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

Social inclusion is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, yet culture remains under-utilised in fostering social cohesion. Cultural practices, sites and expression convey values and skills, conducive to social inclusion. Access to and participation in cultural life have long been appreciated as crucial elements in enhancing well-being and creating a sense of belonging.

This month's **Cutting Edge** explores how to harness culture and creativity to forge more inclusive and harmonious societies, through fairer distribution of cultural infrastructure and use of public spaces, economic empowerment, and more equitable access to culturally-adapted public services.

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

The **Culture in the Agenda 2030** section examines how Member States' Voluntary National Reviews are harnessing culture for social inclusion.

Find Out More includes the latest news and advocacy materials from UNESCO.

> **Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community [and] to enjoy the arts**
>
> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 27

Focus on...

Local & Urban

Indigenous Peoples

Climate Action

Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Culture & Education

Digital

Gender Equality

Youth

Regulatory Frameworks

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 stimulate adaptations of 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 **Madagascar**, the Ministry of Handicrafts and Trades, with other partners, has launched an initiative to boost the potential of the crafts sector for economic development. The initiative includes training opportunities for young artisans, support for employment insertion and the facilitation of exchanges on craft know-how.

Iakov Filimonov/Shutterstock.com*

The Minister for Culture, Sports and Youth of **Oman** has approved a Cultural Strategy 2021-2040. Developed through a participatory approach, it aims for an integrated cultural system with objectives to develop cultural and creative industries, consolidate linkages between culture and society, and reinforce legislation.

Puriwat Sereerat/Shutterstock.com*

The National Assembly of the **Republic of Korea** has passed an Act on the Status and Rights of Artists. It aims to protect the freedom of artistic creation and expression, to promote the professional rights of artists, to guarantee the status of artists, and to contribute to the development of art by creating a gender-equal artistic environment.

In **Belgium**, the cultural authorities of Brussels, have begun a three-month trial of doctors being able to prescribe museum visits in order to support mental health amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Launched in collaboration with a city hospital, patients being treated for stress will be offered free visits to five public museums in the city. The results of the pilot will be published next year.

The Ministry of Culture of the **Dominican Republic** has inaugurated the House of Music museum in the Colonial City of Santo Domingo, which seeks to reinforce the country's musical identity through exhibitions and artistic activities, through exchanges with the music and dance industry. It is also expected to enhance tourism.

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CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

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In **Gambia**, Gambian artists' music videos are driving an awareness campaign encouraging people to get the COVID-19 vaccine, officially launched by the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Organised by the National Centre for Arts and Culture, in partnership with regional organization ECOWAS and UNESCO, the campaign also supports artists.

The Ministry of Culture of **India** has announced the establishment of the 'Indian Institute of Heritage' in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The new institute aims to strengthen higher education and research by offering Masters and Ph.D courses in the History of Arts, Conservation, Museology, Archival Studies and Archaeology, among others.

In **Canada**, the Canadian Heritage authority has announced the creation of two ministerial consulting committees to help support a green shift in the arts, culture, heritage and sport sectors. One committee will be dedicated to the arts, culture and heritage sectors while the other will be dedicated to the sport sector, as part of government efforts to engage society as a whole in efforts to address climate change issues.

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The Ministry of Culture of **Jordan** has launched training courses and workshops to support talented creative young people. The 130 participants are laureates of the "My Talent from My Home" competition designed to nurture the skills of youth in creative writing, visual arts (drawing and Arabic calligraphy), drama and singing, to build a sustainable knowledge economy.

Uruguay has announced the First International Festival of Inclusive Arts to be held in 2022. The "Unlimited - International Festival of Inclusive Arts" includes performances, art residencies, workshops and lectures on inclusiveness for arts and culture, and will be supported by the European Union.

CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

In **Rwanda,** the Cultural Heritage Academy has signed an agreement with Africa in Colors – an organization promoting creative industries in Africa. The agreement entails cooperation on capacity building and empowerment of creative industry players in Rwanda and creating an environment that allows players to showcase their goods and services on global platforms.

One zone Studio/Unsplash.com
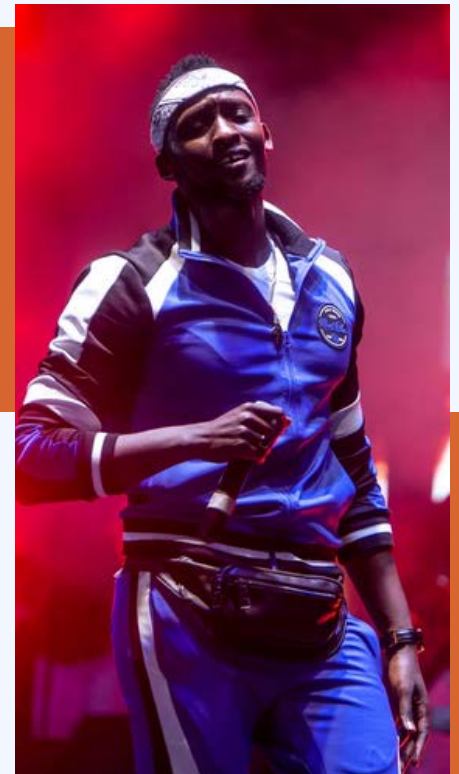
The Ministry of Culture of **Egypt** has launched of the new project 'Cinema Between Your Hands' to develop the skills of young people in filmmaking, in collaboration with the Higher Institute of Cinema. The initiative is part of a larger "Start Your Dream" project targeting creative youth.

New Zealand Heritage Pouhere Taonga has announced the Rainbow List Project as part of its work to diversify the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero. It aims to recognise places of historical, cultural and social significance to New Zealand's gender-marginalised communities.

BernadetteB/Shutterstock.com*

The Palaces and Culture Agency of **Denmark** has launched the "Pool for art and culture in vulnerable housing areas 2022" initiative to support locally based partnerships between social housing actors and arts and culture actors. The initiative supports projects that can contribute to locally rooted cultural communities and strengthen active citizenship.

