



The Tracker

CULTURE & PUBLIC POLICY



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This monthly Tracker is produced by UNESCO to monitor culture in public policy with regards to the UN Sustainable Development Agenda. It highlights developments within national and regional contexts, as well as emerging debates on culture's contribution to sustainable development. Drawing on a variety of sources, it provides a broad overview of cultural policy trends worldwide at the national, regional and international level and looks at ways in which countries integrate culture into other policy areas.

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AT A GLANCE

Today's young people face unprecedented challenges: not only are they more likely to be unemployed, they also have to face some of the greatest challenges ever experienced by humanity. Young people are also the future guardians of our rich, diverse, heritage and dynamos for fresh ideas and creativity. Culture provides multiple responses to this gauntlet of challenges.

This issue's **Cutting Edge** explores the linkages between youth and the cultural sector, from amplifying their voices, to the transition to adulthood, and the role of culture to foster greater civic engagement and social innovation.

Cultural Policy Highlights contains the latest cultural policy innovations from around the world, whilst the **Regional Perspectives** section includes updates on regional processes.

The **Culture in the Agenda 2030** section delves into Member States' Voluntary National Reviews, demonstrating that youth policy is often a gateway for countries' cultural policies.

Find Out More offers further resources on youth and culture, as well as the latest news and advocacy materials from UNESCO.



KEY FIGURES

The cultural and creative industries represents

30 million jobs
worldwide and employs more people
aged 15-29 than any other sector



(Ernst & Young 2015)



CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

This section showcases a selection of the latest developments in cultural public policy from UNESCO Member States. Whilst reactive measures to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cultural sector are expected to largely guide cultural public policies throughout 2021, there are positive signs that countries and cities are transitioning from recovery measures to longer term strategies to build resilience in their cultural sectors.

In **Namibia**, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism have launched a national strategy on 'Sustainable Heritage Tourism Development and Employment Creation Opportunities at Community Level' to accelerate tourism's role in economic development, social inclusiveness, as well as in cultural values, environment, diversity and heritage management.



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The Ministry of Culture of **Saudi Arabia** has released its annual report, reviewing the state of the country's cultural sector in 2020. Focusing on seven key areas, the "Report on the State of Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2020: Digitization of Culture" aims to provide an evidence base for the development of Saudi cultural policies.

The **Kazakhstan** Ministry of Culture and Sports has announced a modernization of the Kazakh film studios, the largest in Central Asia. Wider reforms for the country's film industry include developing a film information system and amending its cinematography bill.

The parliament of **Germany** has passed into national law the European copyright reform that covers copyright responsibility of online platforms and press publishers. In addition, the law contains other clauses related to publisher participation in the revenues of collecting societies, copyright contract law, the preservation of cultural heritage, digital use in education and the availability of out-of-print works.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities of **Italy** has announced the launch of a public-private partnership cultural fund to support investments and other interventions for the protection, conservation, restoration, use, enhancement and digitization of the country's tangible and intangible cultural heritage.



Aaron Greenwood/Pexels.com



CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS



Estella/Pexels.com

The Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage of **Ethiopia** organized an awareness raising and capacity building workshop on the UNESCO 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict to better report on its immovable and movable cultural heritage.

The Ministry of Culture and Sports of **Qatar** has launched a series of dialogue sessions to develop its national youth policy that will include themes such as education, employment and entrepreneurship, health, information technology and the environment.



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In the **Philippines**, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the City of Manila have published The Philippine Registry of Cultural Property. The registry was set up in 2009 to provide information on cultural resources for the public, land use planners, property owners, developers, the tourism industry and educators.

The **United States'** government announced that it has returned two stolen ancient sandstone lintels from northeastern **Thailand** dating from the ninth and tenth centuries after retrieving them from the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.



Pixabay/Pexels.com



The Department of Culture of **Antigua & Barbuda** has launched an online survey as part of a major data collection drive into the economic impact of the country's creative industries. The initiative aims to identify ways to increase participation in the sector and advocate for greater investment in the sector.

Antigua Naval Dockyard and Related Archaeological Sites
Nicola & Reg Murphy



CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

Eswatini is the new host country of the African Tourism Board, of which the tourism authorities of several southern and eastern Africa countries are members. The organisation adheres to the UN World Tourism Organizations Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, which highlights that "stakeholders in tourism development... should observe the social and cultural traditions and practices of all peoples".



mbrand85/Shutterstock.com*

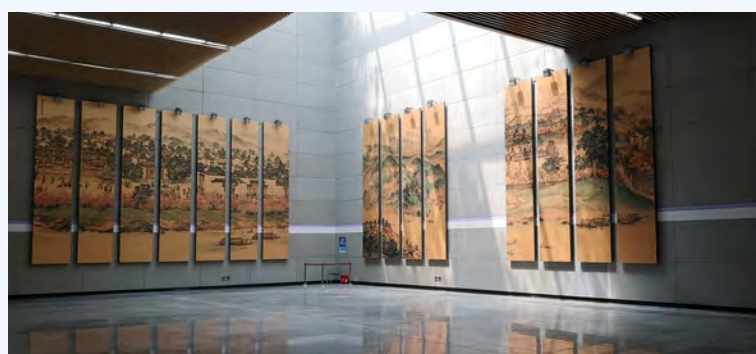


Ethan Hu/Unsplash.com

In **Morocco**, the Interior Ministry has partnered with the Rihla Foundation to provide training workshops in arts and culture for youth in the city of Sidi Kacem. Through theatre, writing, painting and electronic music, the "Machtal" project also aims to foster social inclusion.



