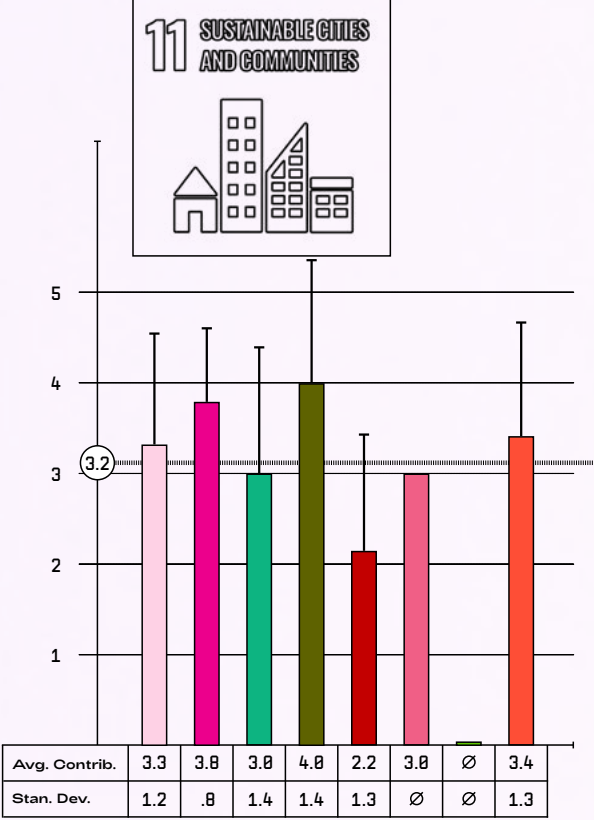
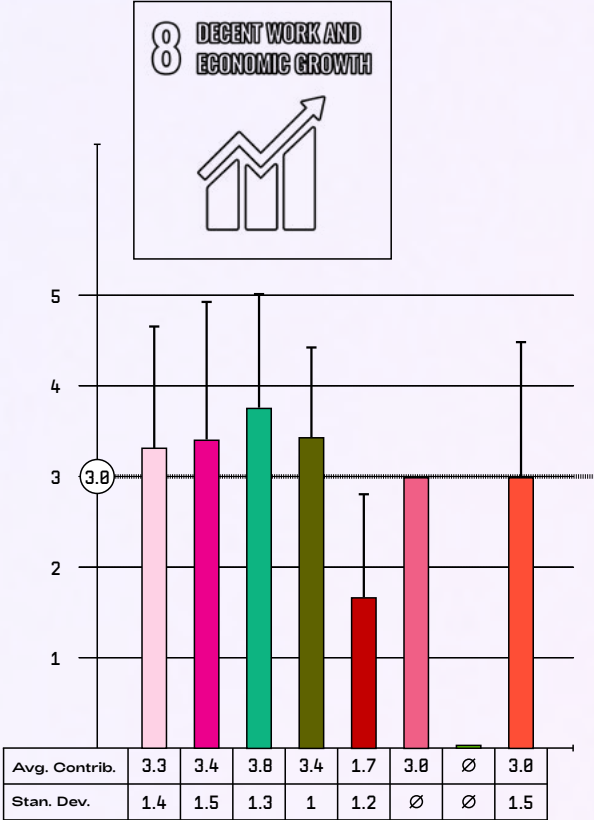
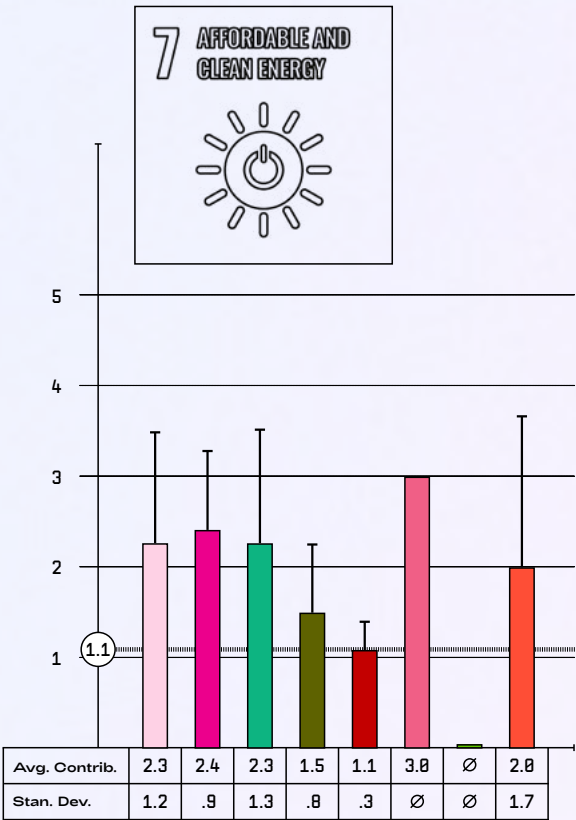
Graphs 1-17: Individual SDG graphs



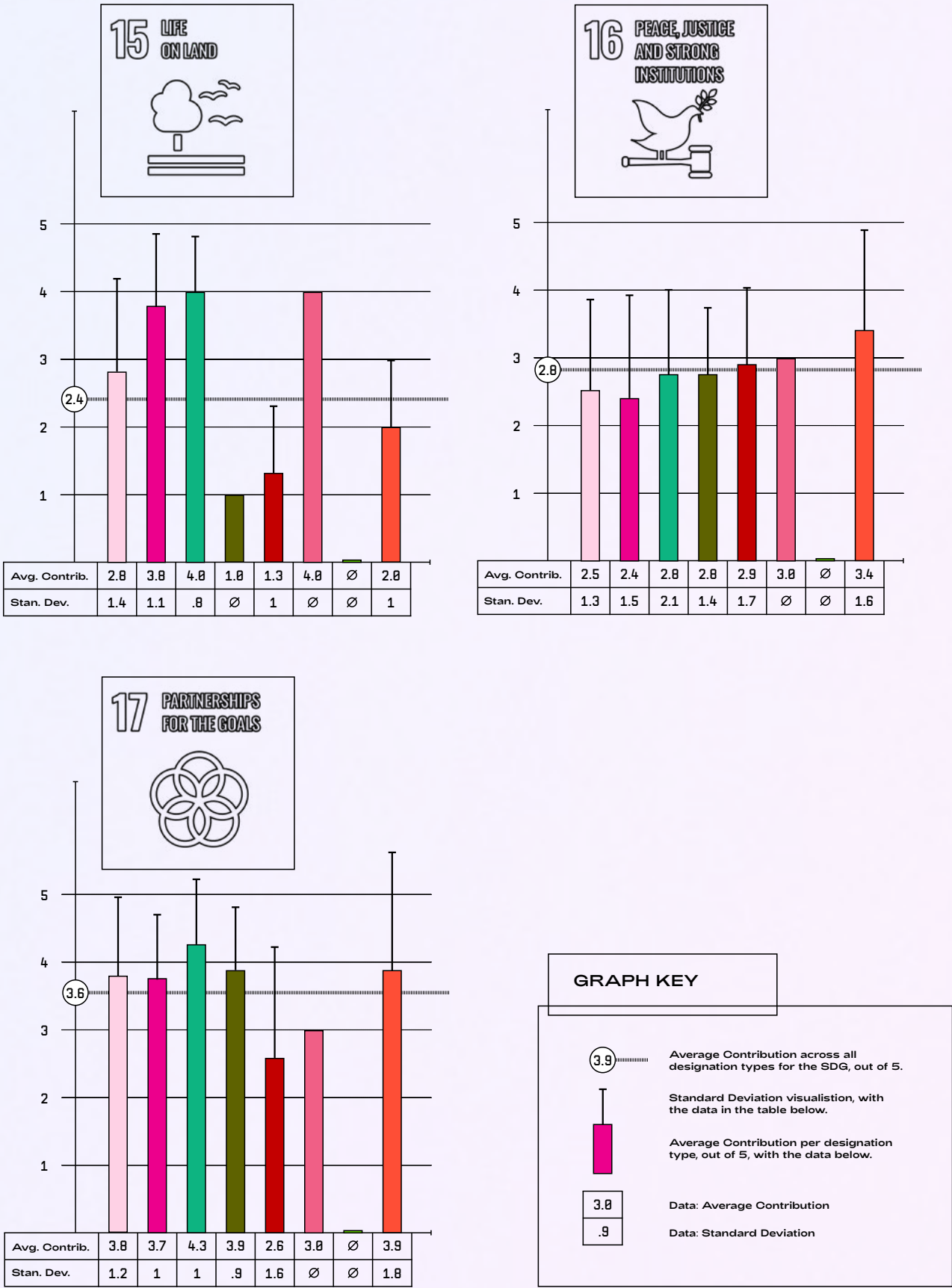
The 17 individual SDG graphs provide an overview of how UNESCO designation types feel they are contributing to each SDG on average.

- **The horizontal dotted line** on each graph represents the average across all designation types for that SDG.
- **The vertical lines** indicate the individual standard deviation for each UNESCO designation category. The standard deviation shows the average distance of individual designations from the average contribution within their respective designation type. For example, the average contribution of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves to SDG 6, Clean Water and Sanitation is 3.6. The 5 individual responses from Biosphere Reserves for this SDG ranged from 1 to 5. The standard deviation (1.67) is the average of how much the individual Biosphere Reserves deviated from the 3.6 average for their designation as a whole. There is no standard deviation for IOC or IHP as we had one response for each.

Graphs 1-17: Individual SDG graphs



Graphs 1-17: Individual SDG graphs



The focus of UK designations mirrors UNESCO’s global priorities on the SDGs.

The data illustrates the following three overall groupings of Goals:

- **Group 1:** Quality Education (SDG 4); Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17) and Action on Climate Change (SDG 13) emerge as the Goals with which UNESCO designations in the UK feel their work is most closely aligned.
- **Group 2:** The SDGs where UK designations feel there is the least alignment are No Poverty (SDG 1), Zero Hunger (SDG 2) and Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7) (although there are disparities between designations).
- **Group 3:** The SDGs where there is strong alignment and potential to contribute more are Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3); Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8); Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9); Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) and Life Below Water (SDG 14).