Chile has begun work on its first National Cultural Heritage Plan with the signing of a collaboration agreement between 15 governmental sub-secretariats. Promoted by the Ministry of Cultures, Arts and Heritage, the Plan for the period 2021-2026 aims to ensure coordination at state level to strengthen the comprehensive development of research, safeguarding and dissemination of the country's cultural and natural heritage, paying particular attention to the heritage of Chile's indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples.

General Carrera Lake, Patagonia, Manon van Goethem/Shutterstock.com*

CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

In **Somalia,** a new cultural initiative dubbed the "Home of Somali Poetry" has been initiated to help promote unity among the population. The initiative, backed by the United Nations Development Programme, underline brings together Somali poets and poetry enthusiasts to promote Somali poetry and use it to foster peace and human rights.

Trust "Tru" Katsande/Unsplash.com

Christian Burri/Unsplash.com

The Ministry of Culture of **El Salvador** held a series of webinars to identify issues faced by indigenous communities during the pandemic. During one of the virtual chats, leaders of indigenous communities exchanged experiences and good practices to open up new perspectives for resilience.

The National Gallery of **Bosnia and Herzegovina,** in collaboration with a civil society organization, has launched an initiative to use art to tackle social stereotypes around the Roma population. A key feature is an exhibition by Selma Selman, a Romani Bosnian artist and activist, dedicated to empowering Roma girls through visual arts by providing scholarships for their education.

The Forum for Literature, Language and Culture of **Mauritania** has launched a digital platform intended to be a space for culture, art and creativity. By bringing together intellectuals, artists and writers and various forms of cultural and artistic professionals, the website also aims to archive Mauritanian literature.

Tonga has unveiled its first ever National Youth Policy 2021-2025, covering topics such as health and wellbeing, employment, social protection and the instilling of national cultural values. It also includes provision for peer education programmes to enrich youth civic capabilities through religious, cultural and civic education.

Michal Pechardo/Unsplash.com

Span <u>has created an Inter-ministerial Commission to develop a legal framework on the status of the artist</u>, adapted to the particularities of artistic performance. Led by the Ministry of Culture and Sports, it will also include the Ministries of Finance; Education and Vocational Training; Labour and Social Economy; the Presidency, Relations with the Courts and Democratic Memory; Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations; and the Ministry of Universities.

ChiccoDodiFC/Shutterstock.com*

The Ministry of Culture of **Peru** has approved <u>guidelines for the implementation of the Recovery Plan for cultural industries and the arts by 2030</u>. Developed with technical assistance from UNESCO in Peru after a participatory process involving workers in the arts, the guidelines contain provisions related to employment, labour conditions, gender equality, cultural rights of vulnerable populations and local governance, among others.

In July, the Ministry of Culture of **Belarus** held a meeting of the board "<u>On the implementation of the action plan for the development of circus art in the Republic of Belarus</u>" to discuss work on the preparation of the Belarusian circus programme and the challenges of the development of amateur circus art.

Rodrigo S Coelho/Shutterstock.com*

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of **Viet Nam** <u>has begun work on middle- and long-term plans and programmes for the tourism system with a vision to 2045</u>, which aims at a sustainable development toward green growth, harmony between tourism development and conservation, environmental protection and climate change adaptation.

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All Aboard! Culture and social inclusion

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"**L**eave no one behind": the pledge at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development makes social inclusion its major defining feature.** The commitment to ensure development for all was born out of the recognition of the corrosive effects of social exclusion in societies that are increasingly complex, particularly due to demographic shifts and migration. Individuals and groups should be included in the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for peace, prosperity and planet "irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status", as specified in Target 10.2. Yet, people all over the world continue to face exclusion, discrimination, or chronic poverty, even in the most developed countries. For example, <u>one in five persons reported being discriminated against on at least one ground of discrimination prohibited by international human rights law</u>. Just this month, the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, called for "<u>renewed solidarity between peoples and future generations</u>" in his latest report, Our Common Agenda, launched during the UN General Assembly.

Social exclusion has negative consequences for all within society, not just the poorest or most marginalised. Solving the problem of social exclusion is urgent. The consequences of deepening inequalities can be particularly devastating, including social discontent, declining levels of trust in government, increased crime, disease, environmental degradation and persistent levels of poverty. In recent years there has been a recognition that equality goes beyond income and wealth, that there are overlapping dimensions, and that inequalities also destroys people's sense of fulfilment and self-worth. Unfortunately, climate change impacts and armed conflict are wiping out many human development achievements of the past decades, disturbing the social fabric in many countries and putting strain on host countries of displaced people.

Culture is a resource for building social cohesion that remains under-exploited. Cultural practices, sites, and expressions are enablers conducive to social inclusion. Access to and participation in cultural life have long been appreciated as crucial elements in enhancing well-being and creating a sense of belonging and shared identity. Furthermore, culture has a high capacity to stimulate effective engagement of local communities across all generations in public life. The 2030 Agenda has given fresh impetus to harness the power of culture across the broad spectrum of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the inclusion of marginalized groups, as well as to raise awareness about the need to build on cultural diversity as a positive resource. At the same time, our increasingly interconnected societies resulting from the acceleration of the digital transition and common global challenges are prompting countries to acknowledge their interdependence when it comes to creating the conditions that enable the flourishing of inclusive societies that engage citizens and diverse groups as actors of their development.

Cultural diversity: the roots of development

The ambition for social inclusion is seldom disputed in principle and has become one of the main precepts across the public policy spectrum. Yet, the complexity of its practical implementation remains a challenge. Global phenomena marked by political and civil unrest and conflicts, the rising scale of migration and evolving geopolitics, combined with shifting economic growth patterns, have prompted countries to rethink the notions of identity and citizenship, diversity and pluralism as they are faced with the deepening of social disparities, marginalization, exclusion and violent extremism. According to UNDESA, social inclusion is "the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society".