The National Cultural Heritage Administration of **China** plans to upgrade 10 to 15 museums by 2035. The plans also include strengthening innovation and expanding museum collections.



Xiaoci YU/Unsplash.com

In **Canada**, the Department of Canadian Heritage is inviting all artists and content creators to participate in the Canadian Artists and Content Creators Economic Survey to help create an updated portrait of the country's artistic and creative community to potentially revise policies and programmes.

Cassidy Dickens/Unsplash.com



Venezuela has held its first consultation meeting on the draft Law for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The country has been a State Party to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2006.



CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

Benin will receive 35 million euros from the French Development Agency for the rehabilitation of the famous royal palaces of Abomey and for the construction of a new museum to international standards planned to accommodate the 26 works that **France** is preparing to return to the country at the end of 2021.



Homo Cosmicos/Shutterstock.com*



Mo Gabrail/Unsplash.com

As part of **Egypt's** Vision 2030 initiative, Cairo's Academy of Arts is to undergo substantial renovations, including the construction of new cultural centres and the installation of state-of-the-art technology.



Creative **New Zealand** has released the latest triennial research into New Zealanders' attitudes towards and engagement with the arts that shows that the arts are making a powerful contribution to wellbeing and are helping people cope with COVID-19.

Poland has launched the "Culture without Barriers" programme to improve the range of cultural experiences accessible to people with living with disabilities at Polish cultural institutions. The Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport will be a strategic partner in implementing the near PLN 20 million initiative.



Marcos Castillo/Shutterstock.com*

Mexico and **El Salvador** have signed a joint agreement for the digital preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage, including historical and cultural documentary heritage. The deal also includes training and research on related topics, as well as academic exchanges.

Through the MuseumsLab project, museum professionals from 10 African countries and **Germany** will come together to spark "new thinking and new practices of co-operation for museums and art spaces in Europe and Africa". They will exchange on topics such as looted objects, including from decolonization that have been restituted, as well as practical issues such as funding.



CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS



K. Mitch Hodge/Unsplash.com

Ireland has announced new creative projects to support young people, including writing projects, increased funding to the Youth Theatre Ireland, a new Creative Technologies Initiative and an extension of the Creative Schools programme.



The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of **Indonesia** has announced that it will hold a Cultural Goods and Spice Route Festival with navy ships retracing the archipelago's spice routes, and various cultural performances and local culinary events. It is hoped that the festival will celebrate cultural heritage – both tangible and intangible – as well as strengthen cultural diplomacy.



Tom Fisk/Pexels.com

Paraguay has begun the process for public consultations on its new cultural heritage protection law. The new law clarifies categorisations of cultural property, defines the responsibilities of owners of cultural property and strengthens legislation for non-compliance.

The Ministry of Culture of **Peru** has updated its Ethnolinguistic Map of the languages of the indigenous or native peoples that aims to ensure that public bodies provide bilingual staff for the more than 4.4 million speakers of indigenous languages, depending on the predominance of any of the 48 indigenous or native languages at the district, provincial and departmental levels.



Janaya Dasiuk/Unsplash.com



Youth and Cultural Policies: Coming of Age



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It is often said that young people are our future. But they are also our present.

The 1.2 billion youth around the world – some 16% of the total global population – is the largest generation of young people in history. Almost 90% of today's youth are in developing countries where they constitute a high proportion of the population. In Africa, the world's youngest continent, the youth population is projected to reach 830 million by 2050, according to the United Nations Development Programme. Today's young people face unprecedented challenges: not only are they currently three times more likely to be unemployed than adults, they have to face some of the greatest challenges ever experienced by humanity. Climate change, rising inequalities, conflict, the issues related to artificial intelligence and new technologies... the young people of today will have to navigate complex, uncertain terrain ahead. Compounding these problems, the lives of young people around the world have also been disrupted by the pandemic, with recent studies indicating that young people feel more anxious about their own futures as a result, leading to increased isolation, marginalization and, potentially, extremism.



Global trends are showing that culture provides multiple responses to this gauntlet of challenges. Young people are also the future guardians of our rich, diverse, heritage and dynamos for fresh ideas and creativity. Despite disparities in education, no generation has been so literate and so exposed to such a large volume of diverse knowledge - and, unfortunately, fake news - including about the challenges facing humanity and the planet. Today, youth are more politically aware and have the potential and the will to contribute to cultural and civic life. Connected to each other like never before through digital technologies, they already contribute to the resilience of their communities, proposing innovative solutions, driving social progress and inspiring political change. Investing in young people has a ripple effect throughout societies. Capturing the energy, inspiration and dynamism of the global youth population in building a better world is not optional: it is essential to the achievement of the ambitious Sustainable Development Agenda.

UNESCO was among the first United Nations (UN) agencies to have a youth programme deeply rooted in the power of culture and the appreciation of cultural diversity to build peace in the minds of men and women. In 1947, following World War II, the Organization recognised that engaging youth in Europe in the reconstruction of cultural heritage was an important way of healing the scars of conflict. Nowadays, across the UN system, the need to fully engage the youth population in order to achieve peace and development has been fully embraced. In 2018, the UN published a Youth Strategy to amplify its work with and for young people across its three pillars: sustainable development, peace and security, and human rights. A UN Special Envoy for Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake, was appointed in 2017. While the United Nations defines "youth" as persons between the ages of 15-24, UNESCO recognises that youth is a fluid, ever-changing category, which varies from country and region.

