

# PLACES OF MEMORY OF THE SLAVE ROUTE IN THE LATIN CARIBBEAN

## Olga Rufins Machin

National Programme Officer, UNESCO  
Regional Office for Culture in Latin America  
and the Caribbean, Havana, Cuba

**T**he project *Places of Memory of the Slave Route in the Latin Caribbean* was launched in May 2006 in Havana (Cuba), at an expert meeting organized jointly by the UNESCO Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean and the UNESCO Office in Port-au-Prince, in close collaboration with the National Committees of the Slave Route in Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the House of Africa, the Fernando Ortiz Foundation and the National Council of Cultural Heritage of Cuba, with the support of the UNESCO Intercultural Dialogue Section and the International Scientific Committee of the UNESCO «Slave Route» project.

The initiative, under the New Strategy of the Slave Route Project and on the basis of the experience gained during the first 10 years of implementation of this UNESCO project, made it possible for a group of experts from Aruba, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Curacao to contribute their previous experiences and criteria in order to agree on a methodology for the identification and inventory of places of memory. It was also decided to select at least 5 places per participating Member State and add to this number all related places already inscribed on the World Heritage List or recognized as Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.<sup>1</sup>

In a first stage (2006-2007), 25 Places of Memory were identified and analyzed: 4 of Aruba, 9 of Cuba, 6 of Haiti and 6 of the Dominican Republic, applying the methodology agreed upon, on the understanding that in each of these Member States and Associate Member States there is a greater number of places that can be evaluated and included in this type of inventory. The following experts worked with UNESCO on this initiative: Luc Alofs, of Aruba; Omar Rancier, of the Dominican Republic; Laennec Hurbon, Michel-Philippe Lerebours and Michel Hector, of Haiti; and Jesús Guanche and Nilson Acosta, of Cuba. The latter served as Senior Consultant to the project.

In December 2007, the UNESCO Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean, the UNESCO Office in Port-au-Prince, the Dominican National Commission for UNESCO, and the Cuban, Haitian and Dominican National Slave Route Committees joined efforts for a first presentation of project results.

Soon thereafter, Dr. Miguel Barnet, President of the Cuban Slave Route Committee and Vice-President of the Project International Scientific Committee at the time, presented the results at the Headquarters of UNESCO in Paris. The project was evaluated as an exemplary pilot project, and its possible implementation in other parts of the world was considered.



In 2008, the UNESCO Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the UNESCO Office in Port-au-Prince published the Multimedia "Places of Memory of the Slave Route in the Latin Caribbean" in Spanish, English and French, as well as its Web version, available on the Portal of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean in these three languages ([http://www.unesco.lacult.org/sitios\\_memoria](http://www.unesco.lacult.org/sitios_memoria)). The launching was given wide media coverage in and out of Cuba.

The project was the first concerted experience in the Latin American and Caribbean region for the development and validation of a methodology for the identification and inventory of places of memory of the Slave Route. This experience contributed positive elements to subsequent efforts in other subregions.

Later on, the UNESCO Regional Office for Culture presented the multimedia "Places of Memory of the Slave Route in the Latin Caribbean" in numerous international forums, the most recent being the Subregional Meeting for the Second Periodic Reporting on the Implementation of the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) in February 2012 [C&D](#).

**Note**  
<sup>1</sup>Upon the entry into force of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage in 2006 and over its subsequent implementation process, the expressions of the intangible heritage previously recognized as Masterpieces were incorporated as of 2008 into the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

PLACES OF MEMORY IN THE MULTIMEDIA

- Aruba**
- Huisje Wild (National Monument);
  - Fort Zoutmaman /Toren Willem III (National Monument);
  - Santa Cruz Asu, Sports Hall (Archaeological Site); and
  - Niewindtstraat 37 (Undeclared).



- Cuba**
- Viñales Valley, Pinar del Río (Declared World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1999);
  - Angerona Coffee Plantation, Artemisa (National Monument);
  - Human Settlement in Regla-Guanabacoa, Havana (National Monument);
  - San Severino Castle, Matanzas (National Monument);
  - Urban Historic Centre of Trinidad and its Valley of Los Ingenios, Sancti Spíritus (Declared World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1988);
  - Ruins of La Demajagua Sugar Mill, Granma (National Monument);
  - Village and Mining Preserve of El Cobre, Santiago de Cuba (National Monument);
  - Tumba Francesa (Inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO in 2003), Santiago de Cuba, Holguín and Guantánamo; and
  - Archaeological Landscape of the First Coffee Plantations in the South-East of Cuba, Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo (Declared World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2000).



- Haiti**
- Camp Gérard (National Monument);
  - Guillon (Undeclared);
  - Poy-La-Générale Estate (National Monument);
  - La Citadelle, Ramiers et Sans Souci (Declared World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1980);
  - Santo (Undeclared); and
  - Jumécourt (National Monument).



- Dominican Republic**
- El Naranjo Community (Not declared);
  - Cepi-Cepí Sugar Mill (National Monument);
  - Diego Caballero Sugar Mill (National Monument);
  - Boca de Nigua Sugar Mill (National Monument);
  - San Gregorio Magno Church (Undeclared);
  - Cultural Space of the Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit of the Congos in Villa Mella (Inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO in 2001).