The aspiration for social inclusion cuts across the 2030 Agenda, which emerged as a top priority in the A Million Voices: the World We Want consultation prior to its adoption. In addition to SDG 10 on inequalities, it is explicit in SDG 5 on empowering women and achieving gender equality, SDG 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, and with regard to SDG 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. The commitment to leave no one behind also recognises that "no one size fits all". For the United Nations "creating a society for all is a moral obligation—one that must reflect the commitments to upholding fundamental human rights and principles of equality and equity." Yet social inclusion "also matters because it is the foundation for shared prosperity and because social exclusion is simply too costly," as a 2013 World Bank report points out. The UN Development Programme proposes five factors for understanding who is being left behind and why: discrimination; place of residence; socio-economic status; governance; and vulnerability to shocks.

As social inclusion is to a large extent about non-material aspects of a person's life, culture is a powerful lever for tackling it, as recognised by multilateral processes. As early as the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, the vision of an inclusive society as a 'society for all' was clearly outlined and governments recognised that a lack of participation in cultural life constituted a form of poverty. The Millennium Declaration of 2000 reiterated the need for the full protection and promotion in all countries of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all. By 2011,

the United Nations General Assembly firmly rooted cultural in broader sustainable development through Resolution 66/208 'Culture and Development' that reaffirms that culture is an important factor in social inclusion, as well as in the fight against poverty, providing for economic growth and ownership of development activities. The establishment of the Permanent Forum of Indigenous Peoples as a UN consultative body in 2007 was also a major breakthrough in terms of human rights, cultural rights and social inclusion.

Social inclusion through culture is a right enshrined in the <u>Universal Declaration of Human Rights.</u> <u>Article 27</u> states "everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits." A prerequisite for implementing this article is ensuring the necessary conditions for everyone to continuously engage in critical thinking, and to have the opportunity to interrogate, investigate and contribute ideas, regardless of frontiers. <u>The UNESCO 2001 Declaration on Cultural Diversity</u> reaffirms this right and further states, under Article 6 -"towards access for all to cultural diversity" - that people from all cultures should be able to "express themselves, make themselves known, and have equal access to art and the means of expression and dissemination."

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UNESCO 2001 Declaration on Cultural Diversity

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Even taking a more instrumental view, social inclusion through greater participation in cultural life has also been shown to have a positive impact for society as a whole. Whilst the linkages between culture and social inclusion are not easy to define, a <u>2016 UNDESA report</u>, for example, showed that a lack of engagement in civic and cultural activities among some individuals and groups had worrying implications for the foundations of democracy, such as representation, rule of law and protection of freedom and rights. Using data from <u>World Values Survey</u>, it showed that ethnic minorities in several countries express significantly lower confidence in the police and courts. Greater participation in cultural life – greater social inclusion – increases, therefore, the chances in societies being more democratic and stable.

From monuments to people

Participation, inclusivity and ownership of development processes have gradually gained importance across UNESCO's Culture Conventions as an overarching principle, both in terms of conceptual approach - which has become broader - as well as implementation modalities for projects and mechanisms for policy-design. From the 1990's, the UNESCO 1972 World Heritage Convention pivoted towards a broader, people-based approach to World Heritage properties, through the expansion of definitions that recognised the symbolic value of certain sites for communities and not only physical attributes. The cultural landscapes category, developed in 1992, was a paradigm shift that recognised values derived from interaction between human beings and the land - particularly those of indigenous communities – that facilitated the inscription of sites such as Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (Australia) and over 100 other properties. Then, a significant shift towards interpreting "authenticity" (a qualifying condition for listing cultural World Heritage Sites), within the cultural context, including more intangible attributes of heritage sites, paved the way for listing properties such as Aapravasi Ghat (Mauritius) where value is associated with memories of indentured workers from India, and the old bridge area of Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina), a reconstruction deemed to have overall authenticity due to strong intangible dimensions. UNESCO World Heritage Cities' tangible and intangible heritage, also "constitutes a key resource in enhancing the liveability of urban areas, and fosters economic development and social cohesion in a changing global environment", as recognised in the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. Furthermore, at an operational level, there is also greater recognition that conservation efforts at many sites that are confronted with mass tourism or gentrification cannot be done without the involvement of local communities.

Chiang Mai (Thailand), a UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art
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The inclusion of communities is one of the founding concepts of the <u>UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage</u> (ICH). Developed during a resurgence of interest in protecting cultural diversity and the traditional knowledge of minority groups and indigenous peoples in the face of globalising forces, it focuses on <u>bearers and practitioners of living heritage</u>, whether they be communities, groups or individuals. Living heritage contributes to social cohesion, encouraging a sense of identity and responsibility which helps individuals to feel part of one or different communities and to feel part of society at large. The 2003 Convention explicitly calls for the participation of communities, groups and non-governmental organizations in the identification and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. <u>The UNESCO Dive into Intangible Cultural Heritage Project</u> reveals that there are many linkages between Intangible Cultural Heritage and SDG 10. The UNESCO Field Office of Montevideo recently published the paper <u>"ICH – Social Inclusion"</u> that proposes a methodological tool and resource to improve the management of ICH through the analysis of the conditions of sustainability, participation, and non-exclusion in several identified heritage contexts. The <u>UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions</u> encourages an awareness of cultural diversity on the part of policy-makers and encourages the formation of non-discriminatory policies. It also contributes to social inclusion and fundamental freedoms, by calling on Member States to improve the status of artist and freedom of expression.

Both the 2003 and 2005 Conventions, marked a paradigm shift towards a more explicit awareness of the importance of directly associating beneficiaries in processes covered by the Conventions, including integrating a participatory process and a diversity of voices. The recognition of civil society as a key vector for the inclusion of a multiplicity of voices is particularly robust in the 2005 Convention. By placing participatory cultural policy-making at its heart – both at international level and national level - it directly contributes to SDG target 16.7. The 2005 Convention encourages and assists Parties in setting up civil society consultations for designing and reviewing policies, particularly through the Quadrennial Periodic Reports. More recently, <u>the ResiliArt movement</u> launched during the COVID-19 pandemic that starkly exposed the fragility of the sector, opened a new space for dialogue between governments and civil society.