The right of youth to access, enjoy and actively participate in cultural life is enshrined in international law, forming a key part of their cultural and human rights. Participation in cultural life is necessary for young people to gain an understanding of their own culture and that of others, which in turn broadens their horizons, strengthens their ability to resolve conflicts peacefully and fosters respect for cultural diversity. UNESCO's action on youth policy - as the UN agency with a lead mandate on culture and education - is guided by Sustainable Development Target 4.7, which calls for all learners to acquire an appreciation of the role of culture for peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and an appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

Priscilla Du Preez/Unsplash.com





As one of its priority groups, UNESCO's engagement with young people is guided by its Operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021). The Strategy encourages engagement of youth in UNESCO's action from the "upstream" integration of youth concerns and issues in the policy agenda to "downstream" grassroots youth-led initiatives in their communities. Working with young leaders, entrepreneurs and members of community youth organizations, young women, marginalized youth and youth with disabilities, the strategy follows three axes 1) policy formulation and review with the participation of youth 2) capacity development for the transition to adulthood and 3) civic engagement, democratic participation and social innovation.

Amplifying Youth Voices through UNESCO Culture Programmes

The integration of the youth perspective in UNESCO Culture Conventions and Programmes has come a long way since the action camps following the Second World War, becoming more structured and integrated. Since 1995, UNESCO has organized an annual World Heritage Youth Forum in conjunction with the World Heritage Committee, offering young people the chance to learn about and respond to threats facing World Heritage. At the first World Youth Heritage Forum, held in Bergen, Norway, young people called for education on cultural and natural heritage to be incorporated into national curricula in order to better understand the challenges facing the protection and conservation of cultural and natural heritage, as enshrined in the principles of the UNESCO 1972 World Heritage Convention. Participants also called for better representation with the local and national authorities through youth advisory committees. Since this initial World Heritage Youth Forum, some 40 international, regional and national youth fora have been held around the world.

The UNESCO World Heritage Youth Forums are at the vanguard of emerging challenges that face youth, incorporating their perspective into the development of cultural policies. For example, at the 2019 World Heritage Youth Forum, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, participants brought forward the youth perspective on the theme of "World Heritage: Local Insights for Global Challenges", linking the New Urban Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change to the UN Sustainable Development Agenda. This theme is particularly pertinent as UN-Habitat's World Cities Report 2020 estimates that whilst currently, youth and children collectively account for nearly 40% of the world's population, by 2030 60% of urban dwellers in developing countries will be under the age of 18, creating an 'urban youth bulge' that requires a reformulation of the social contract between young people and their societies.

Brian Lundquist/Unsplash.com





A new network of young cultural heritage professionals also emerged from a UNESCO-European Union project in 2019, "Engaging Youth for an Inclusive and Sustainable Europe." The European Young Heritage Professionals Forum, held in Zada, Croatia, was the first Forum of its kind to address both the synergies and challenges of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in the European context. The new network of 28 young heritage professionals who can act as "Cultural Heritage Messengers" in their own countries and communities to actively raise awareness about the importance of caring for and transmitting our shared heritage.

Whilst the UNESCO 1972 World Heritage Convention has led the way in integrating youth perspectives and actions into its implementation, UNESCO has progressively integrated youth into other areas of its work on culture. Youth are a priority group for the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and the 246 members are encouraged to engage with youth. Earlier this year, for example, the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, Parma, Italy organized its 3rd Youth Forum focusing on culture, environment, food, education, and urban regeneration. Furthermore, youth remain a priority group in relation to UNESCO's work on Intangible Cultural Heritage to transmit knowledge, know-how and wisdom from generation to generation. At the UNESCO Youth Forum in 2018 young people were called upon to tell the story of their living cultural heritage, including Samoan tattoo artists and Guyanan traditional story-tellers.

Museums play a vital role in engaging young people to be active citizens, particularly by providing non-formal educational opportunities, including for marginalised youth. A 2015 Network of European Museum Organizations publication, for example, brings together some good practices for working with young people and provides guidance for enhancing youth programmes. UNESCO is also stepping up its engagement with youth on the value of museums, with a first UNESCO Campus event in May 2021 attracting 300 youth in collaboration with the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (South Africa), the National Gallery of Cayman Islands, the Child Museum in Cairo (Egypt) and the Victoria and Albert Museum (United Kingdom).

Iakov Filimonov/Shutterstock.com*





Culture and employment: a stepping stone to adulthood

Unemployment is one of the key challenges for youth. It is predicted that some 600 million jobs need to be created in the next 15 years to meet youth needs. Globally, one-fifth of young people currently have "NEET" status ["not in employment, education or training"], which means they are neither gaining experience in the labour market, nor receiving an income from work, nor enhancing their education and skills. Some 96% of youth in developing countries work in the informal sector. Furthermore, the International Labour Organizations' latest assessment indicates that one in six young people are out of work due to the pandemic.

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the cultural and creative industries represented 30 million jobs worldwide and employed more people aged 15-29 than any other sector. Moreover, the share of youth in cultural occupations is larger in low-income countries than in high-income countries, as outlined in a recent World Bank report, Orange Economy: As a Driver of Jobs for Youth. In Pakistan, for instance, nearly one-third of people in creative and cultural occupations are under 24 years old. Similarly, in Ghana and Uganda, more than 25% of people in the creative economy are youth. The cultural and creative industries can also open up opportunities for disadvantaged young people, including refugees, such as Syrian Abdulrahman Naseb who mastered culinary arts in Jordan thanks to a vocational training initiative. As such, expanding access to the cultural industries and supporting young artists and entrepreneurs, through subsidies and recognition schemes, should be a vital component of post-crisis recovery strategies.