These results closely reflect the global priorities set by UNESCO and identified in this chapter. SDG 4 (Quality Education) receives a 3.5+ contribution rating across all the designation types, (with the majority contributing 4+) in line with UNESCO’s global lead in this area. The emergence of Action on Climate Change (SDG 13) as a key Goal for UK designations would reinforce UNESCO’s discussions about making this Goal a cross-cutting priority for the organisation in its future strategic plan.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ UNESCO. (2019). UNESCO towards 2030 and beyond: major challenges and opportunities. Retrieved from https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371398_eng/PDF/371398eng.pdf.multi



Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site

The high contribution of UK designations to SDG 17 (Partnerships) reflects their community-based approach, management structures and collaborative ways of working. As inherently partnership-based entities, UK UNESCO designations embody UNESCO’s understanding in its Partnership Strategy that “...partnerships with public and non-public actors are crucial for achieving internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals...”¹⁵¹

The lower levels of reported contribution to SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) reflects UNESCO’s mandate and supports the view that, to some extent, these Goals are over-arching and underpinned by the achievement of many of the other Goals. UK designations are also working in a UK context. Although some have an international focus, including working with developing countries, their purpose and priorities are less likely to be directed primarily towards immediate poverty and hunger.

¹⁵¹ UNESCO. (2019). UNESCO towards 2030 and beyond: major challenges and opportunities. Retrieved from https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371398_eng/PDF/371398eng.pdf.multi

Creative Cities and UNESCO Chairs feel they are able to contribute to SDG 5 (Gender Equality), rating it above 3 on average. For example, the UNESCO Chair in Gender Research, City University of London (previously at Lancaster) has conducted pioneering research on gender and violence since 2008. As gender is a key priority for UNESCO as well as a specific Goal within the SDGs, there may be opportunities to work with other UK designations to strengthen their contribution to this Goal.

It’s important to note however that these aggregate figures disguise some important variations in contribution across and within designations. For example:

- The IHP makes a maximum contribution (5) to SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) followed by Biosphere Reserves (3.6) and Geoparks (3.25). The focus of other designations in the UK means SDG 6 scores lower overall but UK designations are still making a significant contribution.
- The same is true for SDG 14 (Life Below Water) which receives a full contribution from the IOC but is a lower priority for other designations due to their mandate and focus.
- Life on Land (SDG 15) is a significant focus for the IHP (4), Biosphere Reserves (3.8) and Global Geoparks (4). However, it receives a lower overall contribution than other Goals where the total contribution is higher but each individual designation average is lower than 3.8 (eg SDG 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth).

The average figures also can’t capture the depth and detail of projects being carried out by individual designations. The case studies further on in this section help to demonstrate that while some SDGs might not score highly overall, individual designations might be making their own very valuable contribution.

Key Finding

n°01

SUMMARY

SDGS Designations feel the

Most Aligned to:



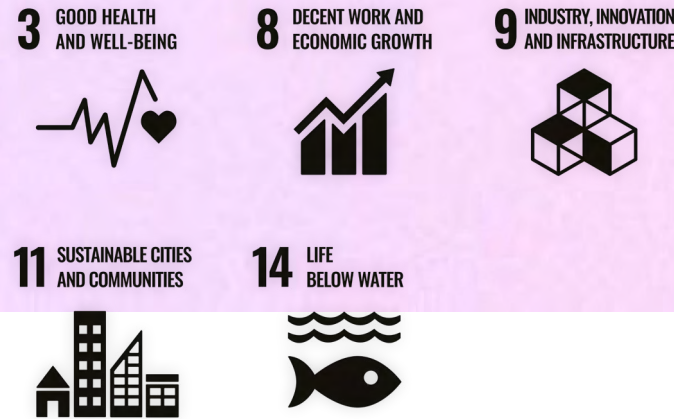
SDGs Designations feel the

Least Aligned to:



SDGS Designations feel they could

Contribute to more:



There may be scope for designations to work more closely together on the SDGs.

The data helps us to identify synergies in the focus of work being done by UK UNESCO designations, including which ones are most closely aligned to which SDGs. For example:

- There may be scope for different designations to learn from and enhance each other's contribution to the SDGs on Education and Action on Climate Change.
- Global Geoparks, Creative Cities, World Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserves all contribute to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and the Goal receives the 6th highest combined average contribution. The UK Government's Taking Part Survey adds impetus to the potential for designations in this field: 77% of adults in England reported engaging with the arts in the year 2018/19 and just under 75% had visited a heritage site.¹⁵² There may be more that UK designations could do to promote their benefit to health and well-being or opportunities for designations in the same area to build their profile in relation to this Goal.

There could be a role for the United Kingdom National Commission (UKNC) to help build the capacity of designations and facilitate networking. This could be supported at global level by UNESCO through more inter-sectoral planning and dialogue. Strategic alliances between designations could enhance their contribution to the Goals and their ability to attract resources.

Further research is needed as to what form this support might take and what the possibilities are for designations to learn from each other's work and possibly forge joint projects or partnerships.

¹⁵² GOV.UK. (2018). Taking Part: Statistical Releases. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sat--2>

There is scope to enhance the contribution of some UNESCO designations in the UK to the SDGs

The survey data points to some designations being in a stronger position than others to fully utilise their potential to contribute to the SDGs. This was reinforced in our conversations with designations; while most have a good understanding of how they could contribute to the UK's 2030 obligations, resource constraints, low profile and insufficient support can make it hard to fulfil that role successfully.

There may be scope for the UK National Commission for UNESCO to help other designations fully align their work with those strategic SDGs which are a high priority for UNESCO and the global community but are currently not strongly aligned with designations across the UK.

© Lake District World Heritage Site



@will.holligan

“When we talk to the management organisation of the North Coast 500, we tend to say ‘just keep pushing that it’s a UNESCO designation’. We know it’s special. The UN know it’s special. Let’s talk about that more. Let’s communicate that more. We need to use that. We don’t just keep it as a passive label, we have to use it actively to educate people about how unique, and how fragile this region is. It’s an ongoing process. All of the reasons that we have a UNESCO status, people understand those. Can they make that connection to the UNESCO brand? I am not sure that they can do that, yet. But we don’t record this, we don’t have the capacity to do that, but that’s what we would need to do to understand that question.”

→ Dr Laura Hamlet, Geopark Coordinator at UNESCO Global Geopark North West Highlands



UNESCO World Heritage Sites

As the longest-standing, most numerous site-based, and arguably most prominent of all UNESCO designations, UNESCO World Heritage Sites have the opportunity to contribute extensively to the SDG Agenda.

UNESCO is enabling this process by integrating a sustainable development perspective to the 1972 World Heritage Convention. Adopted by the UNESCO General Assembly in 2015, the World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy calls on Member States to promote World Heritage Sites as innovative models of sustainable development. The policy offers guidance to governments, practitioners, institutions, communities and networks, to help harness the potential of World Heritage Sites to contribute to sustainable development.

“In addition to protecting the OUV of World Heritage properties, States Parties should, therefore, recognise and promote the properties’ inherent potential to contribute to all dimensions of sustainable development and work to harness the collective benefits for society, also by ensuring that their conservation and management strategies are aligned with broader sustainable development objectives. In this process, the properties’ OUV should not be compromised.”¹⁵³

The policy was given further practical definition with the approval at the World Heritage Committee in 2019 of new Operational Guidelines for UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The guidelines embed sustainable development principles into the management and procedural guidelines for the 1,000+ World Heritage Sites in over 160 countries worldwide.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy <https://whc.unesco.org/en/sustainabledevelopment/>

¹⁵⁴ WHC/19/43.COM/11ARevisionoftheOperationalGuidelines:<https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2019/whc19-43com-11A-en.pdf>

The UKNC’s survey identified World Heritage Sites as contributing most strongly to Quality Education (SDG 4), Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3) and Partnerships (SDG 17). In view of the re-focus of the World Heritage strategy at global level it may be possible to improve the contribution of World Heritage Sites to SDG 13 (Combat Climate Change) which is not currently uniformly strong but is a key focus for some World Heritage Sites, as the case study below illustrates.

“The integration of a sustainable development perspective into the World Heritage Convention will enable all stakeholders involved in its implementation, in particular at national level, to act with social responsibility. This process will enhance World Heritage as a global leader and standard-setter for best practice, also by helping to promote through the over 1,000 listed properties worldwide innovative models of sustainable development.” ¹⁵⁵

→ UNESCO Strategic Objective, Culture Programme.

¹⁵⁵ World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy



The List

Scotland

- 1 St Kilda [1986]
- 2 Heart of Neolithic Orkney [1999]
- 3 Frontiers of the Roman Empire Antonine Wall [1987] joint inscription with Hadrian's Wall
- 4 The Forth Bridge [2015]
- 5 Old and New Towns of Edinburgh [1995]
- 6 New Lanark [2001]

England

- 8 Frontiers of the Roman Empire Hadrian's Wall [1987] joint inscription with the Antonine Wall
- 9 Durham Castle and Cathedral [1986]
- 10 The English Lake District [2017]
- 11 Studley Royal Park / Ruins of Fountains Abbey [1986]
- 12 Saltaire [2001]
- 13 Liverpool - Maritime Mercantile City [2004]
- 14 Jodrell Bank Observatory [2019]
- 15 Derwent Valley Mills [2001]
- 16 Ironbridge Gorge [1986]
- 17 Blenheim Palace [1987]
- 18 City of Bath [1987]
- 19 Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites [1986]
- 20 Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape [2006]
- 21 Dorset and East Devon Coast (Jurassic Coast) [2001]
- 22 Canterbury Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey, and St Martin's Church [1988]

Wales

- 27 Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd [1986]
- 28 Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal [2009]
- 29 Blaenavon Industrial Landscape [2000]

Northern Ireland

- 7 Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast [1986]

London

- 23 Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew [2003]
- 24 Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey including Saint Margaret's Church [1987]
- 25 Tower of London [1988]
- 26 Maritime Greenwich [1997]

Overseas Territories

- 30 Gorham's Cave Complex [2016] Gibraltar
- 31 Gough and Inaccessible Islands [1995] South Atlantic Ocean
- 32 Henderson Island [1988] Pitcairn Islands, Pacific Ocean
- 33 Historic Town of St George and Related Fortifications, Bermuda [2000] Bermuda