Given these conceptual and operational evolutions, UNESCO has developed tools for Member States to assess the contribution of culture to sustainable inclusion, with a view to honing policy design. A 2012 volume of the <u>UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics Handbook</u> proposes a framework specifically to measure cultural participation. More recently, social inclusion features as one of the four key dimensions of the <u>Culture|2030 Indicators</u> framework published by UNESCO in 2019, linking its Culture Conventions to the different SDGs. Specific indicators include culture for social cohesion, artistic freedom, access to culture, cultural participation and participatory processes. At the national level, countries, such as the Republic of Korea, have also developed national cultural impact assessment frameworks.

Culture: a vehicle for pluralism

Developing broader and more inclusive definitions of heritage and creativity is not just an academic issue: it is critical for designing cultural policies for greater social justice. In the mid to late 20th century, cultural participation was above all seen as relating to 'the arts' and was treated by most developed countries as counting visits to museums, galleries and performances. Gradually the focus has moved away from the democratization of 'high culture' through national institutions, to include many informal or traditional activities. Increasing focus is now placed on cultural participation as a lever for social inclusion, and as a core component of a vibrant democratic society, conducive to the values of tolerance and trust. States, particularly in Western Europe and Africa, are increasingly reporting on national sustainable development planning that harnesses the cultural and creative sectors to drive societal transformations, particularly in the realm of social inclusion by mobilising culture to nurture identity and social cohesion, fight inequalities and empower vulnerable groups and minorities. Social inclusion can be an objective for many public policies but there are a few key policy areas in which culture can be particularly effective.

The provision of inclusive access to cultural facilities, contributes to the social and economic vitality. The 2015 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society, particularly highlights how museums "can also enhance the social inclusion of vulnerable populations", as places of cultural transmission, intercultural dialogue, learning, debate and training. The recent UNESCO high-level forum on museums further highlighted their role as essential pillars of our societies and fundamental places for sharing and dialogue. A number of countries are investing in cultural infrastructure to build a more inclusive narrative on cultural diversity. It is not just the extent of that physical infrastructure that counts for social inclusion but also the narratives that they reflect. Cultural institutions and museums play a critical educational role in conveying critical messages on history and of forging new audiences. The museums dedicated to genocide, for example, in Rwanda or Cambodia help populations and communities to better understand the dark pages of their past and are building on culture for reconciliation Similarly, the recently inaugurated National Ainu Museum and Park in Japan valorises the culture of the Ainu indigenous people, as well as preserving elements of their intangible cultural heritage such as language, spiritual values, traditional dances and handicrafts.

Traditional hut of the Ainu indigenous people of Japan. Nonchanon/Shutterstock.com*

Some countries seek to expand cultural infrastructure beyond the urban centres, including in rural areas or urban peripheries. Central Asia, for example, has a well developed cultural sector in its vast areas through cultural and leisure institutions, many of which help to safeguard the living heritage of those communities. The National Target Programme on New Rural Development of Viet Nam, also targets rural areas through cultural infrastructure and cultural community activities. Mali has a large network of community museums whilst Egypt and Iraq use mobile libraries and bookstores to share literature with remote communities. Meanwhile, Darling, South Africa holds an annual festival, called the Voorkamerfees (the 'Front Room Festival') that literally happens in the front rooms of poorer people who reap the economic benefits from hosting performances, and not in city-based, purpose-built infrastructure.

Accessibility and reaching diverse audiences remain important tasks for museums and heritage information centres. Studies have found that museums in general lag behind other social institutions with regards to accommodating people living with disabilities such as wheelchair users, the visually challenged, and hearing impaired people. Tunisia's "Museums for All" initiative has made two museums accessible for the visually impaired whilst in Bulgaria, a national strategy implements arts education for children with special needs. Furthermore, prohibitive pricing can represent a barrier for some populations to participate. Through a scheme in Slovakia, for example, the Ministry of Culture distributes cultural vouchers to school pupils to access culture, such as for admission to a theatre, museum or gallery. Digital technologies provide new possibilities for improving accessibility to collections, such as "The First Brazilians" exhibition of indigenous culture of the country's National Museum that has been visited by some 250,000 people.

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Public spaces have a social and cultural character that consolidates systems and processes of social inclusion, particularly as cities attract increased residents worldwide. On average, in urban areas, public spaces for use by residents and visitors comprises about half of the land, with the exception of very dense settlements. At outlined in the 2016 UNESCO publication Culture: Urban Future, the democratic use of the public space as a common good allows culture to flourish - for example, through public artworks, street theatre or carnivals - but also to strengthen social interactions, to open spaces for dialogue and to become familiar with the culture of others. Unfortunately, about one billion people live in informal settlements which typically lack basic services, as well as nearby public open spaces.

The local level, or other sub-national levels, determine to a large extent, the availability of cultural resources and specific initiatives for the effective exercise of cultural rights. At city level, for example, the Parque Cultural Valparaíso (Valparaiso Cultural Park), Chile , once a public prison, is now a cultural centre for dance, music, theatre and circus performance, and has helped promote dialogue among the community and encourage local cultural practices through fairs and street theatre. Cities are also leading on some initiatives, such as Buenos Aires, Argentina, which is coordinating activities to reduce the social stigma of people with mental health problems through cultural activities.

Supporting the vitality of civil society through a diversity of voices

Promoting the diversity of cultural expressions is conducive to social cohesion. Free cultural expression through values, beliefs, convictions, languages, knowledge and the arts, institutions and ways of life enables people to express their humanity, their world view and their cultural heritage. A 2016 Council of Europe publication reported that "diverse societies where individuals maintain their own identities are not necessarily less inclusive or less cohesive". Furthermore "cultural participation more generally and specific forms of cultural activity, especially artistic expression, online creativity and passive participation, are indeed strongly associated with trust, tolerance and related dimensions of an inclusive society." The 2003 Convention also supports projects aimed at wider social cohesion through the safeguarding of the cultural practices of marginalised communities.