The cultural and creative industries employ more people aged 15-29 than any other sector

(Ernst & Young, 2015)

Los Muertos Crew/Pexels.com



UNESCO supports young cultural entrepreneurs through the International Fund for Cultural Diversity - linked to the UNESCO 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions - and has supported some 120 projects in 60 developing countries since 2010. Youth benefit in at least half of the projects, from training opportunities for women and young creators in Honduras to engaging Namibian youth in the global music market: and from to establishing an audio-visual sector for a disadvantaged community in Indonesia to supporting the Steel Pan art form in Saint Lucia. The recent You Are Next Initiative, supported by philanthropist Sabrina Ho, boosted opportunities for young female entrepreneurs in the creative sector, whilst a new initiative launched in 2020 in collaboration with Japanese film director, Naomi Kawase, supports young female film directors from Africa.



Employment in the creative sector is particularly important in urban centres and can constitute up to 13% of employment in major cities worldwide, as highlighted in the recent UNESCO-World Bank publication "Cities, culture, creativity: leveraging culture and creativity for sustainable urban development and inclusive growth". Many of the 246 cities of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network harness creativity to create employment for youth. For example, Lviv (Ukraine) a UNESCO Creative City for Literature, has launched a programme to support young writers, the UNESCO Creative City for Design Shenzhen (China) hosts the Shenzhen Design Award for Young Talents to promote the work of young professionals and the UNESCO Creative City for Gastronomy of Popayan (Colombia) has launched a digital library on traditional cultural heritage with sections dedicated to encouraging creative young people in catering and hospitality professions.

The cultural heritage sector also supports youth employment. In Yemen, the UNESCO-EU Cash for Work initiative has already employed more than 2,350 young people through the restoration of World Heritage cities and historic urban centres, rehabilitating more than 150 historical buildings. It has also supported artists, youth-led initiatives, and awareness-raising campaigns to boost the cultural and creative industries. A similar scheme is being rolled out as part of UNESCO's flagship initiative Revive the Spirit of Mosul, through which 1,500 young people - as well as internally displaced people and returnees - have gained employment opportunities in Mosul and Basra. These projects in the Arab region respond to the increased recognition that the culture sector can be a source of employment for youth, with the knock-on effect of preventing violent extremism and the mass exodus of young people. Meanwhile, young people are also bringing fresh ideas to heritage conservation, for example through 3D imaging to create digital replicas of heritage sites, such as the start-up ICONEM, with whom UNESCO has partnered.

Intangible cultural heritage skills and practices – whose intergenerational transmission are vital – can also provide youth employment opportunities. For example, the vocational schools in Turkey make it possible to obtain a two-year degree in the art of traditional handmade tiles and ceramics called Cini and equip young people with relevant skills, creativity and design knowledge to provide job opportunities. The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources of Bhutan has strengthened and extended traditional arts and crafts institutes, ensuring that links with the monasteries and villages with the traditional know-how are maintained. Greece's Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports is also making efforts to provide technical and vocational education and training for its vernacular shipbuilding. Whilst the formalisation of youth training in intangible cultural heritage can provide youth employment, it is also important that this heritage is not entirely de-contextualised outside of the community.

“ Young people are yearning to reconnect with their heritage. They don't necessarily know how to do it, and schools are a useful mechanism to allow this to take place.

John De Coninck,
Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda



Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi (Uganda)
CRA-terre/Sébastien Moriset



Incorporating culture – including living heritage – more seamlessly into the school curriculum can also make learning more relevant to learners and help their development to adulthood. As part of the UNESCO-EU living heritage project, for example, ten pilot projects are underway to test ways of teaching with intangible cultural heritage in the European region, resulting in a [new resource kit for teachers](#). This supplements experiences documented in the 2017 UNESCO publication "[Learning with Intangible Heritage for a Sustainable Future: Guidelines for Educators in the Asia-Pacific Region](#)" that shows how elements inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage can be incorporated into learning in several disciplines. This includes Pakistani Truck Art to aid in chemistry lessons to learn about the composition of paint, traditional Muong music of Viet Nam to understand the source of sounds, Besh Tosh and Lank Uzbek Folk Games for the physical and health sciences and the Palauan Notion of Respect Within the Community to learn about road safety.

More broadly, as the world of work changes, the skills gained from engaging in culture and creativity are becoming increasingly important for the contemporary workplace. The World Economic Forum's [2018 Future of Jobs Report](#) predicts creativity, innovation and ideation will be key skills for the workforce of the future, as manual tasks become automated. UNESCO is currently engaged in an important global reflection – including with youth – on "[The Futures of Education: Learning to Become](#)" that aims to rethink education in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty, and precarity. [Progress reports](#) already indicate that it will be vital "to open education to advancing a diversity of cultures and epistemologies, making good use of concepts such as care, ubuntu [southern African word loosely meaning "humanity"], teraanga [Wolof word loosely meaning "hospitality"], sumak kawsay [Quechua term meaning "good living"], ayni y minka [Quechua concepts related to collective work], among many others."

Culture and education: building blocks for a better society

Culture and education are the building blocks to construct stronger, more harmonious and more resilient societies, through the transmission of values of inclusivity, respect and mutual appreciation of cultural diversity. World Heritage sites, for example, are repositories of knowledge, laboratories for climate change adaptation and focal points for intercultural dialogue. In recognition of this important function, the [UNESCO World Heritage Education Programme](#) engages young people to participate in heritage conservation and respond to the continuing threats facing our World Heritage. Initiated as a UNESCO special project in 1994, it is a collaboration between the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the [UNESCO Associated Schools network \(ASPnet\)](#).

