

Professor Robin Coningham

Robin Coningham holds UNESCO's 2014 Chair in Archaeological Ethics and Practice in Cultural Heritage at Durham University, and is committed to the protection of cultural heritage, joining over 30 international missions for UNESCO. He has co-directed UNESCO's archaeological fieldwork within the Greater Lumbini Area of Nepal since 2011 and was invited to co-direct post-disaster interventions in the Kathmandu Valley with Kosh Prasad Acharya and Ram Bahadur Kunwar after the 2015 Gorkha Earthquake by UNESCO and the Government of Nepal. Subsequently, these co-designed post-disaster methodologies have been successfully applied at Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka and Mosul in Iraq.

His publications include the 2012 *Appropriating the Past: Philosophical Perspectives on the Practice of Archaeology* and the 2015 *Archaeology of South Asia* with Cambridge University Press, and *Pivot* Palgrave's *Archaeology, Heritage Protection and Community Engagement in South Asia* in 2019. One of the 100 invited participants of the December 2021 ICOMOS-UNESCO-IPCC Co-Sponsored Meeting to advance heritage and culture-based actions for climate change adaptation and carbon mitigation, his contributions to the reconstruction in Kathmandu were selected as one of 13 global case-studies in the Meeting's Action Plan:

"Crises and disasters, human or natural, often overwhelm planned responses and create situations in which technical interventions are hurriedly applied but later found to compromise existing management and protection agendas and alienate resident communities, and threaten their heritage and values.

Although infrequently mobilised in such contexts, interdisciplinary research is uniquely placed to assist in providing a fuller understanding of the short and longer term impacts, and facilitate reflection on lessons of resilience. After Nepal's 2015 earthquake, for example, the exploration of ancient seismic adaptation within historic urban infrastructure facilitated exchanges between research and practice teams and the integration of 'scientific' and traditional/indigenous knowledge systems, allowing lessons from the past to inform the future and enhance societal and structural resilience"