Culture is an undisputed lever, in particular, to foster the inclusion of migrant populations. A 2012 UNESCO publication "Migrants' Inclusion in Cities", published with UN-Habitat, advocates for the inclusion of migrants through inter-cultural debates, city galleries and venues open to immigrant artists, among other initiatives. Istanbul, Turkey holds an annual International Migration Film Festival to highlight that migration has been a common story experienced by all nations throughout history. Initiatives, sometimes led by civil society organizations, such as the Refugee Food Festival in France, also serve for social inclusion of a stigmatised population through sharing of the culinary traditions, building relations with the broader community. In Peru, like other parts of the Latin America and Caribbean region, migration is a policy concern, and UNESCO and the International Organization for Migration has recently launched a project strengthening the socio-economic integration of migrants and refugees in the town of Arequipa through the arts and cultural industries.

Other groups who may face discrimination include women, youth, older people, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities and countries are leveraging the cultural sector to foster social inclusion as reflected in UNESCO's Policy Monitoring Platform. Examples include Norway's action plan for inclusion and representation in films, Ethiopia's Cultural Festival for People with Disabilities or Panama's programme to promote the culture of its Afro-Darienita community. The Art-Lab initiative, in collaboration with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) focuses on artistic interventions with at-risk populations, putting into practice cultural rights and justice for social inclusion. A series of Art-Lab pilots started in Cameroon in July 2021 in view of mainstreaming the arts practice into the policies of the Ministries of social affairs, as well as the humanitarian and development operators.

Cultural and creative industries can also be harnessed for the economic empowerment of marginalised groups. Rasht, Iran (a UNESCO Creative City for Crafts and Folk Art), for example, has established a crafts centre to empower women cultural entrepreneurs and Barbados has launched a project to train out-of-school youth in the audiovisual and media industries. The International Fund for Cultural Diversity, linked to the 2005 Convention, aims to support the creative sector in developing countries, including through projects, reinforcing "Cultural Factories" for women in Uruguay and engaging Namibia's San community musicians to become cultural entrepreneurs.

Mind the gap

Social barriers may prevent individuals and communities from accessing public services, for example due to language differences or ingrained negative stereotypes. In recognition that the manner in which services are provided matters almost as much as the technical design of the service itself there is a growing practice focusing on "intercultural competencies" among service providers, particularly advanced in health and social work, and is growing in education and other sectors. UNESCO has undertaken training sessions based on the Story Circles, a participatory and dynamic methodology to develop intercultural competencies in a space of equity and respect. The methodology for the acquisition of intercultural competencies empowers frontline workers with the socio-emotional skills to interact across difference, whether within a society (differences due to age, gender, religion, socio-economic status, political affiliation, ethnicity, and so on) or across borders, fighting against stereotypes and unconscious bias. The Master Class Series against Racism and Discriminations, launched by UNESCO in 2019, also seeks to empower students to become youth champions in their own schools and communities and spread awareness on how to deconstruct the mechanisms underlying racism and discrimination and seek mutual understanding.

Municipalities are at the forefront of addressing the needs and entitlements of a growing and diversifying population in this age of mobility. UNESCO has contributed, along with other UN agencies to reflection and a guidance document for building the inclusive, equitable communities envisioned by the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compacts for Migration and on Refugees.

Furthermore, the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR) - launched by UNESCO in 2004 - supports the work of some 500 cities in seven regional and national coalitions of cities to build inclusive urban development, free from all forms of discrimination. UNESCO Creative Cites are also vehicles for engaging citizens in "design thinking" for moulding urban public policies tailored to the needs of the population, such as in Bandung, Indonesia (a Creative City of Design).

As well as cultural competencies, institutional arrangements can facilitate access to and delivery of public services. In New Zealand, service provision is devolved to Maori organizations such as health providers, who provide services that are responsive to Maori health needs and the Maori kaupapa (philosophy), using the Maori language. Language policy across the world can be an important driver of both exclusion and inclusion. Singapore has four official languages, facilitating access to public services, and Peru has a network of translators employed across the countries to ensure that speakers of indigenous languages can access services. Language in education was also identified in the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report as vital for ensuring learning outcomes, as well as social inclusion. As part of the UNESCO Decade for Indigenous Languages 2022-2032, indigenous peoples represent a distinct group whose human right to language should be promoted and protected.

Leaving no one behind: the extra mile

Social inclusion through culture is a human right issue and a pragmatic public policy choice. Participation in political, civic and cultural activities is a major part of social life and crucial to promoting democratic societies that are inherently more stable and prosperous. Social inclusion should not be seen as a threat to central government or the centrality of national values. Culture can be one of the underlying causes of social exclusion that impinges on the capacity of each individual to work, live and access basic services equitably. The ambition for social inclusion starts with the equal recognition of groups through anti-discrimination laws and their effective enforcement – an exercise that inherently dives into cultural differences - as well as creating more inclusive cultural and social institutions. Education is also vital to advance inclusion and global citizenship in today's diverse and multicultural societies. Social inclusion also requires removing barriers to fully participating in public life and accessing public services.

Harnessing the cultural and creative sector for social inclusion is particularly strategic in tackling exclusion. A starting point is targeted actions to improve the cultural infrastructure, open spaces for intercultural dialogue, create opportunities for cultural expression, and empower individuals and groups through the arts and crafts. Yet, culture needs to be anchored in the broader public policy spectrum meaning that governments will need to work around the usual silos. Cities play a particularly pivotal role in promoting diversity and inclusion, targeting the most disadvantaged groups, such as persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, youth, migrants and refugees, vulnerable women and girls, and the elderly. In an increasingly urban world, it is from cities that many of the greatest societal challenges emerge, so it is in cities that they must be faced – from growing inequalities to poverty and discrimination in all its forms. As centres of migration, diversity and connectivity, cities are also sites of innovation, exchange, learning, dialogue and cooperation, and are, as such, the very spaces in which creative solutions to contemporary challenges will be found.