Mark Cruzat/Pexels.com





The programme has developed several resources for use inside and outside of the classroom. The World Heritage in Young Hands Educational Resource Kit, developed in 1998, aims to raise awareness among young people about the importance of preserving their local, national and World Heritage. It covers key themes such as identity, tourism, the environment and a culture of peace, and is available in 40 languages. A short film series entitled "Patrimonio", created in 1994 by a group of Spanish-speaking students, has been developed. Furthermore, a 2015 manual for teachers on underwater heritage, entitled "Heritage for Peace and Reconciliation: Safeguarding the Underwater Cultural Heritage of the First World War" not only intends to highlight the role of the 2001 Convention for the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, but also offers a concrete way to introduce the concepts of dialogue, peace and reconciliation.

The World Heritage Volunteers Initiative, launched in 2008, provides more hands-on experience on the preservation of World Heritage. Since the first project that took place at Mosi-oa Tunya/ Victoria Falls (Zambia & Zimbabwe) in 2009, some 5000 volunteers have participated in more than 350 action camps at 138 World Heritage sites. These experiences have been collected in a recent publication celebrating the first ten years of the initiative, entitled "Empowering Youth for Heritage". The sites featured are located in some 60 countries, and include sites that are in danger and sites that are on the tentative list for World Heritage, meaning that young people have a real stake in securing the future of these sites, such as the Rainforests of the Atsinanana in Madagascar, the Lalbagh Fort in Bangladesh and the Inca site of Incallajta of Bolivia. Countries are also taking initiatives to safeguard their intangible cultural heritage through transmission to youth. For example, the Fujian Province of south-eastern China has formulated a strategy to ensure the puppetry art form is passed on to future generations whilst Nàhuat youth from El Salvador have participated in inventorying to safeguard their oral traditions.

Youth are also key stakeholders in global efforts on the prevention of violent extremism, and UNESCO is the leading agency on educational and cultural approaches on this priority area for the UN. At a time when cultural heritage is increasingly in the line of fire during conflict, as recognised in several UN resolutions (notably S/RES/2347), UNESCO launched the #Unite4Heritage campaign in 2015. The campaign combined social and traditional media, as well as events, to provide an alternative narrative to vulnerable young people as a means of strengthening the resilience of youth in the fight against extremism.





In the Arab region in particular, UNESCO has been supporting youth social actors in the prevention of violent extremism through culture, often harnessing digital technologies. In 2018, the Prevention of Violent Extremism through Youth Empowerment in Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia project, was launched in collaboration with UN Office of Counter-Terrorism to support youth civic engagement and equip youth with knowledge, tools and skills to participate in peace-building. The project "MediWander", for example, aims to engage secondary and high school students through a digital game that takes a creative, approach to promote the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Sousse Medina – a UNESCO World Heritage site.

“

It is challenging to motivate youth to find greater interest in heritage and to introduce them to the fascinating history of their medina. Our game is designed to make heritage an appealing and youth-friendly topic. Ultimately, the objective is to gain knowledge and skills to engage in peacebuilding efforts through solidarity and respect for diversity, education, critical thinking, dialogue, engagement and action.

Yoldez, young Tunisian architect, designer of Mediwander



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Intercultural dialogue is increasingly important in societies across the world, as well as the increasingly interconnected online spaces, particularly for youth. Ethnic, linguistic and cultural minorities are more likely to be among the estimated 246 million children and adolescents who experience school violence and bullying, in some form every year. Global Citizenship Education is a response to such intolerance and UNESCO's dedicated programme has explored cultural practices from around the world to instil respect for diversity, in its publication Global Citizenship Education: Taking it Local. Media and Information Literacy (MIL) also plays a significant role in instilling values of respect for cultural diversity through efforts directed at strengthening cultural literacy. UNESCO - with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations - has launched the first international University Network on Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue to bring together the latest research, share educational materials and promote youth-media initiatives.



“Nothing about us, without us”

