

WEBINAR

Protecting Cultural Heritage: a driving wheel for sustainable development

24 November 2021





Restoration works at the Jupiter Temple in Baalbek, Lebanon
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protecting cultural heritage: a driving wheel for sustainable development



Dome Houses of Syria, project led by Arcenciel
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insights and impacts from projects
implemented in the Mediterranean Basin

a Practitioners' Network webinar
organised by AICS and the British Council

wednesday, 24 november 2021 *

14.00 - 16.00 CET

registration - <https://bit.ly/3qyuZr5>
participation - <https://bit.ly/304pLl2>



Practitioners' Network
for European Development Cooperation



protecting cultural heritage: a driving wheel for sustainable development

This 2-hour webinar will focus on the protection of cultural heritage as an enabler of social and economic development, with particular reference to the Mediterranean Basin. Contributions will shed light on how actions aimed at protecting and safeguarding cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, promote the increase of employability and employment-related outcomes, the development of professional skills and capacities, the building of partnerships among civil society organisations, universities, private bodies and public stakeholders, the cohesion of communities and the inclusiveness of society.

programme

- 14.00 - welcome and introduction
- 14.05 - approaches to Cultural Heritage Protection and field experiences by AICS and the British Council
- 14.40 - guided panel discussion and Q&A
- 15.55 - conclusions

guest speakers

- Rein Nieland
EU Delegation in Lebanon
- Ana Sanchez Salcedo
AECID
- Anthony Duteuple
Première Urgence Internationale
Occupied Palestinian Territories



Practitioners' Network
for European Development Cooperation

Presented by the Practitioners' Network and co-hosted by the British Council and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, the webinar moved from the **PN Declaration** "Cooperation in Culture for Development: Towards a Sustainable Transformation" (2020), and it animated the debate on the role of culture in sustainable development.

The 2-hour webinar focused on **the protection of cultural heritage as a driver and an enabler of social and economic development**, with particular reference to the Mediterranean Basin.

Contributions by AICS and BC and other European partners shed light on how actions on cultural heritage, including the protection and safeguarding of both tangible and intangible heritage, bring about an increase of employability and employment-related outcomes, the development of professional skills and capacities, the building of partnerships among civil society organisations, universities, private bodies and public stakeholders, the cohesion of communities and the inclusiveness of society.

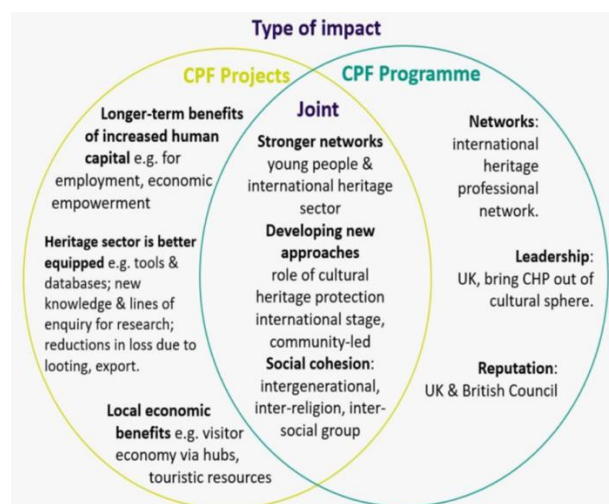
First Session

BC and AICS presented their respective approaches to the protection of cultural heritage, introducing tools, methods and actions.

British Council

The British Council introduced the [Cultural Protection Fund](#), launched in 2016 with an endowment of £ 30M. Based on a broad definition of cultural protection as a tool for development, from which economic and social benefits derive, the CPF implements projects responding to well-identified needs on the spot, in connection with local CSOs. To date, **70 projects have been carried out for 35 M pounds in 12 countries**, including Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Yemen: their implementation, among other things, has made it possible to reach areas that are not normally accessible, such as remote areas in Yemen.

Impacts in this sector are especially dependent on the modalities and approaches with which projects are carried out: **the "how" counts as much as the "what" and the "how much"**. The relationships built throughout the projects are one of the cornerstones of its success: a key to its social and cultural sustainability. Some of the evidence and enabling factors which are starting to emerge from the Cultural Protection Fund were also linked to sustainable development and the UN SDGs, framed through the **Cultural Protection Fund's Impact Framework** including community empowerment, community leadership and networking benefits to grantees.



Some of the enabling factors highlighted in the Cultural Protection Fund evaluation in supporting sustainable development:

- Forging relationships & networks supports access to or generation of employment opportunities;
- A proactive approach to generating employment outcomes reportedly worked well;
- Training & capacity building, providing skills for when funding has finished.
- The development of a legacy of digital outputs e.g. databases.
- Involvement of younger generations in safeguarding for the future, supported by intergenerational & peer-to-peer activity;
- A diverse pool of participants from across different societies, & providing opportunities to interact as part of project activities, &/or around shared heritage;
- Culturally specific solutions: e.g. developing translated versions of resources in local languages, & ensuring resources & examples are centred on local features.