Empowering those who are left behind is vital: individuals and groups who are excluded from political processes have limited voice or power to affect the attitudes, norms, institutions and policies that drive social exclusion in the first place. Civil society must play a strong role in policy design and policy monitoring in order to have informed, transparent and participatory systems of governance making it more likely that cultural and other public policies and measures reflect and serve people's needs. Multilateral institutions also bear responsibility for engaging with different segments of society to recall and also to encourage States to develop policies conducive to fostering pluralism. UNESCO remains fully engaged in upholding the ideals on which it is founded, from the right to education and the right to science, to the right to culture and the right to freedom of expression.

Looking ahead, the imperative for social inclusion should reshape public policy paradigms towards more equitable and inclusive models, in line with promise that is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. Culture has the transformative power to make this happen. This overall ambition was a cornerstone of the G20 culture ministerial Declaration, which outlined a vision for more sustainable and inclusive growth. This crucial issue will also be at the core of policy discussions in the upcoming UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies – Mondiacult 2022, to be hosted in September 2022. Addressing social inclusion is also one of the three thematic priorities of the new Inter-Agency Platform on Culture for Sustainable Development, launched in May 2021 by UNESCO with 36 partner agencies to leverage international cooperation efforts, including through job creation, training and inclusive digital transformations.

Today, multicultural societies require ever more active investments, enlightened leadership, powerful educational values, extensive research in social innovation and an open media world in order to ensure the effectiveness of social inclusion. Social inclusion calls for the political will and commitment to strengthen the ability of living together with our differences – of sex, race, language, religion or culture – while furthering universal respect for justice and human rights on which such coexistence depends. None of the multifaceted and complex challenges of our times can be tackled effectively without inclusion. This is the resounding message of the 2030 Agenda and its pledge to "Leave no one behind". Action to counter societal fragmentation and actively commit to fostering social inclusion must be anchored in human rights and gender equality, while promoting openness, empathy and shared values. This is the cornerstone of UNESCO's normative and operational work which aims at advancing respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. As clearly articulated in the 2001 Declaration on Cultural Diversity,"Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace."

AFRICA

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On 21 September 2021, UNESCO, the African Union (AU) and the Government of Angola, hosted a press conference to announce the launch of the 2nd edition of the Biennale of Luanda – "Pan-African Forum for the Culture of Peace", which is due to take place in November. The five-day programme will focus on four major points: Intergenerational Dialogue of Leaders and Youth; Thematic and Best Practice Forums; Launch of the Alliance of Partners for a Culture of Peace; Festival of Cultures.

In August, the 20 member states of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation adopted a Protocol on Voluntary Registration of Copyright and Related Rights. The protocol aims to address the gaps in rights granted to authors and owners of literary, musical and artistic works on the continent. It is hoped that reinforcing copyright protections will facilitate commercialization, stimulate creativity, expand markets and attract foreign direct investment.

ARAB STATES

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Marking the second Islamic World Heritage Day on 25 September, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) called on stakeholders to step up efforts on tangible and intangible cultural heritage, particularly in terms of highlighting and preserving this heritage, as well as harnessing technology such as artificial intelligence for its safeguarding and accessibility. The Islamic World Heritage Day is part of a broader ISESCO strategy that adopts a more comprehensive vision towards preserving the heritage of the Islamic world.

The Online Regional Arab Dialogue on the Fight against Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property took place on 6 September. Hosted by UNESCO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, the Arab Dialogue meeting was held as part of the global commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the UNESCO 1970 Convention to take stock of five decades of combating illicit trafficking of cultural property. Insecurity in the region is a particular concern and the 50 participants especially highlighted the need for special training on emergency evacuation of museum collections. The meeting also identified several other needs, actions and priorities for the future and fed into an international conference organized by UNESCO on 14 September 2021.

Al Mawred (Culture Resource) regional civil society organization has announced 12 alliances selected to participate in an initiative aimed at strengthening cultural entities who seek to set up collaborations. It is part of the All-Around Culture Programme to foster a vibrant cultural ecosystem as an enabling environment for social and economic inclusion of young people in seven countries across the Arab region including Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, and Libyan and Syrian communities in these countries.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Khudayar Khan Palace, known as the Pearl of Kokand, was the palace of the last ruler of the Kokand Khanate, Khudayar Khan
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Ministers of Tourism of the Turkic Council agreed during a meeting on June 24 to launch the "Turkic World Tourism Capital" project in order to promote tourism in the region, with the city of Kokand, Uzbekistan, being designated for the first year. Ministers also agreed to work on the details of the "TabarrukZiyorat" or Pilgrimage Tours project and expressed their readiness to involve the holy places of their respective countries to the project. Parties further agreed to prepare the "Tourism Map of the Turkic World" to list the main historical, cultural and touristic destinations in the Turkic World, which will be the reference project in determining the main touristic destinations in the Member States.

At the annual Committee for Culture and Information Conference of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), members agreed several new cultural projects, including an ASEAN Arts Festival project at EXPO 2020 Dubai which will take place in 2021. The Conference, held on September 8 under the chairmanship of Thailand, focused on the theme of "Diversity and Innovation: Towards a Sustainable Future for ASEAN". Participants discussed progress towards the implement The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity to 2025 on pillars including culture and information sectors.

Members of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth launched on 30 August the publication entitled "Understanding How Young People See ASEAN: Awareness, Values, and Identity", in which culture emerged as a theme. Empowering youth is a regional priority is its aspirations to strengthen cooperation, particularly supported by the Declaration on Culture of Prevention (CoP) for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy, and Harmonious Society, which was adopted at the 31st ASEAN Summit in 2017.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

Teenager at the ancient Greek temple in Agrigento, Sicily, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
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The European Union (EU) parliament Committee on Culture and Education presented an opinion – a non-binding act including an evaluation, along with possible actions- on an intellectual property (IP) action plan to support the EU's recovery and resilience. The text underlines the need to enhance legal protection for intangible assets and IP-intensive industries. It urges Member States to support educational and cultural heritage institutions to help them make full use of the opportunities of digitalisation. It also makes mention of the importance of traditional handicraft and industrial products for Europe's cultural identity and know-how, as well as of non-EU-based video-on-demand platforms.