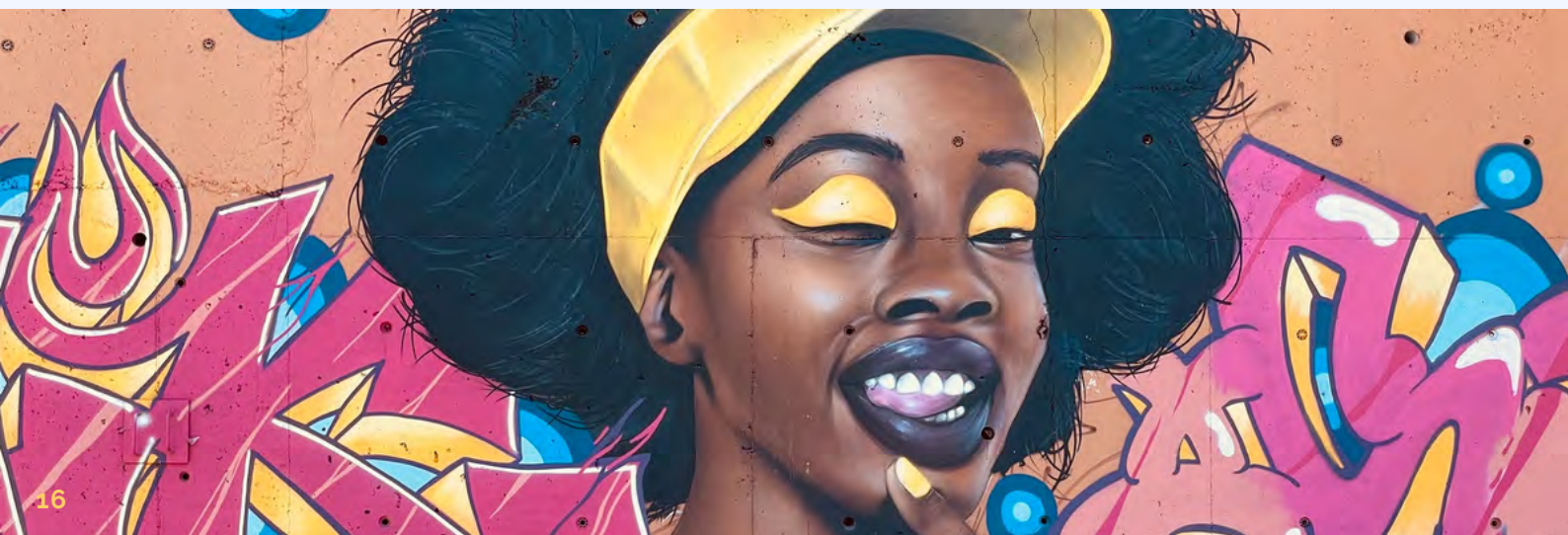
Young people are not passive beneficiaries but equal partners and actors for sustainable development and peace. They are increasingly vocal and reject what they see to be ‘tokenism’. Culture and education rank highly as priorities for youth and they are increasingly bringing their concerns to major political fora. For example, the youth group of the G20 industrialised nations’ group (known as the ‘Y20’), recently conducted a survey on the main “preoccupations for the future” of young people, which highlighted that education and culture are the second and third most important priorities, following climate change. In the framework of the G20 Summit under the presidency of Italy, the Y20 will present their recommendations, which include strengthening the synergies between culture and education, as well as enhancing access to digital technologies.

The pandemic has particularly highlighted how countries can harness the power of the cultural sector to respond to the needs of young people who face great precarity. The sector can provide employment, a fact that is being particularly highlighted during the UN Year for the Creative Industries, avoiding the “brain drain” phenomenon by which countries lose their talented young people who seek better opportunities abroad. Empowering youth to be active in tailoring policy design is the best guarantee for having a confident youth workforce, wanting to invest in their societies.

Culture can also facilitate learning, as well as being a way for young people to interact socially, as demonstrated by the recent UNESCO social media campaign [#YouthOfUNESCO My Covid-19 Story](#) that connected young people from around the world through the art of storytelling. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of intercultural exchange programmes for young people - such as the ERASMUS scheme in the European Union, which have ground to a halt - for opening their minds to other worldviews. Furthermore, culture can be a way of engaging youth in public discourse and civic life, as demonstrated in several country’s Voluntary National Reviews (see Agenda 2030 section).

Conversely, the cultural sector itself is revitalized by young people, through their role as future custodians of the heritage of humanity and their dynamism that nourishes human creativity. Mobilizing the energy and ideas of youth will also help to reinforce the role of culture for sustainable development across policy

Osman Yunus Bekcan/Unsplash.com





areas: from health to the protection of the environment, from food security to sustainable cities. With an increasingly interconnected world - and in the face of growing inequalities - exposing young people to greater cultural diversity is one of the surest ways of moulding global citizens who are respectful of cultural diversity, nurturing their critical thinking and openness to adaptability, therefore building more peaceful societies.

Governments have made progress in supporting youth in policy-making in the cultural sector. For example, youth were recently active participants in the [national consultation for Somalia's National Culture Strategy and Action Plan](#), as well as Jamaica's new cultural policy in 2016 (with the support of UNESCO's IFCD). Yet, more progress could be made in facilitating the youth-led cultural policies. Fostering peer-to-peer programmes to support knowledge sharing, providing grants for youth start-ups and truly engaging youth at the national and local level will enhance and strengthen cultural policies. UNESCO emphatically encourages ministries to engage youth as a key party in processes to revise national cultural policies.

Investing in young people has a ripple effect that permeates throughout their communities: it is a great force for social transformation. Therefore, providing funding and training programmes to ensure young people's full participation in the safeguarding and transmission of living heritage, in the conservation of tangible heritage, and in the cultural and creative industries is a critical policy investment for the future. Digital skills and media literacy are also necessary to navigate the world today and, whilst some young people are digital natives, others need opportunities to develop these skills. Furthermore, the collection of age-disaggregated data will help to pinpoint ways to better understand the status of youth participation in various forms of cultural life, including in cultural employment and non-formal cultural education.

The ways in which countries respond to the shifting demographics in the world, as well as the ways in which young people navigate their transition into adulthood, are critical for the progress of humankind and the health of the planet. As Nobel Peace Prize laureate and advocate for the abolition of child slavery, Kailash Satyarthi, puts it: "The power of youth is the common wealth for the entire world. The faces of young people are the faces of our past, our present and our future. No segment in the society can match with the power, idealism, enthusiasm and courage of the young people."

Halfpoint/Shutterstock.com*





RODNAE Productions/Pexels.com

Activities for the African Union “Year of Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers to Build the Africa we Want” continue. Of great significance was the official launch of the entry into force of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance. The Charter was adopted in Khartoum, Sudan in January 2006 and entered into force in October 2020 upon receipt by the AU Commission of the 15th ratification. This important cultural policy document on the continent intends to promote African identity and shared values; develop Africa’s creative economy; and protect and safeguard African heritage.

“ One of the objectives of the Charter is to enhance the role of culture in the promotion of peace and good governance. The African Union is fully aware of the role that the arts, audiovisual and cinematographic expressions, along with other creative industries, play in the African integration process, as factors of peace, understanding and conflict prevention, as well as socio-economic growth.

