



# CULTURE & COVID-19

## Impact & Response Tracker

### THIS REGULAR UPDATE

is produced by UNESCO as a snapshot on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the culture sector worldwide and on the responses initiated at the national, local and regional level. This tracker is not intended to be an exhaustive presentation of measures but instead draws on a variety of sources to provide a broad overview of the evolving situation worldwide.

## IMPACT

Many museums, galleries, heritage sites and cultural venues are beginning to open up again around the world. This week, for example, an estimated 46% of countries have opened or partially opened their World Heritage sites. Yet, following several weeks of closures, many cultural institutions and heritage sites around the world are worried about their future survival.

According to recent studies by UNESCO and the International Council of Museums, more than 10% may never reopen. Many of the estimated 95,000 museums worldwide are privately-run and rely on ticket sales. According to a recent survey by The Art Newspaper and the University of Maastricht, around one third of independent galleries and art dealerships globally do not expect to survive the crisis, particularly among the smaller businesses. Such galleries are part of the cultural ecosystem that provide artists' livelihoods.

Ticket sales are often the main – if not the only – source of financing for vital conservation, archaeological and restoration works at heritage sites and museums around the world, expanding our knowledge and safeguarding our shared heritage. Preserving these cultural places is crucial for addressing the repercussions of the crisis and for tackling long term challenges, such as climate change or social exclusion.



Tinmel Mosque, Morocco

### WORLD HERITAGE

CURRENT FIGURES

# 54%

of countries have closed their  
World Heritage Sites

#ShareOurHeritage

# ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Whilst some countries have borne a heavier burden of the health crisis, the shockwaves of the resulting economic crisis have been felt around the world. Planning for recovery is vital and many countries have already begun socio-economic impact assessments, which integrate culture. In some parts of the world, the role of culture for identity building, social cohesion, dialogue and reconciliation is paramount, while its economic contribution may be underestimated. Yet, cultural heritage and tourism, and the cultural and creative industries, represent a large portion of the cultural sector. The latter can contribute up to 10% of GDP in some countries. In addition, the World Council on Travel and Tourism believes one in 10 jobs (319 million) worldwide are found in the tourism sector, generating 10.4% of global GDP. Again, culture plays a vital role as one in three tourists cite culture as a reason for choosing their destination.

Within the United Nations system, the current socio-economic impact assessments that are being used to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic are usually conducted at a national-level through the UN Country Teams (UNCT), which work alongside relevant national ministries, to devise policies in response to the current crisis, including in both economic and social terms. The UNESCO Culture | 2030 Indicators - that are being rolled-out - serve as a guide for this process and, more broadly, culture's contribution to sustainable development.



**IT IS ESTIMATED THAT CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES CONTRIBUTE \$225BN TO THE GLOBAL ECONOMY AND ACCOUNTS FOR**

**3% of global GDP**

CREATIVE TIMES REPORT, 2015

## SOUTH-EAST EUROPE



In South-East Europe, for example, socio-economic impact assessments are taking place in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, and Montenegro, in cooperation with the respective Ministries of Culture, and in Serbia with the Institute for Cultural Development, the Ministry of Culture and the Office of the Prime Minister. With the support of UNESCO, the Ministries have launched two surveys, one on public cultural institutions and one on cultural and creative industries, which will feed into the UNCT Response Plan due to be ready in June. Countries of the region benefit from robust baseline data about culture, notably through the implementation of the UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators (CDIS), which will support the inclusion of culture in response planning. This national data notably shows that culture contributes to between 3-6% of GDP for countries in the region and that national investment in culture represents a return on investment of 3 to 5-fold.



## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)  
Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI)  
Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB)  
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

The crisis has accelerated cooperation between the countries of the South American sub-regional trading bloc, MERCOSUR, for this first ever joint statistical exercise on the cultural sector. Based on existing data sets – such as turnover, value added and employment – the study will project different scenarios to help the nine countries involved to design strategies to support their cultural sectors. With the same goal, a regional survey will be carried out to collect artists' and cultural entrepreneurs' perceptions about the impact of COVID-19 and health measures on aspects such as income, social security, employment, and ability to transition to the digital world.

Led by the Ministry of Culture of Argentina, the project is a collaboration between MERCOSUR, the Inter-American Development Bank, UNESCO and regional intergovernmental organizations SEGIB and OIE. UNESCO will particularly support efforts to strengthen national cultural information systems, in line with the methodological framework of the Andrés Bello Agreement – a regionally developed methodology that demonstrates the contribution of cultural goods and services to economic growth, including non-monetary indicators. Elsewhere in the region, Cuba, Mexico and Chile are also beginning socio-economic impact assessments, as is Ecuador, which is using the UN Post-Disaster Needs Assessment methodology.