The Council of Europe launched the Young European Heritage Makers competition for children and young people from its 47 Member States to encourage exploration, discovery and expression of their heritage. The competition is being run by European Heritage Days – the largest celebration of cultural events in Europe – and will culminate in a special exhibition at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

The Nordic Council's committee for knowledge and culture has decided to strengthen Nordic language teaching in schools through a new proposal to update the objectives in the "Declaration on Nordic language policy" from 2006. The representatives from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland took into account findings that two out of three between the ages of 16-25 believe that language comprehension is an important part of the Nordic community. More specifically, the Committee highlighted that the study of Nordic languages is fundamental for understanding sustainable development challenges.

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Ministers of Culture of the Pacific Alliance – made up of Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru – as well as representatives of entities in charge of labour, education and statistics from the four countries met in August to make progress on a common qualifications framework to promote the recognition and circulation of the arts, cultural heritage and functional creations in the region. The next step is agreeing a roadmap to establish common guidelines to certify the trades that exist in the arts and culture sector.

Ibero-American System of National Library Networks (SIRBI) has been officially launched as a space for dialogue, exchange and cooperation. The Regional Centre for the Promotion of Books in Latin America and Caribbean (Cerlalc) – a UNESCO Category II Centre – together with the national leaders of the libraries of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Panama established the network on July 21.

The Ibero-American Manual of Intellectual Rights in Music was launched in the framework of the Ibermúsicas Programme of the General Iberoamerican Secretariat (SEGIB). It aims to provide systematized pedagogical content for people involved in musical activity disseminating information about their intellectual property rights. The development of the manual was a Special Project promoted by Argentina through its National Institute of Music and the Ministry of Culture.

SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

In their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) submitted to the UN to monitor progress towards the SDGs, several Member States attest to the power of culture to reinforce social inclusion. From cultural values and cultural rights to foster social cohesion, to inclusive governance to manage cultural resources, the VNRs demonstrate the close interlinkages between culture and social inclusion. Some countries report on innovative policies for reinforcing cultural infrastructure – including through digital technologies – or the creative sector for the empowerment of marginalised groups. Finally, culture is also potent element in ensuring equitable and inclusive education systems, whilst education can also tackle prejudices based on cultural differences.

NATIONAL VALUES AND CULTURAL RIGHTS FOR INCLUSIVE POLICIES

Samoa highlights that its fa'a culture and tradition has marked the country's long-term sustainable development vision "Improved Quality of Life for All", which ensures that no one is left behind, while respecting and protecting their land and ocean resources. **Brunei Darussalam** cites that its national values are formed by social inclusiveness, harmony, respect for the elders and pivotal role of the family. These values are part of the nation's cultural events, like festivities or cultural celebrations. **Liberia** underscores that minorities enjoy equal rights, are all allowed to practice their culture and profess their religion without hindrance, and can use their languages in the public space. Moreover, **Norway** cites its White Paper on National Minorities that plans to strengthen their language, culture, and position in Norwegian society. It acknowledges that, whilst the formal rights of minorities are met, implementing those rights remains challenging.
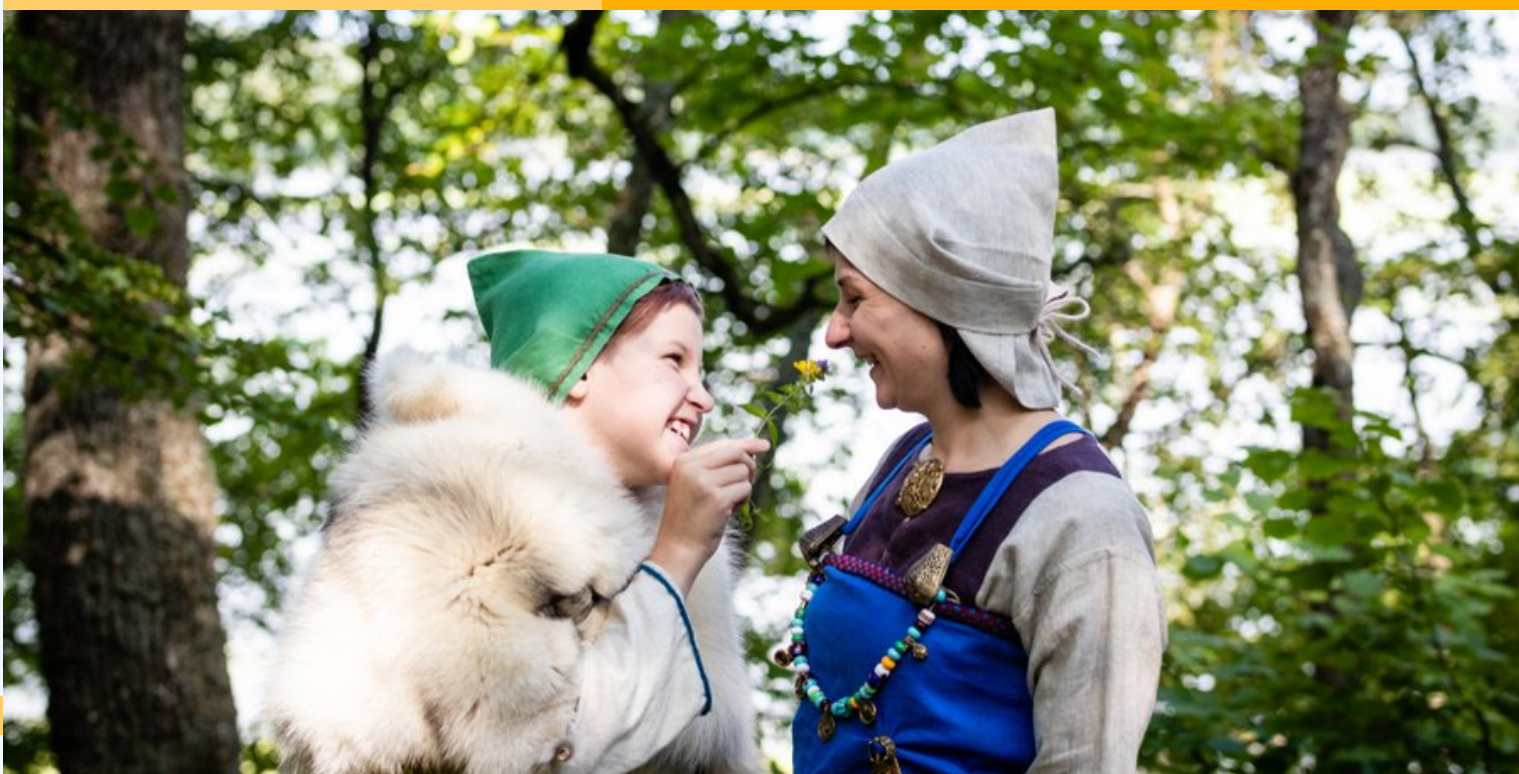
INCLUSIVE PUBLIC POLICIES FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Inclusive territorial governance with the four indigenous communities of the Mosquitia region is the aim of an initiative in **Honduras**, through a human rights approach. **Paraguay** also cites innovative models for public investment in sustainable management and governance of the natural resources of indigenous communities, which aims to fight against poverty and food insecurity, as well as improve health outcomes. Tackling maternal mortality rates among indigenous communities through the intercultural adaptation of health service delivery is cited by **Colombia** in its VNR.