In spite of the cultural domination, which during the slave trade and colonial era, led to the depersonalisation of a proportion of African peoples, falsified their history, systematically disparaged and combatted African values, and attempted to gradually and officially replace their languages with those of the colonisers, African peoples were able to tap into African culture to find the necessary strength for resistance and the liberation of the Continent.

The African Union believes that Africa’s unity is based first and foremost on its history. The history of Africa, which is part and parcel of our cultural identity, is key to the development of our Continent.

Moussa Faki Mahamat
President of the Commission of the African Union,
on the occasion of the launch of the entry into force of the
Charter for African Cultural Renaissance

The fifteen AU Member States that have ratified this instrument are: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Chad, Congo, Cote d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Mali, Malawi, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal and South Africa. Thirty-four Member States have signed this instrument.



Stairs leading up to a mural of galloping horses at Jumeirah, Dubai
Nick Fewings/Unsplash.com

The Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science (ALECSO), in cooperation with the Qatar National Committee for Education, Culture and Science and Qatar National Library, held a lecture on June 10 on virtual reality to preserve heritage and monuments in the Arab world. The lecture explored other new technologies, such as drones to record and monitor archaeological sites and digital twinning to preserve the originals in digital form, as well as the use of blockchain technology to protect them from looting and piracy. It was noted that these technologies also give new dimensions to people's interaction with exhibitions, creating vibrant and engaging digital displays, and even through artificial intelligence to create smart museums. Participants underlined the importance of regional cooperation to explore new technology to protect Arab heritage, as well as of acquiring skills to address attacks on heritage.

With the generous support of the Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud Foundation of Saudi Arabia, UNESCO has launched a project on Creativity in the Arab Region with a special focus on youth-led creativity. The great potential of cultural resources in the Arab region, its strong youth perspectives and demography, provides very fertile ground for expanding job opportunities, while empowering youth voices and participation to advance social and economic development. In the first phase of the project, young artists from the Arab Region share their perspectives through their creative art, providing their visions about their environment, including in the challenging context of the prevailing health crisis.





ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



Elina Sazonova/Pexels.com



The Pacific Community (SPC) hosted The Pacific Food Systems Dialogue, on May 20, convening national governments, non-governmental organizations, scientists and researchers and community representatives from across the Pacific to value the link between food and local know-how rooted in cultural practices, as well as to produce regional recommendations for food security. Representatives discussed actions to tackle the challenges – including climate change, nutrition and non-communicable diseases – facing Pacific countries in realizing equitable benefits from the global food system.

The Pacific Dialogue is one of a number of regional and independent dialogues that, along with national dialogues, will feed into the global UN Food Summit, to be held in September 2021 at UN Headquarters. The Summit will seek to launch bold new actions to transform the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food in order to contribute to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, each of which relies to some degree on healthier and more sustainable and equitable food systems. The cultural dimension of food security, including sustainable attitudes, will be part of the discussions.



Manuel Nägeli/Unsplash.com



The Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe (CoMoCoSEE) adopted a declaration recognizing “the exceptionally important role of culture in sustainable social and economic development in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” More specifically, the Ministers - who gathered in Athens, Greece on 25 May - recognized the importance of a holistic approach towards the cultural and creative sector, which focuses on the interdependence of the economic and social dimensions of culture. They also acknowledged the role of culture for social cohesion and the need to strengthen capacities to leverage culture for environmental sustainability and tackling climate change.

The Council (Education, Youth, Culture and Sport) of EU adopted conclusions on the recovery, resilience and sustainability of the cultural and creative sector at its meeting on 17-18 May. The meeting identified six priorities following the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis, including improving access to funding, strengthening mobility and cooperation, and accelerating the digital and green transitions. On 21 June, the Council also adopted conclusions welcoming the EU Concept on cultural heritage in conflicts and crises, which enhances the EU's approach to peace, security and development. The protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage is to be mainstreamed into Council work across areas under the Common Foreign and Security Policy and included in all the relevant dimensions of the EU toolbox for conflicts and crises.



A new report on how to close gender gaps in the cultural and creative sectors has been published by the EU Commission. The report “Towards Gender Equality in the Cultural and Creative Sectors” provides recommendations and an overview of over 250 good practices from across the EU to improve the working conditions of women.



Marisol Benitez/Unsplash.com

Two declarations were adopted at a meeting between the European Network of National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) and the Ibero-American Network for Cultural Diplomacy (RIDCULT) that took place 10-11 June with more than a hundred delegations. The first declaration was a commitment between EUNIC and RIDCULT on culture and development. The second declaration between EUNIC and the European Union was to promote European cultural diplomacy in the international arena, including the celebration in 2022 of the Euro-American Cultural Week simultaneously in 125 cities in 95 countries.



As part of the celebration of the International Week of Arts Education, the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI) announced the development of a web platform that will collect good practices in the field of arts education. Compiling experiences of arts education teachers and creators, the platform aims to offer a tool to share knowledge so that more educational institutions will incorporate art and culture into their classrooms.

The Regional World Heritage Institute in Zacatecas (Mexico), in collaboration with UNESCO, organised the "International Forum World Heritage and Communities: From Present to Future" to explore experiences on World Heritage in Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico. The event highlighted the importance of understanding cultural heritage defined as both patrimonial assets of the state or institutional sphere and elements such as dances, rituals, archaeological sites or temples, which communities consider as their own. It was noted that indigenous communities continue to face marginalization, even though they are bearers of a great cultural wealth, particularly living cultural heritage, such as language, worldview, gastronomy and clothing.



