



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

Empty UNESCO World Heritage sites, cultural events cancelled, cultural institutions closed, community cultural practices suspended, heightened risk of looting of cultural sites and poaching at natural sites, artists unable to make ends meet and the cultural tourism sector greatly affected... The impact of the COVID-19 on the cultural sector is being felt around the world. This impact is social, economic and political – it affects the fundamental right of access to culture, the social rights of artists and creative professionals, and the protection of a diversity of cultural expressions. The unfolding crisis risks deepening inequalities and rendering communities vulnerable.

For the time being, the global health crisis is not being experienced in the same way across the world. Some countries – particularly in East Asia and Europe – have been in lockdown for months, while others – particularly in Africa, Latin America and the Arab States – are just beginning to feel the impact. With public policy initially rightly focusing on the immediate health implications, the full consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cultural sector are just becoming apparent, with the overall impact still unknown.

WORLD HERITAGE

CURRENT FIGURES

89%

of countries around the world have closed or partially closed their World Heritage sites to the public.

Visit the UNESCO online exhibition of World Heritage properties in collaboration with Google Arts & Culture.

Join our social
media campaign
#ShareOurHeritage





ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Governments, intergovernmental organizations and civil society are mobilized to assess the scale of disruption to the cultural sector. Often within the first days following lockdown, civil society groups – particularly sector-specific associations (such as music or film), professional networks or city-based organizations – began monitoring the impact, often through online surveys. In some countries, ministries of culture have started to engage in impact assessment processes – sometimes partnering with civil society organizations – and have reached out to UNESCO for guidance. In Europe and Latin America, regional organizations have also taken the lead in supporting impact assessments on the culture sector, building primarily on existing regional data sets.

53% OF FRENCH INTERNET USERS PLACE THE CONSUMPTION OF CULTURAL GOODS AT THE TOP OF THEIR LIST OF ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES DURING THIS TIME OF CONFINEMENT

(SOURCE: HADOPI)

The methodology for assessing the scale of the impact relies particularly on Post Disaster Needs Assessment approaches in the culture sector (deployed, for example, following a natural disaster). Through the UNESCO network of Field Offices, the Organization is also working with UN Country Teams (that bring together multiple UN agencies in a concerted effort), on holistic responses to the crisis. Up until now, the main cultural issues being raised at country level are particularly related to the loss of tourism revenue, social security of artists and cultural professionals, arts and culture in confinement, and ensuring culturally appropriate awareness-raising about the pandemic.



RESILIART DEBATE AND MOVEMENT LAUNCH

15.04.2020

On World Art Day (15 April 2020, 2pm-4pm Paris time), UNESCO will launch ResiliArt, a global movement with artists and cultural professionals to raise awareness about the effects of COVID-19 on their livelihoods. Join the global UNESCO debate in partnership with the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC) and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Jean-Michel Jarre! For more information, visit en.unesco.org/covid19/cultureresponse



RESPONSE

Responding to the social and economic implications of the pandemic, several governments have announced measures targeted at the whole economy, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises or individual entrepreneurs, which are more vulnerable. However, some policy measures specific to the culture sector have already been announced or enacted - by ministries of culture and specialized cultural institutions, at the national and local levels - fostering access to culture in confinement and mitigating the economic impact on the sector.

GLOBAL SNAPSHOT OF COVID-19 RESPONSES

MINISTRIES MOBILIZING

In **Morocco**, a crisis monitoring unit set up within the Ministry of Culture

In **Egypt**, the Ministry of Culture received digital training to support online management of culture

ARTISTS AS ADVOCATES

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, musicians are committed to raising awareness about the health crisis on social media

ACCESS TO CULTURE: A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

In **China**, the Ministry of Culture created a digital platform and smartphone application dedicated to virtual visits of museums

SUSTAINING CREATIVITY

In **Argentina**, the Ministry of Culture commissioned 500 artists to production digital artworks

In **Iran**, the Ministry of Culture has launched the digital platform "30 Museums in 30 days"

Italy launched a web portal and YouTube channel posting exclusive content, including videos by renowned Italian artists

EMERGENCY FINANCIAL AID

The culture sector is a financially fragile sector and has been singled out by a number of countries as needing extra support at this time of crisis. Support falls into four main categories:

NATIONAL-LEVEL SUPPORT FUNDS

Some countries have announced overall support packages, either through their Culture Ministries or specialised culture agencies, including, **Tunisia**, **Chile** (US\$ 17m), **Colombia** (US\$ 29m), **Norway** (US\$ 28m) and **Singapore** (US\$ 1.1m). **Italy** is providing support for the performing arts and audiovisual sectors (US\$ 146). In addition, **France** has announced support funds by sub-sector: for music, books, visual arts and regional cultural bodies (US\$ 18.8m in total). In **China**, funds have also been announced at a regional level, including US\$ 56m by the Government of Guangdong Province for cultural and tourism businesses, with a further US\$ 7m for the 1325 movie theatres impacted by the crisis, in the form of tax return from last year.

1

SUPPORT FUNDS FOR ARTISTS

2

In **Mexico**, **Ireland**, **Poland**, **Switzerland**, **France** and **Luxembourg**, social security payments will be made to independent artists. **New Zealand** has also released US\$ 9.6m for artists and cultural associations. **The Republic of Korea** has announced a budget of US\$ 2.5m to give artists preferential access to loans, whilst **Spain** has also released US\$ 11m worth of low interest credit to support artists. In **Germany**, the Berlin Senate has released US\$ 110m in grants to freelance workers and small businesses in the cultural sector, with another US\$ 55bn announced by the Federal Government to support independent entrepreneurs and small businesses (including those in the cultural sector).



US\$13.9m in earnings lost by UK musicians
(the British Musicians' Union)

EMERGENCY FINANCIAL AID

INNOVATIVE OR FLEXIBLE POLICY MECHANISMS FOR CULTURAL SECTOR

3

The **Australia** Council and the Office of the Arts have postponed loan reimbursements, made administrative obligations more flexible (in terms of project reporting, for example) and allowed earmarked funds to be reallocated to meet current needs. Similarly, in the **Republic of Korea**, the Korean Film Council has loosened tax obligations for cinemas in the country and decreased the rent for concert halls.



The global film industry has recorded a US\$7bn loss in revenue (Statista)

CIVIL SOCIETY AND PRIVATE STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

4 Finally, civil society organizations and private stakeholders are also mobilizing, particularly in the **United States of America** where several cultural associations and foundations at the national, regional and local level have established emergency funds for the arts, crafts, music and literature. Netflix has also made US\$ 100m available for professionals in the audiovisual sector.

This update is published by UNESCO

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