AICS

AICS framed its approach to the Protection of cultural heritage from a thematic and a methodological perspective. From a thematic perspective, AICS envisages actions on cultural heritage in terms of drivers and enablers of socio-economic development. **Culture as a driver of economic development produces direct employment** in terms of jobs on site (for professional or unskilled workers), as well as in terms of spin off employment opportunities in the tourism and service sectors, among others. Culture as an enabler contributes to creating the conditions and a favourable context for socio-economic development by promoting human capital, thus affecting **governance, democracy and stability**.

Cornerstones of the AICS approach in designing and implementing actions on cultural heritage are **ground-based programming**, rooted in an extended presence of regional offices on the field, and **partnerships** with local public and private stakeholders. Such an approach ensures a thorough knowledge of the territory, its cultural tangible and intangible heritage and its needs.

Within this framework, **AICS Tunis** Regional Office offered insights on actions in Morocco and Tunisia, focussing on the relevance of partnerships and of local intangible skills within cultural protection actions. The project for the conservation and valorisation of Morocco's archaeological heritage Volubilis - a World Heritage Site - Chellah; Lixus and Zilil has "partnership creation" as its keywords, and the exchange of know-how and best practices on restoration, conservation, valorisation, and site presentation as its main pillar. In Tunis, the restoration and valorisation of Sainte Croix complex in the Medina of Tunis responds to **a specific request of the community**: here the restoration of the presbytery will not only give new life to an historic building, but it will also provide a unique space for designers, artists and traditional artisans. The tangible heritage of historic Medina is meant to host the true spirit of the intangible heritage of Tunisian craftsmanship where workshops, atelier and exhibition will be linking the past and the future of culture and heritage of Tunisia.

AICS Beirut Regional Office presented CHUD Projects in two of the main UNESCO World Heritage sites, Baalbek and Tyre, highlighting, on the one hand, the impact on **local intensive labour** produced by the on-site works and the infrastructures implemented by Italian specialized companies and, on the other hand, the impact on the **neighbouring towns' economic sectors**. In fact the restoration of monuments and archaeological sites produced an attractive environment that contributed to strengthening the tourism industry and local small business. Furthermore, the maintenance of historic buildings contributed to the improvement of the quality of life in the area and promoted the sense of belonging. Finally, Aics Beirut offered insights on the relevance of **capacity building and training**, stressing the importance of transferring

and sharing Italian expertise to enhance national governance and management capabilities in the perspective of sustainable development.

AICS Amman Regional Office focused on how actions in Jordan are progressively increasing attention to culture as a driver of employment opportunities and an enabler of the **tourism industry**, starting from actions at the Petra Archaeological Park, a World Heritage site since 1985 that highly contributes to Jordan's overall tourism market. The actions evolve in line with the national priorities, including prosperity, and they focus particularly on engaging youth in the preservation of cultural heritage. Capacity development of Syrian and Jordanian youth and the Petra Archaeological Park (PAP) authority staff in heritage preservation and risk prevention (training on safety and security, geology and engineering, geology applied to cultural heritage), resulted fundamental to sustainable development. On the other hand actions have offered employment opportunities to skilled and unskilled workers identified through a vulnerability assessment scheme, and engaged in risk mitigation interventions through cleaning of the Siq slopes.

Second Session

A set of field experiences selected among European partners offered evidence of the following main topics:

- the **value added** by actions on cultural heritage in addressing conflict and recovery and their relation to sustainable development;
- the effects and added value of partnerships in projects;
- the modalities of involvement of local communities within the projects and their impacts on the wellbeing and livelihoods of local communities.

Guest speakers and specific topics

Vasile Rotaru, EEAS Head of Sector – Methodology of Integrated Approach

The EEAS Concept Note on Cultural heritage in crisis and conflicts is related to socio-economic development: actions on cultural heritage are fundamental not only with the aim of protecting heritage from damage, but also with the aim of favouring recovery in terms of reconciliation and sustainable development. In this perspective, **the relevance of culture is claimed not only in peace dialogues, but also in the reconstruction process as a tool to favour the involvement and consultation of local communities**, both essential in the logic of *building back better*.