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CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR INCLUSION

San Marino mentions the creation of an open-air tactile museum "Tactilia", as part of its project "San Marino for All", that promotes the accessibility of artistic and cultural heritage to the elderly and those with reduced motor and sensory capabilities. Digital infrastructure is also cited by Member States as a tool for greater participation in the social discourse. For example, **Cuba** mentions the role of its public service television, radio and other mass communication media in efforts to promote access for all to information, culture, and artistic creation. Through its "Kulturpool" digital portal for cultural heritage documenting 983,000 objects, **Austria** aims to enlarge cultural access for all. Meanwhile, a project through the Global Libraries – **Bulgaria** Foundation aims to foster equal access to information, as well as creativity and events, through collaboration with its network of public libraries, reaching even the smallest settlements with community centres.

EMPOWERMENT OF VULNERABLE GROUPS THROUGH CULTURE

Through the "Greening the Seychelles Prison" programme of the **Seychelles',** inmates develop skills, including in the arts and crafts – as part of a rehabilitation programme that also helps the prison become more sustainable. **North Macedonia,** cites the "Project Happiness" that supports people living in poverty, including initiatives encouraging women entrepreneurship focused on local culture and tradition. **Samoa**'s "Healthy Homes Healthy Villages" programme also provides livelihood skills training for women to improve their skills in sewing, weaving the traditional arts and crafts, and screen printing.

CASE STUDY   INCLUSION THROUGH EDUCATION

Respect for cultural diversity is well integrated into **Ecuador's** education system at many levels, as reported in its 2020 VNR. Its Organic Law on Intercultural Education states that vulnerable groups must have preferential treatment in access to education, without distinction of their background. Concrete initiatives that harness culture for social inclusion include the strengthening of the intercultural bilingual education system and the inclusion of Afro-Ecuadorian history and culture in the curriculum. A scholarship programme also targets people from indigenous communities at primary, secondary and university levels of education. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has collaborated with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in implementing the "Breathe Inclusion Methodology" of training teachers and other authorities on how to combat discrimination and xenophobia.

LATEST NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS

AFGHANISTAN: UNESCO CALLS FOR PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

Amid the rapidly unfolding events in Afghanistan, and twenty years after the deliberate destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, UNESCO released a statement calling "for the preservation of Afghanistan's cultural heritage in its diversity, in full respect of international law".

READ MORE

WORLD HERITAGE SITES: NEW PROTECTION FROM HYDROPOWER PROJECTS

The International Hydropower Association made a commitment on the protection of World Heritage sites and protected areas at an event organized by UNESCO during the IUCN World Conservation Congress.
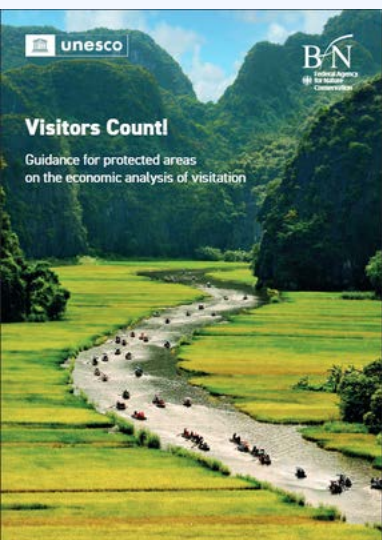
READ MORE

RESTITUTION OF 3,500-YEAR-OLD GILGAMESH TABLET TO IRAQ

UNESCO celebrated a victory in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural objects when one of the oldest literary works in history - also known as the "Gilgamesh Dream Tablet" - was formally handed back to Iraq by the United States of America on September 23rd.

READ MORE

VISITORS COUNT!

Drawing on case studies from around the world, the Visitors Count! publication aims to build awareness, knowledge and capacity internationally on how to best undertake economic evaluations of tourism in protected areas, and thereby contribute towards a globally acknowledged standard methodology.

READ MORE

CALLS FOR ACTION

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM RECOVERY SURVEY

This survey is part of an ongoing process to monitor the impacts of the crisis on sustainable tourism at World Heritage properties. The results will help shape UNESCO's World Heritage and sustainable tourism policies and recovery strategies going forward.

Deadline 5 October

CONTRIBUTE

CALL FOR PROJECTS "UNESCO-ASCHBERG PROGRAMME FOR ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PROFESSIONALS"

The call for projects is now open for projects that aims to improve the social and economic protection of artists, decent employment and the balanced circulation of cultural goods and services.
Deadline 3 December

EN   **FR**

This Tracker is produced by UNESCO, in English and French.

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

A contribution, an idea or a question?

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