Natural Sites - Giant's Causeway

© Heikki

Geological Sites - Jurassic Coast

© alouphoto



Prehistoric Sites - Neolithic Orkney

© Luis



© Mark Williamson

Scientific Sites - Jodrell Bank



© Julius Kiehl

Merchant Sites - Liverpool

Architectural Sites - Bath



© ValdisKudre

Engineering Sites - Forth Bridge



© Kruwt



© Kkatka

Breathtaking Art Sites - Painted Hall, Greenwich

Sites of Urban Planning - Saltaire

© Sue Burton





Climate Change and Orkney World Heritage Site

→ Climate Action SDG 13; Quality Education SDG 4

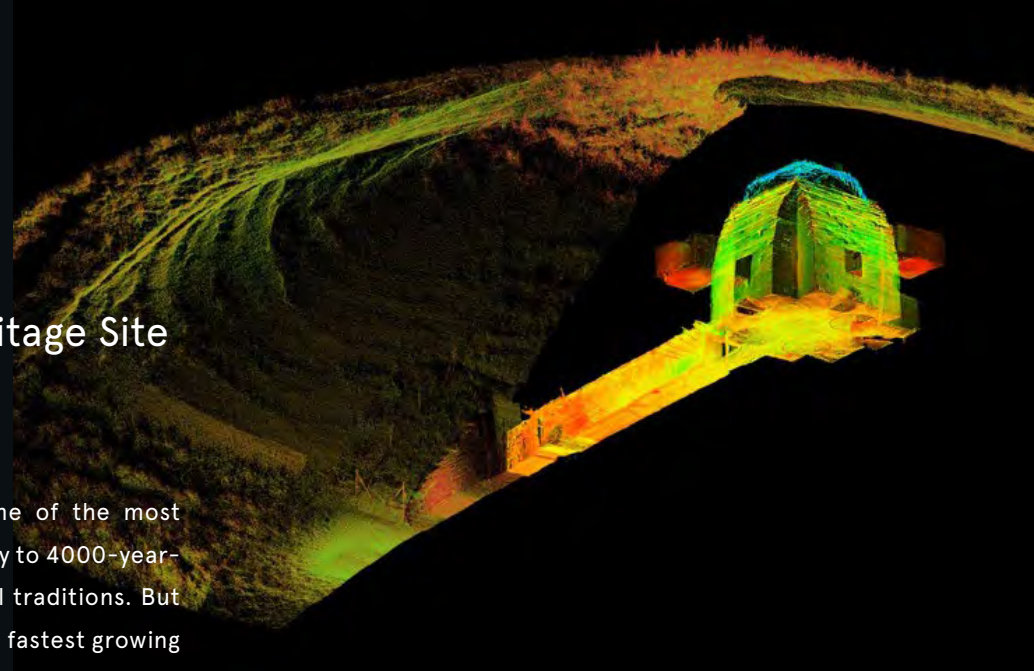
The UNESCO World Heritage Site in Orkney is home to some of the most important Neolithic monuments in northern Europe which testify to 4000-year-old ceremonial, funerary and domestic components of cultural traditions. But its heritage is at risk. Research shows that climate change is the fastest growing global threat to World Heritage. So the designation has taken a pioneering role in assessing the impact of climate change to the Island using a new methodology: the Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI).

Initially developed by James Cook University in Australia and applied to the natural World Heritage Site of Shark Bay, the CVI was supported by the ICOMOS Climate Heritage Working Group and Union of Concerned Scientists US. CVI assesses the threat posed by climate change to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of a Site and also the likely corresponding impacts on the social, economic and cultural values of the associated community as they relate to the World Heritage property. It also considers the community's capacity to adapt to these impacts.

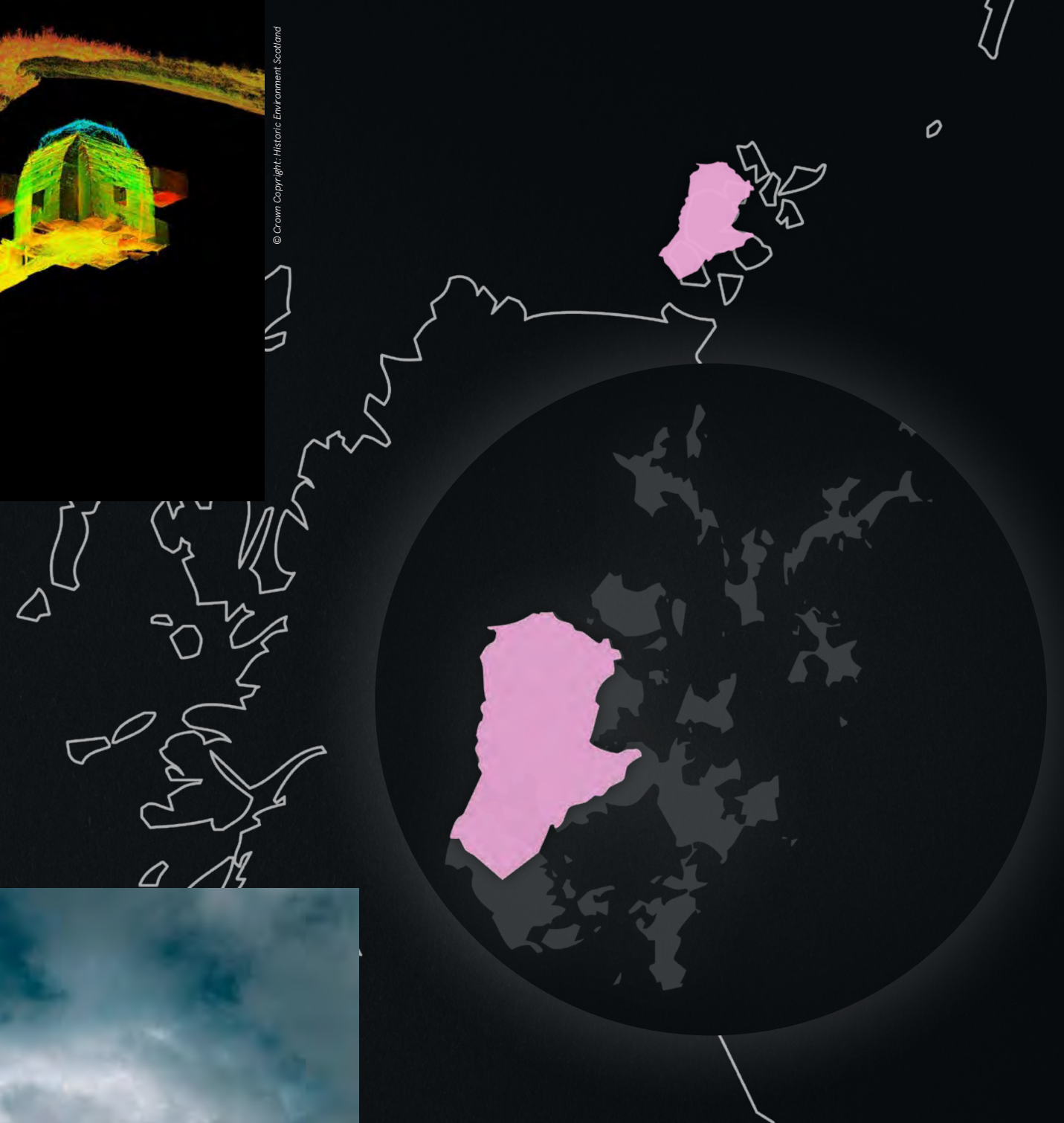
Local and international experts, businesses, management partners and residents were brought together to assess the threats to the World Heritage Site and the community values, in order to better inform the protection and conservation of the site for future generations. One of the key findings of the project was that the Heart of Neolithic Orkney's OUV is at extreme risk from climate change and that compounding pressures, such as increases in tourism, will pose significant challenges to management of the Site in future – and that not all of these potential impacts are fully understood at present.

Released in July 2019, the CVI report prompted Historic Environment Scotland to commit to integrating the findings into the 2020-25 Site Management Plan and to build repetition of the CVI process into the five year management review cycle. Further CVI workshops are now in planning for two of the other five Scottish World Heritage Sites – Old and New Towns of Edinburgh and Frontiers of the Roman Empire: The Antonine Wall.

Since publication of the Orkney CVI report, the Climate Heritage Network held its international launch in Edinburgh in October 2019. A voluntary network including government agencies, heritage experts, businesses, NGOs and universities the Climate Heritage Network is seeking to mobilise the heritage sector in taking action on climate change.



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@visitorkney



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Creative Cities and the New Urban Agenda

A relatively new and growing UNESCO designation, organisationally, Creative Cities sit within the UNESCO Culture programme.

Established in 2004, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network has sustainable development at the core of its vision, and the cities' activities are integral to the New Urban Agenda. Unlike World Heritage Sites, Creative Cities are not governed by a specific Convention. To become a member of the network, cities undergo an application and assessment process and must be endorsed by their respective National Commission. They need to demonstrate what the designation would mean for their city, build broad partnerships with local decision-makers and set out what they would contribute to the international network.