CULTURE AND YOUTH

Youth policies are an entry point for cultural policies for several countries. Some Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) demonstrate how Member States have youth policies with culture as a key component to integrate young people. Other Member States also highlighted measures to develop youth skills to enhance employment in the cultural sector. The UN 2030 Agenda encourages youth participation in the dialogue on sustainable development and some countries have shown how they carry out projects using culture to engage youth in this dialogue. Finally, other VNRs highlight how youth contribute to sustainable development by safeguarding intangible heritage and by participating in civic life.



HOLISTIC YOUTH POLICIES: CULTURE AS AN IMPORTANT PILLAR

Ghana highlights that many educated young people do not have decent jobs. In response, the country adopted its National Youth Policy in 2017, which prioritizes economic empowerment, culture and sports for young people. **Lesotho's** Youth Policy of 2017 also provides a framework for enhancing young people's participation in the development processes by developing their social, economic, cultural and political skills. Moreover, since 2012 the Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation has been conducting entrepreneurial and technical trainings and providing information on opportunities for youth entrepreneurs to boost youth employment. **Serbia's** National Youth Strategy (2015-2025) also aims to promote youth employment and entrepreneurship, as well as digital literacy, the recognition of youth achievements in science, art, sport and innovation, and the improvement of cultural services in rural areas. **Palau's** 2016 National Youth Policy was developed with the participation of youth and contains actions in eight different domains including arts, culture, sports and recreation. In **Cyprus** the National Youth Strategy (2017-2022) also identifies several fields of action including among them youth and the world, creativity and culture.





DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH SKILLS FOR EMPLOYMENT IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR

Slovakia reported in its 2018 VNR a project in Georgia to support unemployed youth by developing entrepreneurship potential in areas with great tourism potential, through the practice of traditional arts and crafts, and for organic agricultural businesses. **Bahamas** mentions a heritage resource conservation plan designed to map out areas of historic importance to develop a strategy for the tourism sector and provide income-generating activities for marginalized communities, particularly entrepreneurial opportunities for youth. **Panama** highlights programmes related to SDG 11 (cities) that encourage young people to take advantage of their talents in art, culture, music, crafts by collaborating in areas such as tourism, museums and special events to improve income resources.



CULTURE TO ENGAGE YOUTH DIALOGUE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Saudi Arabia launched the MiSK Foundation Global Forum in 2016 to bring together young leaders, creative persons and intellectuals to explore ways and means of addressing the challenge of change. The Government of the **Kyrgyz Republic** has been implementing the “SDG Youth Ambassadors” programme bringing together youth activists and has organized more than 150 events to promote the SDGs, including through, art exhibitions and festivals. The **Solomon Islands** reports on the innovative use of film to tackle corruption through a film festival organised by the Pacific Youth Forum Against Corruption.



CULTURE FOR YOUTH EDUCATION AND CIVIC LIFE

Oman's National Youth Committee contributes to projects to support young people in writing and publishing their books, as well as establishing reading clubs in universities and colleges. Another project documents national oral history to build a database for young researchers on oral history and intangible cultural heritage. **Turkey's** VNR mentions its 292 youth centres that engage in cultural, sports and artistic activities to increase the participation of young people in civic life and to develop their life skills. Moreover, these centres constitute spaces for the integration of young people from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.





LATEST NEWS



UNESCO 2001 CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE

To celebrate the 2001 Convention 20th anniversary, UNESCO has launched the largest ever international underwater heritage cooperation programme involving eight countries on both shores of the Mediterranean for the safeguarding of the Skerki Banks; an exceptional archaeological site, which has been frequented since antiquity by ships travelling the trade route between Rome and Carthage.

See video explaining Sherki Banks project



Евгения Пивоварова/Unsplash.com



UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE SESSION TO BE HOSTED BY CHINA AFTER A ONE-YEAR HIATUS

The World Heritage Committee's 44th session will be chaired from Fuzhou (China) and take place online from 16 to 31 July. The Committee will inscribe nominated sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List and examine the state of conservation of 255 sites already inscribed, 53 of which also figure on the List of World Heritage in Danger.



UNESCO LAUNCHES REPORT SERIES ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE CULTURE SECTOR

The series of reports, based on recent surveys and research, provides revealing snapshots across 5 areas: World Heritage; living heritage; cultural and creative industries; museums; and cities.

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PARTIES TO UNESCO 2005 CONVENTION PROMOTE RESILIENT CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTOR

The 8th Conference of Parties to the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions - ratified by 150 countries and the European Union - was held online from 1-4 June 2021.



TRACKING INVESTMENT TO SAFEGUARD THE WORLD'S CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

UNESCO Institute for Statistics released the first set of data for Indicator 11.4.1, related to protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, in a new report, Tracking Investment to Safeguard the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage.

READ MORE



YOUTH RESOURCES



VOICES OF YOUNG ARTISTS FROM THE ARAB REGION: ONE WORD, ONE ARTIST

Through the project supported by the Sultan bin Abulaziz Al-Saud Foundation of Saudi Arabia, UNESCO has invited young artists from the Arab Region to share their perspectives through their creative art.

[READ MORE](#)



DIVE INTO LIVING HERITAGE

For more information on the linkages between youth, living heritage concepts and elements on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, see the Dive into Living Heritage tool.

[READ MORE](#)



WORLD HERITAGE MAGAZINE

See the issue of World Heritage magazine with a special focus on youth initiatives.

[READ MORE](#)

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We are counting on partners to support its production in other UNESCO official languages, to expand the global discussion on culture and public policy.

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Cultural Policies and Development
Culture.Forum@unesco.org

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