**“ Culture once again unites us. It involves us all and has a healing power that shows us that caring for each other and for the planet is the deepest care for oneself.**

Mr. Tristán Bauer, Minister of Culture, Argentina  
UNESCO Online Meeting of Ministers of Culture,  
22 April 2020



## AFRICA



Similarly, in Africa, a number of countries, including Mozambique, Cameroon, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire are beginning to work on assessing the impact on their cultural sectors. Much of the cultural sector is in the informal economy and civil society organizations are key advocates for recognising the importance of culture in a context of competing priorities. In Namibia, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, in collaboration with the National Arts Council and the film production company Joe Vision Production, led to a survey among creative professionals in the country on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The results show that 94% of creative professionals and creative business have been adversely affected with over half stating that they do not expect to survive without financial assistance.



# ASSESSING THE IMPACT

In Africa, there is often a lack of baseline data on the cultural and creative industries and the organisers of the Namibian survey believe that this locally-adapted methodology could be applied to other countries to yield unprecedented information and help African creative professional to learn from each other. Similarly, in East Africa, the HEVA Fund that provides finance, business support and knowledge for the creative industries, recently published its findings on the impact on the creative industries in Kenya. Egypt is also reinforcing its baseline data through a study of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises that includes the contribution of actors in the cultural and creative industries.

## EXAMPLES OF GLOBAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

### CREATIVITY IN CONFINEMENT

In **Norway**, an annual food competition will be filmed and recipes shared, to encourage gastronomic creativity, despite confinement

### ART ACROSS BORDERS

The Kinda Foundation for Contemporary Arab Art, based in **Saudi Arabia**, has launched an international art competition called "Art Across Borders" to showcase creativity during confinement.

### TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Indigenous women from the Ayacucho region of **Peru** have developed a facemask with traditional designs of Sarhuino art for sale in the country and abroad

### BUILDING RESILIENCE

**Indonesia's** Directorate-General for Culture's has launched a YouTube channel "BudayaSaya". to share artistic performances and artisans' masterclasses on dancing, painting, music, storytelling, and producing films

### STIMULATING DIGITAL CREATIVITY

In **South Africa**, The National Arts Festival, in partnership with Digital Lab Africa, has launched a call for creative professionals and digital experts to participate in the 2020 edition, which will take place online

## SPOTLIGHT ON... ARTS AND CULTURAL EDUCATION

Confinement measures around the world have shown the importance of culture in order to connect. For the 1.57 billion children and youth in 190 countries - 90% of the world's student population - whose schools have been closed for prolonged periods during the past few months, the arts and culture have proven a remarkably effective way of engaging children to continue learning from home. Several schools have modified their curriculum, whilst cultural institutions such as galleries, museums and theatres have rapidly developed educational materials and made them available online. A recent report by the Network of European Museum Organizations reported that, after social media content, educational materials were the most sought after service with online visitors. These initiatives also help counter feelings of isolation and help learners heal from trauma and loss, and builds resilience. However, such cultural materials for educational purposes are not available in all parts of the world, particularly in Africa and in the Arab States.

Arts education contributes to socio-emotional well-being and improves learning outcomes. This can be either by education **in** the arts - teaching specialized art disciplines but also teaching art history which refers us to our historical and cultural heritage and develops our appreciation of cultural diversity - or by education through the arts - using the arts as a pedagogical tool for the teaching of other disciplines.

A 2019 study by Rice University involving over 10,000 students showed that experiences provided through school-community partnerships with local arts organizations, cultural institutions, and teaching-artists improved school engagement, further education aspirations, and arts-facilitated empathy. With digital technologies changing the world of work, these skills will be vital for the workplace and societies of the future.



Specialised arts institutes in tertiary education also ensure the vitality of the cultural and creative sector. With arts schools around the world also closed due to the pandemic, many students and institutes have expressed their concerns for the current cohort of graduates whose potential to earn a living from their art has been weakened by this crisis. Some arts institute, particularly smaller ones, are also in danger of closing down.



Arts and cultural education, so vital for wellbeing, goes beyond formal learning settings and is a lifelong process. The transmission of living heritage through the generations relies on education, as does an appreciation of natural and built heritage sites. A survey launched by UNESCO showed that the lockdown has been an opportunity for some practitioners of living heritage to pass on their know-how.

## STRENGTHENING SCHOOL PEDAGOGIES THROUGH ARTS EDUCATION

# 1

In **Mexico**, the Ministry of Education launched a programme entitled "Aprender en casa" (Learn at Home) using UNESCO videos on World Heritage sites, living heritage and creativity, which were broadcast via television and the internet to teach history, natural science, ethics and civic studies. In **Mongolia**, the National Centre for Cultural Heritage and the National Academy for Children's Film have broadcast the television programme "Tsets" or "The Wise" for the general public, especially for children, about the traditional culture, customs and way of life of nomadic Mongols. In **Kazakhstan**, the #ArtConnects programme has provided artistic resources for children with learning difficulties to express their emotions, as well as explore the common heritage in Central Asia. In Bangkok, the Patravadi High School Hua Hin that shares the campus of the VIC Theatre is **Thailand's** first 'alternative' high school which places an emphasis on performing arts, including writing, music and costume making. During the pandemic, they have been using their skills to make face masks.