As cities which are trying to mobilise their creative potential to forge innovative solutions to the economic, social and environmental challenges of the modern world, Creative Cities can serve as laboratories for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, involving their local communities in implementing the goals at city-level. With the urban population continuing to grow, UNESCO has highlighted the role Creative Cities can play in delivering the 2030 Agenda, including specific targets within its Culture programme. The cities are embracing this role, with their 2019 report providing examples of sustainable development around the world.¹⁵⁶

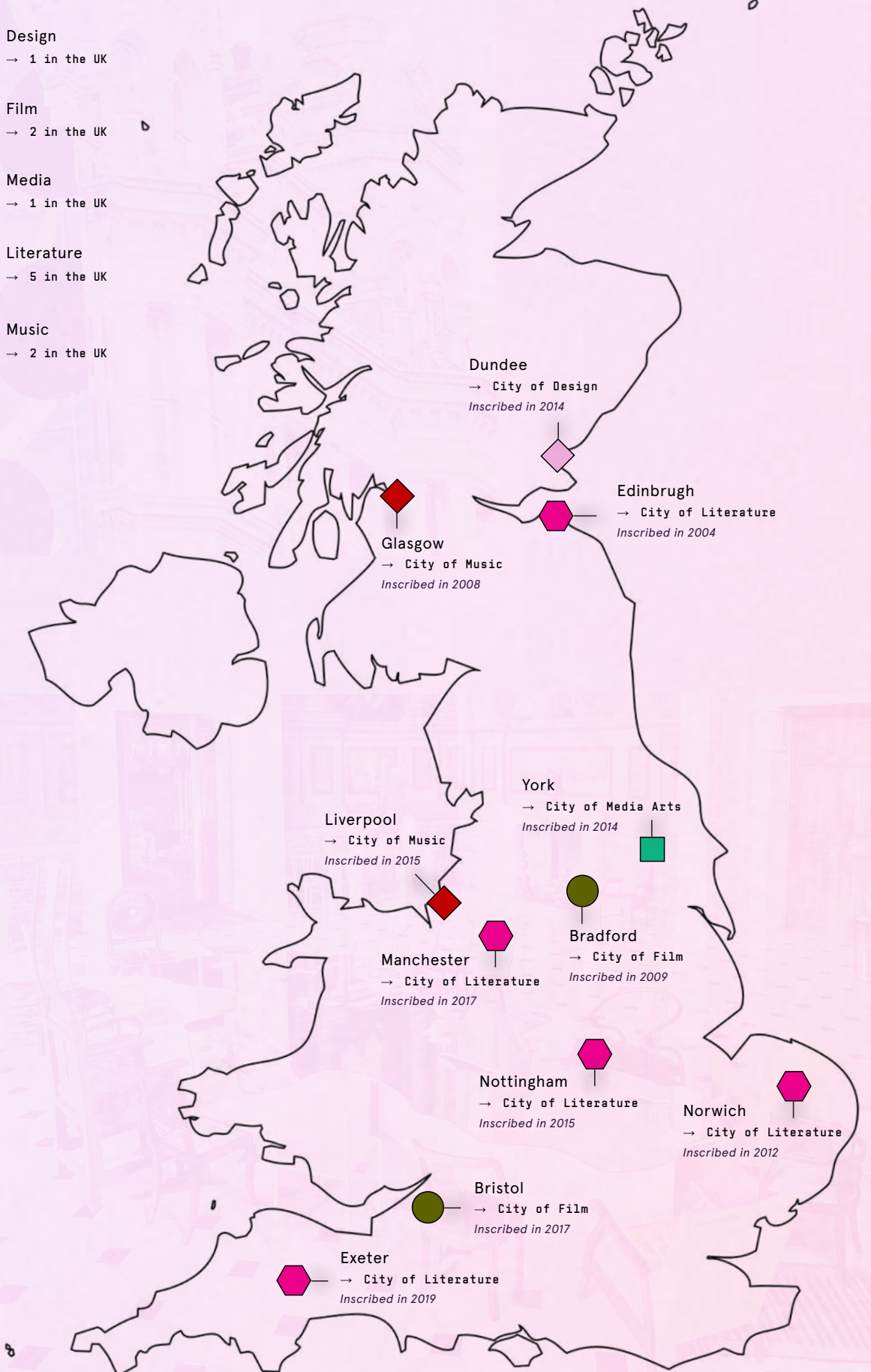
In the UK, Creative Cities identified their strongest contribution to the SDGs as aligning with SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities) and SDG17 (Partnerships). The average contribution of Creative Cities to SDG 13 (Climate Change) is relatively low (at 1.75) – there may be opportunities to build on this contribution. The case studies reflect these findings and reveal some of the other SDGs to which Creative Cities can contribute.

¹⁵⁶ UNESCO. (2019). Voices of the City. Retrieved from https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/sites/creative-cities/files/16_pages_villes_creatives_uk_bd.pdf

→ Map Key

Map of The UK's Creative Cities by category:

- Design
→ 1 in the UK
- Film
→ 2 in the UK
- Media
→ 1 in the UK
- Literature
→ 5 in the UK
- Music
→ 2 in the UK



The Scottish International Storytelling Festival at UNESCO Creative City of Literature Edinburgh.

→ Climate Action SDG 13; Quality Education SDG 4

Storytelling as a means of advancing sustainable development? The Scottish International Storytelling Festival in the city of Edinburgh shows that this is possible and is a remarkable example of how culture can lead in this area.

The annual Festival, which has been awarded £100,000 by the Platforms for Creative Excellence Fund (PLACE) set up by the Scottish Government and the City of Edinburgh Council, uses storytelling to tackle global and national issues such as climate change and inequality.

Thanks to the grant, this year's festival featured a brand-new project called the Global Storytelling Lab which combined indigenous traditions with tales of radical activism, included talks from storytellers such as Extinction Rebellion activist Grian Cutanda, and saw the launch of the world's first anthology of Earth Stories, aligned with the principles of the Earth Charter.

The Festival also organised 100 new locally-led events across the country to empower and encourage groups and individuals to share their own stories with the wider communities. Collaborations with local storytellers also helped to unearth forgotten and lesser-known local stories, songs and rhymes.

Storytelling promotes intercultural exchange, it fosters mutual understanding and can strengthen a sense of community. According to Ruth Kirkpatrick, Chair of the Scottish Storytelling Forum: 'There is a hunger for the kind of community belonging, and the hospitality that traditional storytelling fosters.'¹⁵⁷

So celebrating Scotland's rich literary and oral heritage through storytelling is a great example of how UNESCO designations can use culture to engage with and contribute to the Sustainable Development Agenda.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Ruth Kirkpatrick, Chair of the Scottish Storytelling Forum, quoted in Press Release of Scottish International Storytelling Festival 2019.

¹⁵⁸ Press release of the Scottish International Storytelling Festival 2019



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© Roberto Ricciuti

© Richard Wirrpenny, Beltane Fire Society



UNESCO Creative City of Design Dundee.

→ Partnerships for the Goals [SDG17]; Sustainable Cities [SDG 11]; Good Health & Well-Being [SDG 3]; Decent Work & Economic Growth [SDG 8]; Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure [SDG 9]; Reduced Inequalities [SDG 10]

In Dundee, culture and innovation lie at the centre – quite literally. Having grappled with serious post-industrial challenges such as depopulation and job loss, the city has been embracing creativity to boost its economy and enhance public well-being. From developing strong public art and dance programmes to becoming the location of Scotland’s first design museum, the City is a cultural hotspot dedicated particularly to the world of design.

Dundee became a UNESCO Creative City of Design in 2014 and has been using design to uphold UNESCO’s values and objectives, Annie Marrs, the City’s Lead Officer, tells us:



© Velma Pickles with Kathryn Rattray Photography

© Kathryn Rattray



© Velma Pickles with Kathryn Rattray Photography

© Kathryn Rattray

“For us, everything comes back to the Sustainable Development Goals and UNESCO Creative Cities’ mission statement. Culture is fundamental to making a city a successful place and for people to live good healthy, successful lives. It’s not an add-on. We publicly champion our commitment to placing creativity at the heart of our local development plan and our international co-operations; to celebrating and using design to improve people’s lives and championing design; to trying to promote the talent of our designers to make sure that Dundee is a creatively and commercially successful place to actually be a designer; and to the UNESCO’s Creative Cities network so that our designers are able to learn from an international best practice and that they can go to other places or they can collaborate internationally. And that’s really important for us because we think that’s the strength of the network. The more we can engage internationally, the better we get.” ¹⁵⁹



→ Annie Marrs, Dundee Creative City Lead Officer

© Kathryn Rattray



© Kathryn Rattray



@visitscotland



© Erika Stevenson

The city's UNESCO status is built on several partnerships. Led by Dundee Partnership it is directly supported by the local universities, Dundee City Council, Leisure and Culture Dundee, Creative Dundee and many other organisations, businesses and institutions which have all signed up to Dundee's City Values. Exhibitions, design workshops and across-the-city projects, such as the annual Design Parade, help to raise awareness around design and the creative industries, encourage creative thinking, enhance career prospects and well-being, and create a more people- focused public sector.

“We believe that the more people work together the better they understand each other's differences and the stronger we'll be as a society. We happen to do that through design. But the fundamental founding principle is that we want our young people, and our community to be together, try to understand each other and have a peaceful, safe world to live in.”

→ Annie Marrs, Dundee Creative City Lead Officer



© Erika Stevenson



© Erika Stevenson

The 360° immersive and interactive experience 'Spheel' was designed as 'a conservation starter' to encourage young people to talk about mental health. Designed by Biome Collective and a part of the London Design Biennale 2018 'Emotional States', the interactive game experience helps young people to express their feelings through sounds and colours rather than words. The project was a collaboration between Youth Work Organisations Hot Chocolate Trust and The Corner, Creative Scotland, NEoN Digital Arts Festival, University of Dundee, Abertay University and UNESCO City of Design Dundee. It is one of the City's many innovative ways of how design can be used to enhance public well-being.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ Wider Value interview, phone call with Annie Marrs, 2019, London



@kujifathwal

Designation

n°03



Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks

Sitting within the UNESCO Natural Sciences programme, Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks are recognised as 'learning sites for inclusive and comprehensive approaches to environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainable development'.¹⁶¹

As models for sustainable development, the work of Biosphere Reserves is inseparable from the SDG agenda. The Roadmap for the MAB Programme and World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) defines the overall strategy and action plan up to the year 2025 and outlines how Biosphere Reserves will strategically engage with the SDGs and continue to act as hubs for knowledge and research with value beyond the protected area(s) each Biosphere Reserve contains.