Angela Atzori, DG NEAR, Team Leader – EU MADAD Trust Fund

The Madad trust fund, created in 2014 to respond to the Syrian, crisis is managed by the EU Commission on behalf of the donors. 11 mln have been given to UNESCO to support livelihoods through cultural heritage development, in collaboration with ILO. Implemented in Jordan and Iraq the programme creates opportunities for Syrian refugees, vulnerable Jordanians and Iraqi internally displaced. The key elements look at job development but also at creating an enabling environment for **cultural entrepreneurship**. This cultural *volet* of the Trust Fund has been started in 2018, in occasion of the European year of Cultural Heritage, in line with the international strategy on cultural relations of 2016 and policy priorities on Culture in the European Consensus of 2020

Rein Nieland, EU Delegation Lebanon - Head of Cooperation

The Lebanon Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) is part of a comprehensive response to the massive explosion on the Port of Beirut on August 4, 2020. **The attention to culture within this framework stems from the lessons learned from the reconstruction of Beirut in the 90s**, following the civil war when the heart of the city was rebuilt with modern buildings erasing in part the cultural heritage and the

social fabric of the area. Indeed, following the port explosion once again one of the most affected areas was the vibrant epicentre of the city with a unique urban fabric embedded with historical buildings hosting the production of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI), with impacts on associated livelihoods, and the risk of permanent exodus from the sector of those affected. Overall, the estimate of damage to the cultural sector ranges from US\$1.0 - US\$1.2 billion, with losses from US\$400.0 - US\$490.0 million.

Mazen Masoud, ENABEL - Local economic development expert Enabel and Bosayna A. Eisheh Director/ Urban Planning Department, Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)

Belgium supports the Palestinian Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) through the Regeneration of Historical Centres (RHC) project. The project focuses on **preservation/restoration and development/revitalization of the urban and rural areas** with a historic and cultural value that are currently affected by abandonment and physical and economic depletion.

Anthony Dutemple, Head of Mission Première Urgence Internationale – Occupied Palestinian Territory, project funded by the Cultural Protection Fund.

The project aims to rehabilitate two heritage sites in the Gaza Strip: the Saint Hilarion Monastery and a Byzantine Church in Jabaliyah, as well as to provide training and capacity building to students and skilled workers. Beyond the **protection and preservation** of the archaeological sites, it delivers a **capacity building programme for students and skilled workers** in a variety of conservation and archaeological techniques, and increases **public engagement** with the two sites.

A programme of practical training has been delivered with the two university partners as well as a wide programme of community engagement attracting significant numbers of Gazans to visit the sites.

Ana Sanchez, AECID - Department of Cultural Cooperation and Promotion.

AECID referred to the project “Accompanying the Comprehensive Urban Renewal Process of the Historic Centre of Hebron” (Palestinian Territories). The initial objective of the Urban Renewal Process of the Historic Centre of Hebron focused on the **use of public spaces**, including sanitation and infrastructure, and improving living conditions and cultural life through the protection and enhancement of rich cultural heritage.

Concluding Remarks

Culture, including the protection of cultural heritage, directly contributes to the economy of services, the economy of knowledge, and the economy of sustainability. Nevertheless, its borders as an economic sector remain fuzzy, which explains why official data on employment and value added do not capture its full footprint on socio-economic systems, as the OECD points out. Therefore, it is important to **monitor economic indicators related to cultural initiatives**, to measure economic outcomes, and also **to balance inequalities of opportunities between urban and rural settings** and between large and small operators.

The protection of cultural heritage is a key to **cultural experiences**, which are much more needed than often perceived, and which fundamentally require the engagement of people. As many contributions of this webinar have shown, the demand of cultural experiences remains strong, while the protection of cultural heritage represents an **economic and social investment**.

In short, **culture is an asset**, a most powerful asset, from an economic perspective, as well as from an overall sustainable development perspective. As a matter of fact, **culture is rooted in human capital** and, as such, it is universally distributed. Promoting culture, intended in its broadest sense, may contribute to transform

development in a shared and democratic process in which attention and importance is given to people's own visions, skills and objectives, where each one puts into play and leverages his own means to achieve results, within a dialogic process.

We believe that acting for the protection of cultural heritage, as an economic and social investment which produces tangible outputs, deserves greater and greater attention and support.

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Speakers

AICS

AICS Tunis: *Gessica Ferrero*, Programme Officer for Morocco; *Anna dal Maso*, Head of Social and Local Development Unit for Tunisia.

AICS Beirut: *Maria Luigia Calia*, Senior CHUD Programme officer

AICS Amman: *Alessandra Blasi*, Team leader Culture&Development

AICS Rome: *Paola Abenante*, Culture Sector; *Andrea Merli*, EU Cooperation Unit

British Council

Steve Stenning, Head Arts and Society

Ian Thomas, Head of Evidence, Arts

Rosanna Lewis, Senior Programme Manager Culture and Development

Isabelle Van de Gejuchte, Senior Advisor Policy Engagement

Attendance: about 70, including representatives of European Commission, European External Action Service, PN Members, Member States representatives, UNESCO, EUNIC, cultural organisations.