Warholitos Project, Mexico

A 2019 STUDY, CO-LED BY THE UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF ART MUSEUM DIRECTORS, SHOWED THAT A SINGLE VISIT TO AN ART MUSEUM STIMULATED **CURIOSITY**, AND IMPROVED **CREATIVE THINKING, COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND HUMAN CONNECTIONS.**

## CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS MOBILISING FOR EDUCATION IN CONFINEMENT

# 2

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Republika Srpska, released a children's book called "The Secret Life of the Museum" that can be downloaded for free in Cyrillic, Latin and English. The Children's Museum of **Jordan** created a virtual tour, as well as posting science, arts, and other activities for children online on their social media page. The Warholitos Project of specialised tours of museums and galleries for children in **Mexico** has switched to an online format. In **Armenia**, the Hovhannes Toumanian Museum, arranged for 10 children to record the "The Liar" fairy-tale by the writer Hovhannes Toumanian in different languages to connect children around the world through linguistic and cultural diversity, whilst in the **United Kingdom**, a writer published a children's book about the Coronavirus to help explain the pandemic and why it is important to stay indoors. In **Costa Rica**, the Ministry of Education has hired artists to video record the reading of literary texts by Central American writers that are taught in secondary schools, which will be broadcast to students throughout the sub-region.

## TRANSMISSION OF CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

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Living heritage, including traditional knowledge and skills, relies on education to be passed down through the generations. During the period of confinement, many bearers of this intangible cultural heritage have turned to online platforms to give masterclasses, including traditional pottery in **Turkey**, hat-weaving in **Ecuador**, traditional dance in **Greece**, weaving in **Ukraine** and felt carpet making in **Kyrgyzstan**. In **Belize**, the Government has prioritized the production of audio-visual educational materials to ensure that knowledge about living heritage remains a part of the national psyche. In **Indonesia**, the "Creative Youth at Indonesian Heritage Sites" programme, which works with around 400 youths to build skills close to national World Heritage sites, switched to online resources to deliver training in business planning and social media marketing. Also thanks to digital technologies, a youth heritage project in **Yemen** could continue uninterrupted by the pandemic, including the release of a series of five videos called "Turathna" (our heritage).

“Embroidery became the most relaxing and happy thing for everyone during the epidemic! Transmission requires perseverance from generation to generation. This epidemic also seems to tell us to live slower, to feel harmony with nature.

Song Shuixian, Nationally-recognized bearer of the Intangible Cultural Heritage element horsetail embroidery from the Shui Ethnic group, China



## HIGHER EDUCATION ARTS SCHOOLS' ADAPTATIONS

Specialised arts institutions around the world have made adaptations to their curriculum during the confinement period, although difficulties remain due to the specialised equipment that is required to teach some subjects. Students in the culture and anthropology department of the Cheikh Anta Diop University in **Senegal**, were invited to join a writing competition to document the current crisis, as well as stimulate their creativity, whilst in **Kazakhstan**, students of the Almaty Music College performed online concerts of traditional music. In the **United Kingdom**, a team from the Royal College of Arts worked with the University College Hospital to design new signage to ensure safety at a new emergency unit.

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## LIFELONG LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS AND CULTURE

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Government, cultural institutions and practitioners have made lifelong learning opportunities available via online platforms. The government of **Algeria**, for example, has launched a series of "Master @ Home" online classes in music, visual arts, theatre, dance, performance arts, literature and restoration. The Ajoka Theatre **Pakistan**, which emphasises cultural and artistic heritage through its performances, is holding a community-oriented "Coronlogue Online Theatre Festival". The Museum of Digital Art, **Switzerland** has livestreamed different masterclasses for different age groups whilst practitioners of mime in **France** have also shared online classes of this traditional art form. The Peyo Yavorov regional Library in **Bulgaria** has also made large parts of its collection on intangible cultural heritage available online.

## UNESCO LITTLE ARTISTS EXHIBITION



572 children from 55 countries responded to a global call for the Little Artists Exhibition. UNESCO invited children (aged 6-12) to draw a UNESCO World Heritage site that matters to them. This could be a site in their community, a memory from a family vacation, or a place they saw in a book, movie or TV show.

The submissions received represent 154 World Heritage Properties. UNESCO would like to warmly congratulate and thank all of the children who submitted artwork!

[CLICK HERE TO SEE ALL THE SUBMISSIONS TO THE LITTLE ARTISTS EXHIBITION](#)





FIND OUT MORE...



“Creativity builds the resilience we need in times of crisis. It has to be nurtured from the earliest age to unlock the imagination, awaken curiosity and develop appreciation for the richness of human talent and diversity. Education is the place where this starts.

Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO



Video Message of UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture



2020 IAEW | Why Arts Education Matters

**[Click here for information, including good practices, communications materials and the full message from the Director-General of UNESCO.](#)**

## USEFUL LINKS

- [UNESCO Culture | 2030 Indicators](#)
- [Andrès Bello Convention \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [Post Disaster Needs Assessment methodology](#)
- [UNESCO Road Map for Arts Education \(2006\)](#)
- [Study by the Network of European Museum Organisations](#)
- [Arts education study by Rice University](#)
- [Study on single visit to museums](#)
- [Database on living heritage practices during the pandemic](#)

This update is published by UNESCO

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