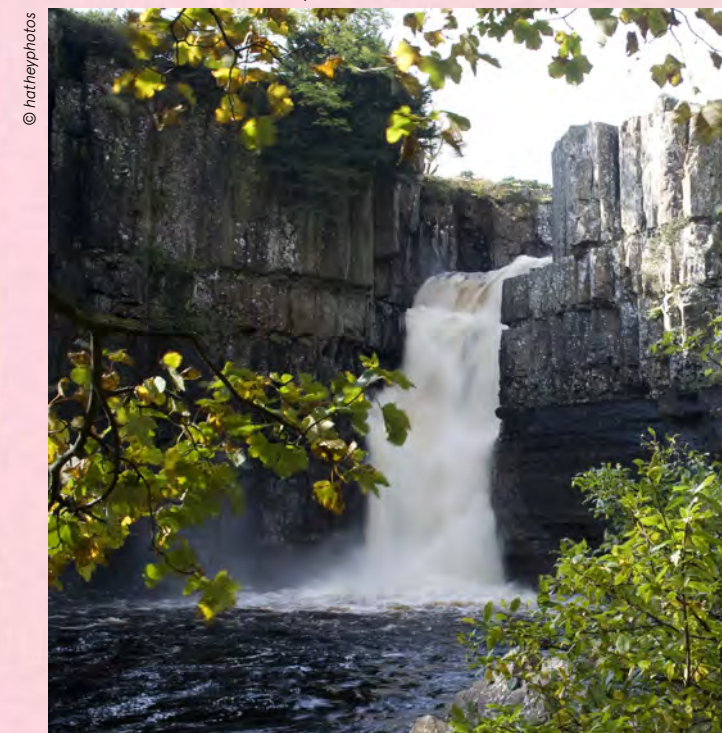
¹⁶¹ UNESCO. (2019). 40 C/5 Volume 1 Draft Resolutions Second Biennium 2020-2021. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000367155/PDF/367155eng.pdf.multi.p.178>



Wester Ross Biosphere Reserve

@asoncharleshill

North Pennines Global Geopark

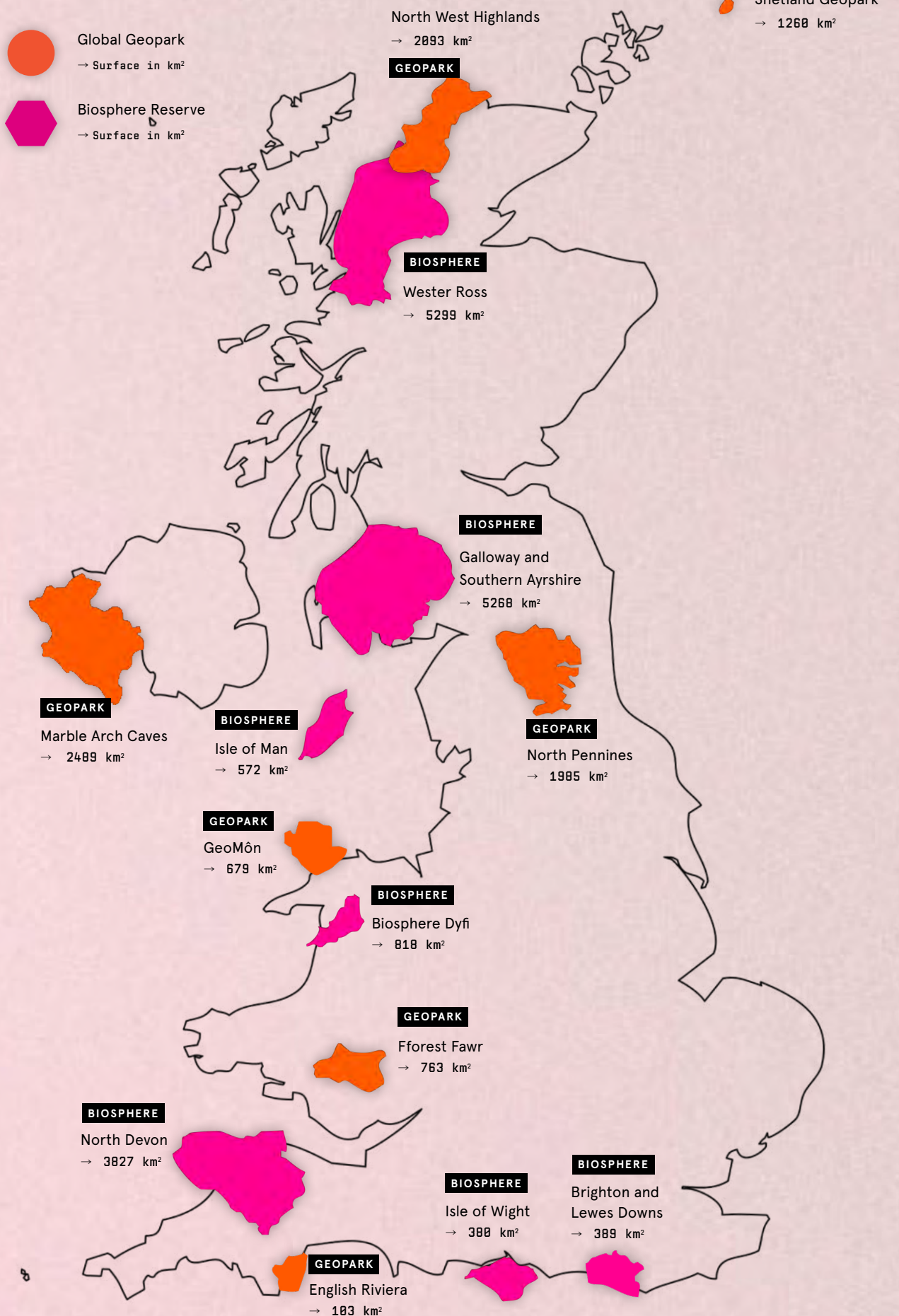


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→ Map Key

Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks in the UK:

- Global Geopark
→ Surface in km²
- Biosphere Reserve
→ Surface in km²



One of the four mission priorities in the MAB strategy is to “help the Member States and stakeholders to meet the Sustainable Development Goals through urgently... exploring and testing policies, technologies and innovations for the sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources and mitigation and adaptation to climate change.”¹⁶²

MAB National Committees and Networks are encouraged to prepare their strategies and action plans based on the overall framework. The role of Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks is affirmed in UNESCO’s programme and budget where the sites must demonstrate their role as hubs for sustainable development solutions, including green and inclusive economies, which respond to the needs of vulnerable groups and support gender equality. They are also being supported to act as a comprehensive network of observatories for resilience to climate change and natural hazards, making use of citizen science.

This integral nature of sustainable development to Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks is reflected in our UK findings. Biospheres Reserves contribute most on average to SDG 4 (Quality Education) followed by an equal contribution to SDGs 15 (Life on Land), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 11 Sustainable Cities. Global Geoparks make their highest average contribution to Partnerships (SDG 17) followed by Action on Climate Change (SDG 13) and Quality Education (SDG 4).

¹⁶² UNESCO. (2019). Strategy and Lima Action Plan. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247418>



@manxmikephotos

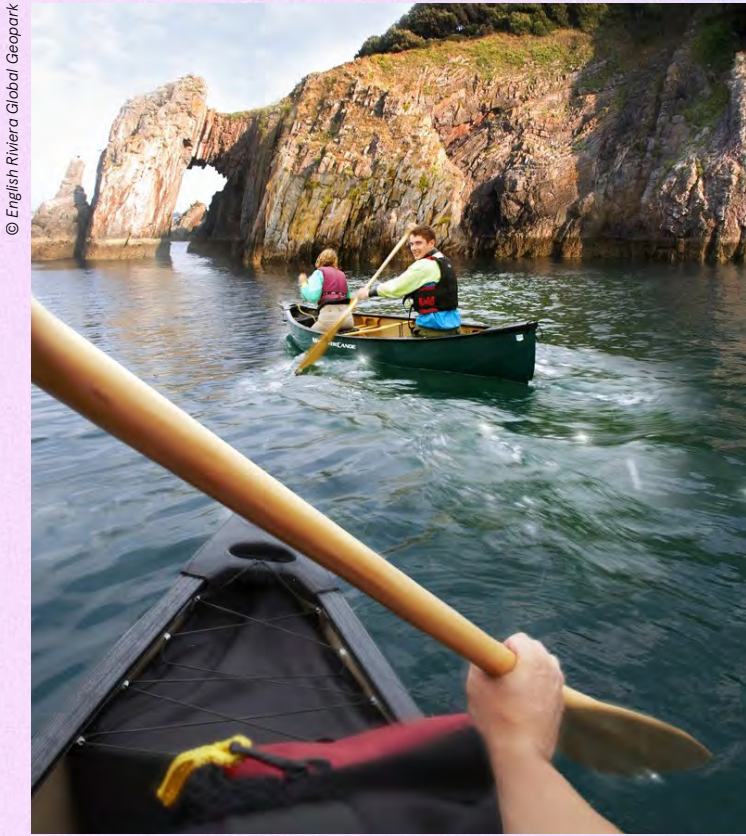
Isle of Man Biosphere Reserve



@visitengland

Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere Reserve

English Riviera Global Geopark



© English Riviera Global Geopark

GeoMôn Global Geopark



© Adam

North West Highlands Global Geopark



@edderfizz7

Shetland Global Geopark



@visishetland

Fforest Fawr Global Geopark



@kiff_family_robinson

Wester Ross Biosphere Reserve: Eco-Tourism

→ Climate Action SDG13; Partnerships SDG17; Quality Education SDG 4; Life Below Water SDG 14; Life on Land SDG 15; Sustainable Cities & Communities SDG 11

Wester Ross, one of Scotland's two UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, has joined forces with other countries to develop an eco-tourism initiative that promotes the economic, environmental and societal wellbeing of the area.

Led by the University of the Highlands and Islands in cooperation with Karelia University of Applied Sciences in Finland, the three-year SHAPE project (Sustainable Heritage Areas: Partnerships for Ecotourism), forms an international network of sparsely populated, rural, protected areas that are rich in cultural and natural heritage.

The destinations meet and regularly convene to foster their network and share expertise. It offers Wester Ross, which became a Biosphere Reserve in 2016, the opportunity to exchange ideas, experiences and concerns with areas that face similar challenges.



@hyggeoutdoor

“The Northern network is particularly useful because we have shared challenges and opportunities including large expanses of land, more difficult climates, young people leaving and in some regions reconciliation with indigenous people. So, we tackle these issues together. We don't solve them all, but we get good examples of best practice from our friends and neighbours in these other biospheres which can be adapted and applied here.”

→ Natasha Hutchison, Wester Ross Coordinator



@rob_stevens_photography



@visitscotland



@simonackinsonphotography



@belperbarlow



@visitscotland

“What makes Wester Ross distinctive is our connection with the land and the sea. The biosphere celebrates the special relationship that people have with their environment. There’s a rich tapestry of natural and cultural heritage here and we try to demonstrate and remind people that all are intrinsically linked.” ¹⁵⁵

→ Laura Hamlet, Geopark Coordinator at UNESCO Global Geopark North West Highlands



@visitscotland

SHAPE also enables Wester Ross to network locally. The initiative is specifically geared towards connecting communities, authorities, conservationists and other partners to develop projects that benefit both the area and its people.

Before joining SHAPE, Wester Ross did not have an agreed set of actions on how to manage the destination. Now the Biosphere Reserve is taking a lead role in developing a destination management plan to which 126 businesses in the area have signed up and agreed to support.

Hutchison tells us, ‘People are excited and want to work with us. They want to be involved in the planning process.’ As an entirely community-led non-profit organisation, Wester Ross places community and its local identity at the core of its work.

The Biosphere Reserve is home to 8,000 residents, covers more than 5,000 square kilometres and attracts circa 100,000 tourists per year. Some of the community’s most common concerns are that there will be too many tourists, not enough infrastructure and the degradation of the environment. That’s why, according to Hutchison, ‘The most important thing really is to take into account how the local communities feel about tourism and visitors.’ Including the community in the planning process allows the Biosphere to ultimately promote sustainable development that is in line with everyone’s interests – residents, visitors, and the environment alike. SHAPE has given us the foundation that we need to develop as an organisation and to deliver something that is not only tangible but what people want. They want to have a say, and they want to be heard. It’s much more people-centric. And for us, it’s just been the best way to really engage with our local communities and to raise the profile of the biosphere and get more support locally.’ ¹⁶³

¹⁶² Natasha Hutchison, Wider Value Interview, August 2019.



@WesterRossBiosphere

North Devon Biosphere Reserve: Exploring the potential of Natural Capital

→ Clean Water and Sanitation SDG 6; Decent Work and Economic Growth SDG 8; Action on Climate Change SDG 13; Life Below Water SDG 14; Life on Land SDG 15; Partnerships SDG 17

The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in North Devon is at the centre of two groundbreaking projects, one land-based, one marine, which are seeking to find innovative ways to govern our environment. They are two of four 'pioneer projects' being carried out to help inform the implementation of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) 25-year plan.

DEFRA's plan takes a longer-term approach and a more holistic view, aiming to make sustainable use and restoration of the environment central to all society's decisions. Its ultimate vision is to repair, improve and protect our environment, so it's in a better state for the next generation.¹⁶⁴

Both three-year projects are investigating how natural capital (geology, soil, air, water and living things) can be best managed to benefit the environment, economy and people. Led by Natural England and the Marine Management Organisation, the projects involve multiple national and local partners, including government agencies, universities, NGOs and the private sector. The land-based project is trialling new approaches to manage farmland, natural habitats, watercourses, coasts and urban environments in a better way for people and nature. After mapping existing sources of funding, it will identify where investment in natural capital is most needed and take action to secure new investment.

A similar approach is being taken by the marine pioneer which is testing new tools and methods for applying a natural capital model; demonstrating integrated planning and delivery and seeking to trial and 'scale-up' the use of new funding opportunities.¹⁶⁵ Where possible the marine and landscape pioneer programmes are being brought together to demonstrate how the area can be managed as a single system. In addition to providing on-going changes to practice and funding for the pioneer area, the projects are hoping to offer lessons which can be applied nationally in other areas of the UK.

¹⁶⁴ GOV.UK. (2019). DEFRA 25-year Environment plan. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

¹⁶⁵ GOV.UK. (2019). MMO update on Marine Natural Capital projects. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-pioneer/marine-pioneer-achievements>



@wongle.hikes

“Biosphere Reserves are all about innovating and testing new policy developments - it's one of our key wider values to the UK. It's a testament to North Devon's history of powerful partnership working and our firm base in the local community that we were chosen to host two pioneer projects. I'm hopeful they will offer valuable lessons for the sustainable management of the environment and a tangible contribution to the SDGs.”

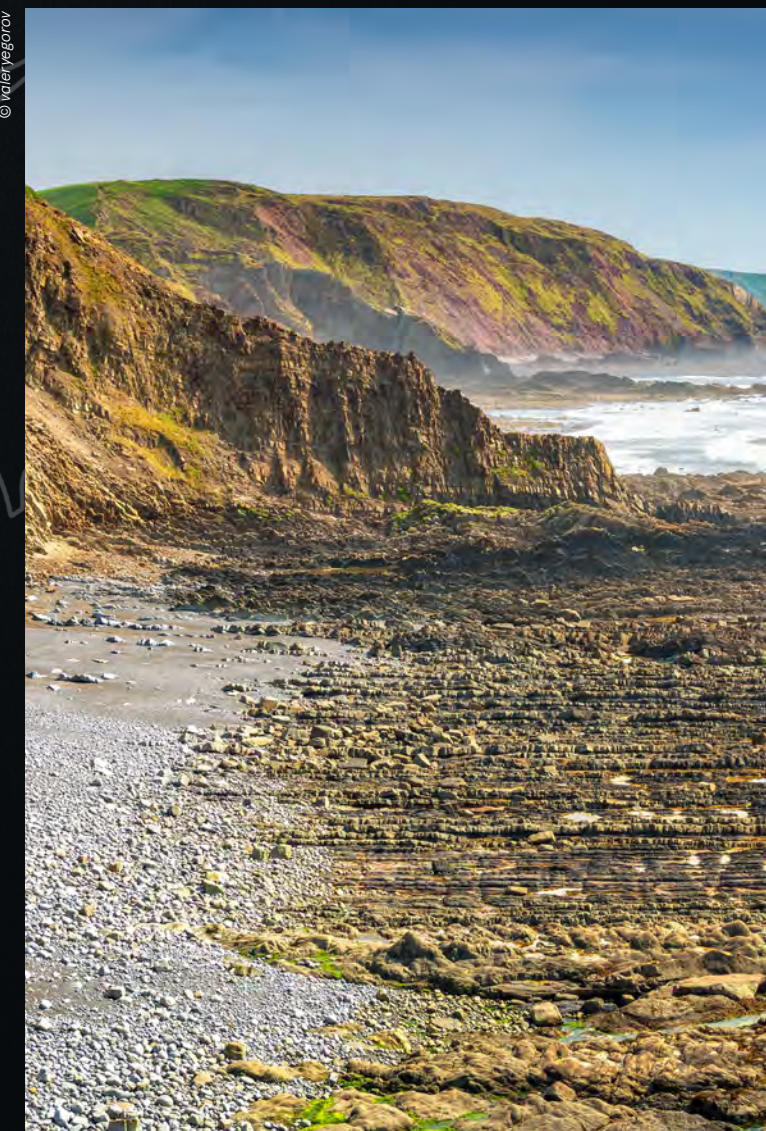
→ Andy Bell, North Devon Biosphere Reserve's Co-ordinator



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UNESCO Chairs/ UNITWIN

Established in 1992, UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN (University Twinning and Networking) are part of the section of Higher Education within UNESCO's Education Programme. However, the majority of the projects they undertake are interdisciplinary, encompassing all UNESCO's programme areas.

Through ideas, innovation, knowledge and information, UNESCO Chairs can offer support to achieving all the SDGs. UNESCO is seeking to increase and enhance this contribution by encouraging programmes aimed at generating new knowledge and innovative tools for Member States to address some of the challenges associated with the Goals.¹⁶⁷

The SDGs are at the core of the work of many UNESCO Chairs with partnerships between institutions and countries a particular strength and opportunity. As part of their UNESCO designation Chairs are encouraged to have a sub-regional or international focus and work with NGOs, foundations, and public and private sector organisations.

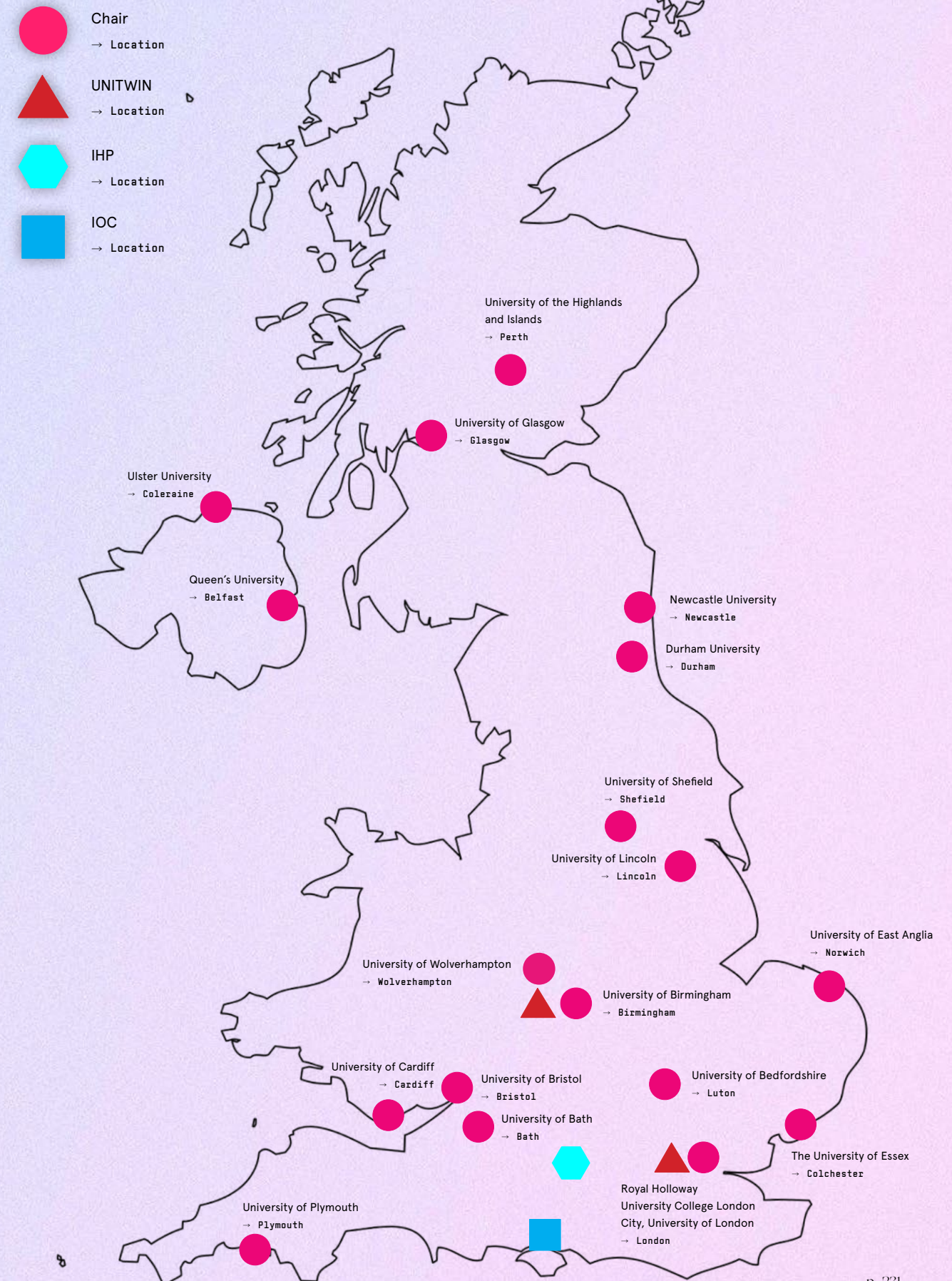
The 25th Anniversary of the UNESCO Chairs programme recognised and celebrated the role of Chairs in relation to the SDGs by asking all Chairs to provide an overview of how their work aligned with the 2030 Agenda.¹⁶⁸ UNESCO has also hosted conferences which brought together Chairs working across Culture and Science to help share knowledge and practice.

¹⁶⁷ UNESCO. (2019). Chairs/UNITWIN guidelines. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261018>

¹⁶⁸ UNESCO. (2019). UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme: brilliant minds for sustainable solutions, 25th anniversary. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259967>

→ Map Key

UNESCO Chairs and
UNITWIN Network



UNESCO’s updated Comprehensive Partnership Strategy highlights the potential offered by Chairs’ rich partnerships with institutions and countries around the world and the need to ensure these partnerships are pro-actively harnessed.¹⁶⁹ However, the dispersed nature of UNESCO Chairs across the different programme areas means that, although the role of Chairs in contributing to the SDGs is recognised, there is little formal strategic direction from UNESCO on how the particular impact of UNESCO Chairs should be shaped or measured. There may be a role for National Commissions in helping to redress this balance.

In the UK there are 19 UNESCO Chairs and 1 UNITWIN, whose focus areas cover a broad range of SDG-related themes including water science, education as a tool to heal divided societies, archaeological ethics and practice and sustainable mountain development. Many have an international reach – their education and research help to build capacity in developing countries and cut across numerous SDGs.

Given the nature and focus of their work, it is to be expected that UNESCO Chairs in the UK rate their highest contribution to the SDGs as SDG 4 (Quality Education) followed by Partnerships (SDG 17). The remaining contribution of Chairs is quite evenly spread across the Goals, perhaps reflecting the cross-cutting nature of this designation as revealed in the case studies below.

¹⁶⁹ UNESCO. (2019). UNESCO Comprehensive Partnership Strategy 207 EX/11. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000217583>

UNESCO Chair on Globalising a Shared Education Model for Improving Relations in Divided Societies.

→ Clean Water and Sanitation SDG 6; Decent Work and Economic Growth SDG 8; Action on Climate Change SDG 13; Life Below Water SDG 14; Life on Land SDG 15; Partnerships SDG 17

The pursuit of peace forms the foundation of UNESCO and a cornerstone of the ambitious vision of the SDGs. The UNESCO Chair at Queen's University Belfast is pioneering a trial model of shared education to break down barriers in countries transitioning from conflict to peace.¹⁷⁰

Led by Professor Joanne Hughes at Queen's University Belfast, the Centre for Shared Education in the School of Education at Queen's became a UNESCO Chair in 2016 and is working with Education Ministry officials and educational stakeholders in Northern Ireland, the Balkan Countries and Israel to further the development of shared education.

The Centre's research has informed the Shared Education Act (2016) in Northern Ireland, and shared education is now embedded as a model for promoting education between Macedonian, Ethnic Albanian and other minority groups in North Macedonia (previously the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).¹⁷¹

With a grant from the Economic and Social Research Council's Global Challenges Research Fund, the Centre has extended its work in the Balkan region, establishing an infrastructure that connects academics, practitioners, NGOs and policymakers across the diverse contexts of North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia. The Centre has also begun working in partnership with Israeli teacher education colleges and universities to explore the possibilities for shared education among trainee teachers and joint research.

In addition to providing training and resources for teachers nationally and internationally, findings from qualitative research to assess the impact of the shared education model in Northern Ireland will be used to inform future projects.

¹⁷⁰ Hughes, J. (2019). Queen's University Belfast Profiles. Retrieved from [https://pure.qub.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/joanne-hughes\(t24f8fb5-f17c-42bf-ac73-59c51b14fca0\)/projects.html](https://pure.qub.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/joanne-hughes(t24f8fb5-f17c-42bf-ac73-59c51b14fca0)/projects.html)

¹⁷¹ UNESCO Chair Progress Report, Queen's University Belfast, 2016-17





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ENGLAND

UNESCO Chair on
Archaeological Ethics
and Practice in Cultural
Heritage.

→ Durham University

DURHAM



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Case Study

n°07

UNESCO Chair on Archaeological Ethics and Practice in Cultural Heritage.

→ SDG 4 Quality Education; SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions;
SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals; SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

Held by Professor Robin Coningham at the Centre for the Ethics of Cultural Heritage at Durham University, the Chair seeks to build and strengthen the ethical and balanced promotion of heritage to enhance the sustainable development of regions, especially those with religious and pilgrimage sites.

From developing new guidelines and opportunities for postgraduate education to training and connecting heritage professionals and managers in South Asia and the UK, and devising benchmarks for measuring the impact of cultural heritage on societies and economies – the Chair's activities are diverse. Visiting professorships, supervision, on-site training, workshops and educational material are some examples of how Coningham and his team help to promote interdisciplinary north-south exchanges, advance ethical heritage development, and tackle gender inequality in this area. The Chair also organises a variety of workshops, exhibitions and conferences where the team shares its research, brings together experts, and raises awareness of the challenges faced by South Asian sites and of the social and ethical benefits of heritage on local communities.

One of the Chair's research projects included post-disaster rescue archaeology in the Kathmandu Valley UNESCO World Heritage Site following two major earthquakes in Nepal in 2015. This natural disaster was a human and cultural catastrophe, costing the lives and livelihoods of numerous people and damaging and destroying substantial parts of the region's unique cultural heritage so crucial to the region's economy and social well-being. The project received substantial funding from UNESCO, the National Geographic Society, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Global Challenges Research Fund. The Chair was crucial in bringing together archaeologists and architectural experts from the Department of Archaeology (Government of Nepal), Durham University and other research institutions and partners to ensure the ethical and balanced reconstruction and sustainable development of the heritage and region through extensive consultation, reconstruction and conservation work.¹⁷²

¹⁷² Durham University. (2019). UNESCO Chair on Archaeological Ethics and Practice in Cultural Heritage. Retrieved from <https://www.dur.ac.uk/cech/unescochair/>.



Memory of the World

The promotion of peace, respect for freedom, democracy, human rights and dignity underpin the SDGs – and documentary heritage has a vital role to play in this.

Established in 1992, UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme believes everyone has the right to access their documentary heritage. This includes the right to know it exists and where to find it. The programme, part of the Communication and Information sector at UNESCO, is a key mechanism for harnessing the power and importance of culture to the SDGs, complementing other UNESCO programmes, especially the World Heritage and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Conventions. It brings together diverse knowledge and disciplines across memory institutions, associations and professions such as archivists, librarians, conservators, museum curators, historians of various disciplines, and information technology specialists.

There is no Convention that Member States must ratify to be part of the Memory of the World Programme. However, since 2015, Member States are requested to comply with the guidelines in the Recommendation concerning the preservation of and access to documentary heritage including in digital form¹⁷³ and to take the necessary steps to ensure it is protected and, where possible, accessible. It is important that UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme is integrated into the Thematic Indicators for Culture (see below) and that its contribution to the SDGs is adequately captured.

Memory of the World designations in the UK also rate their highest contribution to the SDG Agenda as SDG 4 (Quality Education). The role of documentary heritage in promoting peace is reflected in their contribution to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) which is one of the highest contributions of all UNESCO designations in the UK.

¹⁷³ UNESCO. (2019). Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage including in digital form. Retrieved from http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=49358&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

→ Map Key

UNESCO Memory of the World
Inscriptions





→ Women's Suffrage Documents



→ The Gough Map

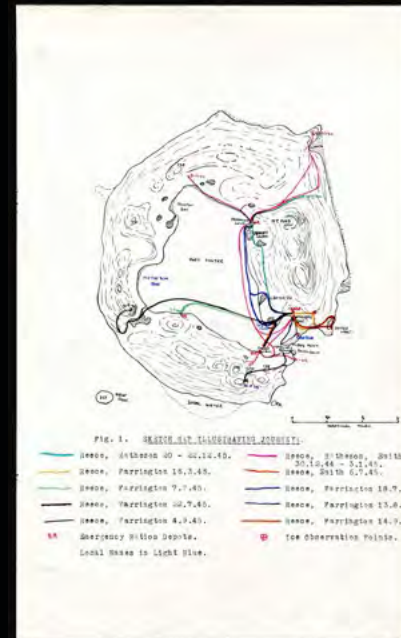


→ George Orwell Archive



→ The Peterloo Massacre Relief Fund Account Book

→ London WW2 Bomb Damage Maps



→ Antarctic Survey



→ Canterbury Cathedral Archive

→ Over Eighty Entries

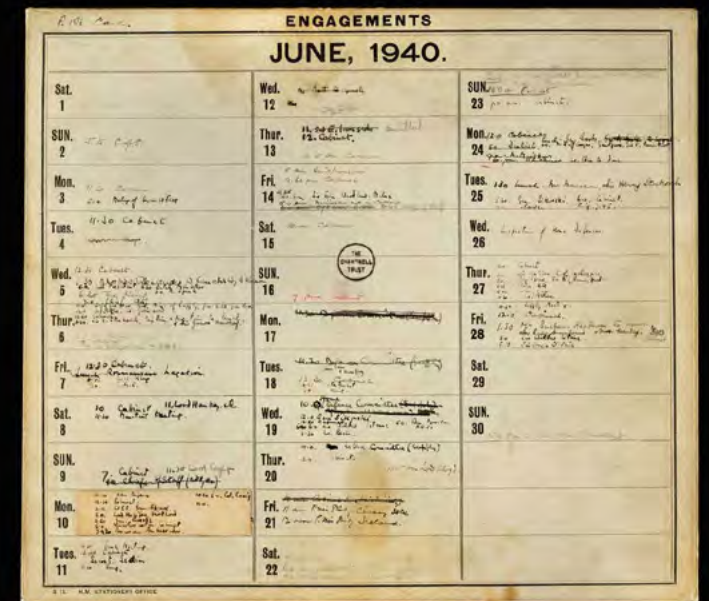
Discover some of the UK's entries in the Memory of the World Registry.



→ Hereford Mappa Mundi



→ The Golden Letter of the Burmese King Alaungpaya to King George II of Great Britain



→ Churchill Archives

The Memory of the World Programme is a global plan to safeguard the world's documentary heritage against collective amnesia, the ravages of war, decay and deterioration.

→ Memory of the World Constitution

The Charles Booth Archive.

→ SDG 4 Quality Education; SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

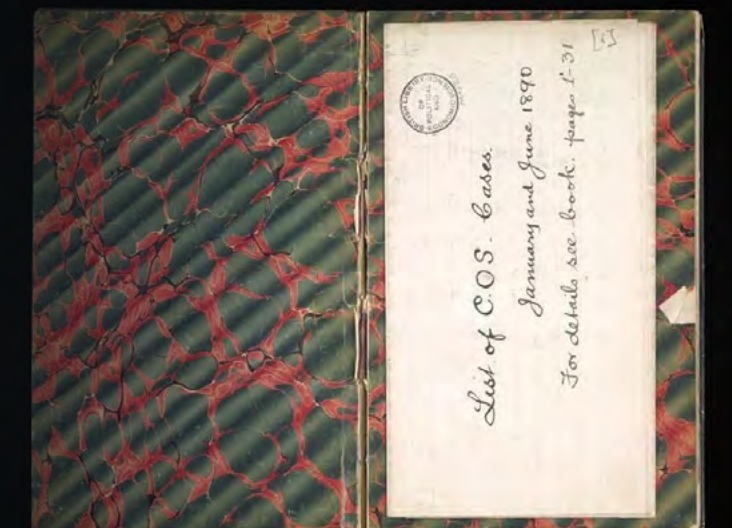
Inscribed into the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register in 2016, the Charles Booth Archive at the Library of the London School of Economics and Political Science offers unparalleled insights into social and economic life in Victorian London. By promoting inclusive quality education and raising awareness of past and present inequalities, the Archive is a great example of how UNESCO Memory of the World inscriptions can contribute to the SDGs.

It holds the papers of industrialist and social reformer Charles Booth who conducted 'one of the most ambitious and wide-ranging sociological surveys ever completed.'¹⁷⁴ His 16-year-long study *Inquiry into Life and Labour in London* holds extensive data on the social conditions of Londoners including hand-written notebooks and detailed maps documenting poverty levels, religious influences, prostitution and migration.

The Archive runs exhibitions and has an engaging and interactive website to make Booth's papers more accessible, raise their awareness, and engage visitors in social and economic history.

Also, most of the Archive's collection is digitised which not only provides access to a wider audience but also encourages greater interaction with the sources. Visitors can compare Booth's maps with those of London today, tracing the change and development that have taken place in the city over the centuries.

Search functions, references to Booth's respective notes and detailed descriptions mean visitors can follow their own interests. The collection also demonstrates how data used to be collected and how new methodologies and techniques in the social sciences developed at the time.¹⁷⁵



¹⁷⁴ London School of Economics. (2019). LSE Library Exhibition– Charles Booth's London: Mapping Victorian Lives. Retrieved from <http://www.lse.ac.uk/website-archive/newsAndMedia/newsArchives/2016/09/LSE-Library-Exhibition--Charles-Booths-London-Mapping-Victorian-Lives.aspx>

¹⁷⁵ London School of Economics. (2019). Charles Booth's London Poverty maps and police notebooks. Retrieved from <https://booth.lse.ac.uk/>

Conclusion

Initial data gathered by the United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO identifies key trends in how UNESCO designations in the UK are contributing to the 2030 Agenda. These trends mirror UNESCO's global priorities and reflect the mandate and focus of designations, with Quality Education (SDG 4), Partnerships (SDG 17) and Action on Climate Change (SDG 13) scoring particularly highly.

However, the full value of designations' contribution to the SDGs is not being fully realised or understood.

From sustainable tourism solutions for UNESCO World Heritage Sites to interactive video games promoting mental health in a multi-cultural city and pioneering work to assess climate vulnerability - the diverse and creative range of activities designations are engaged in to support sustainable development within communities needs to be promoted and enhanced.

With increased support and co-ordination, the work of designations could be further aligned with this vital global agenda. Greater recognition and understanding of the expertise and opportunities brought by designations could significantly enhance their contribution to the SDGs and help governments to fulfil their obligations. The UK National Commission for UNESCO could help to facilitate this process by conducting further analysis and facilitating networking and cross-designation dialogue.

Final Conclusion

The purpose of this report was to assess and understand the contribution of UNESCO designations to the UK.

Our statistical analysis of quantitative data, structured analysis of qualitative data from 76 designations, plus extensive secondary source research and in-depth interviews, reveals that UNESCO is of significant economic and broader value to the UK. The UK boasts a remarkable range of cultural and natural heritage and UNESCO designations play a crucial role in conserving and enhancing this rich diversity and, ultimately, creating a more humane world.

UNESCO status helped UK designations to attract an additional income of £151 million over one year. UNESCO World Heritage Sites generated the lion's share of this sum, followed by UNESCO Chairs and UNESCO Global Geoparks, with UK and devolved Governments, tourism, private legacies and the National Lottery Heritage Fund serving as the most important funding bodies.

Our research also found the value of UNESCO designations to the UK goes far beyond their economic potential and that, given current political tendencies and social and environmental challenges, this intangible value is equally, if not more, important.

No matter their type or focus, all UNESCO designations are united in their pursuit of promoting a better world. By joining the UNESCO family, they all agree to advance UNESCO's key mission of peace and sustainable development. It is the UNESCO status which provides the critical framework for their work. This research shows that their UNESCO status also encourages them to engage in these five main activities: conservation, research, education, capacity building, management and planning.

Developing partnerships and a greater sense of community lies at the core of these activities. Whether it is researching new solutions to tackle social and environmental issues or teaching communities the skills and expertise to live more sustainably, designations know that to foster a greater appreciation for heritage and a better understanding of our world they must build strong relationships with their varied audiences. This is key to building long-lasting peace and sustainable development.

UNESCO designations in the UK constitute a unique network of over 1,300 partners and stakeholders. Their affiliation with UNESCO not only opens doors to new opportunities and contacts but also helps them to share and exchange their expertise and concerns with each other, as well as with individuals and organisations. The UK National Commission for UNESCO sits at the centre of this network. It provides the vital link between the designations in the UK and UNESCO in Paris as important facilitator and the key point of contact.

The full value of designations’ contribution is still to be fully realised and understood.

There are many factors that significantly influence the breadth and depth of the UNESCO designations’ activities and ultimately also the UNESCO network in the UK. These include variables such as their respective geography, location, popularity, awareness and legislative framework. It is important to remember these factors when assessing the value of UNESCO designations to the UK. Data and conversations with individual designations show these factors can be hugely restrictive. Funding and resources vary significantly between designations and affect their ability to pursue their objectives to the best of their ability.

With increased support, designations’ work could be more successfully aligned with UNESCO’s agenda. A greater recognition and understanding of the expertise and opportunities that designations bring could significantly enhance their contribution to the SDGs and help governments to fulfil their obligations. There are opportunities for the UK National Commission for UNESCO, the UNESCO Secretariat, and UK and devolved Governments.

As the centre of the UNESCO network in the UK, the UK National Commission for UNESCO has a key role to play in unlocking the advantages and opportunities that designations have as members of the national and global UNESCO network. These include joint working, opening up avenues to further resources, and helping designations to further their potential contribution to the SDGs.

First and foremost, the UK National Commission for UNESCO should enhance the value of the UNESCO brand in the UK (**Recommendation 1**). This requires coherent branding guidelines for UNESCO designations in the United Kingdom in collaboration with the UNESCO Secretariat in Paris and its forthcoming communications strategy. This should include individual designation-specific branding guidelines and toolkits, as well as broader guidelines for how to use the UNESCO brand with partners, in tourism strategies, with funding proposals, and across digital platforms.

National campaigns, international days and events such as the successful Science Museum Lates and the UNESCO Trail in Scotland are examples of how the National Commission can lift the profile of the UNESCO brand in the UK as a whole. Creating a central, clear and engaging website (www.unesco.org.uk) to showcase the designations and help share their data, as well providing an internal shared resource for UNESCO designations to exchange best-practice and develop joint initiatives would further help the National Commission to increase awareness and strengthen the network of UNESCO designations in the UK.



The National Commission can facilitate stronger cooperation among designations, regardless of their type (**Recommendation 2**), support them in their activities identified in Chapter 2, use the SDG framework as a coordinating mechanism, and ensure that all designations are engaged in SDG reporting mechanisms nationally and within the UNESCO network. The National Commission should also facilitate the flow of content from the UNESCO Secretariat to the designations to help them to promote UN and sustainability messages at the local level.

The National Commission also aspires to help make UNESCO’s global mission, the normative work, and global programmes, relevant and integrated at the designation level and to facilitate UNESCO designations to attract more funding from new and existing sources such as private legacies and fundraising campaigns (**Recommendation 3**).

There is an opportunity for the UNESCO Secretariat Paris to play a bigger role in strengthening the UNESCO network nationally and, in turn, globally. UNESCO designations are locally based organisations adding value at the local level. UNESCO Paris could work more closely with National Commissions for UNESCO under the new Communications Strategy and Comprehensive Partnership Strategy to target varied audiences, especially local communities. Increasing both human and financial resources would help significantly to enhance the quality and breadth of UNESCO networks.

UNESCO designations have added extraordinary vitality, opportunity, knowledge and commitment to all parts of the United Kingdom as well as showing a significant financial return on investment. This report underscores their even greater potential to contribute to the betterment of society and fulfill the UN’s sustainable development goals.

It is of critical importance that the UK understands the role that UNESCO designations play across all spheres of life for citizens in the UK, and that decision makers appreciate the intrinsic global value that UNESCO brings and