



# 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

As some countries – particularly in Asia and Europe – begin to reopen their cultural institutions, other countries remain in lockdown. In almost every country, cultural life has taken a hit in one way or another, in terms of both social and economic impact. The pandemic has exposed some structural vulnerabilities and inequalities within and between countries. Within countries, the pandemic has further revealed inequalities facing vulnerable groups, in particular women, indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees, and LGBTI groups, including in access to culture.

The precarious nature of the work of artists has been made increasingly visible by this crisis. For example, the Arts Council of Ireland announced this week nine in ten artists surveyed by the Arts Council have been impacted by the pandemic with almost half applying for the Government's emergency payment. Meanwhile, in Ethiopia, a survey carried out by the Music Association, showed that about 90% of musicians are working privately and have no salary. In Costa Rica – where much of the cultural sector operates in the informal economy – a recent government survey estimated that 12.3% of art workers surveyed live in a state of poverty or extreme poverty, which makes them especially vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic.



"TITANES", A Social Inclusion Open Urban Art Museum, Ciudad Real, Spain 2019



At the international level, a clear illustration of inequalities is the use of the internet for ensuring the right to access culture, the sale of cultural goods, and the continuation of living heritage practices and creativity. In many parts of the world, use of digital platforms has soared since governments imposed restrictions on mobility to curb the spread of the virus. Yet, access to digital technologies is not even everywhere. According to the Broadband Commission, some 46% of the global population remains offline: the vast majority of these estimated 3.6 billion people are in developing countries.



“

**COVID-19 DOES NOT CARE WHO WE ARE, WHERE WE LIVE, WHAT WE BELIEVE OR ABOUT ANY OTHER DISTINCTION. WE NEED EVERY OUNCE OF SOLIDARITY TO TACKLE IT TOGETHER.**

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTONIO GUTERRES  
MAY 8, 2020,

The need for greater understanding of cultural diversity and for greater dialogue in order to build cohesive societies, has also been thrown into stark relief. A recent report by Human Rights Watch has shown that there has been a sharp global increase in anti-Asian racism and xenophobia around the world. The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres furthermore denounced such anti-Asian prejudice, as well as the spread of anti-Semitic COVID-19-related conspiracy theories, anti-Muslim attacks and the vilification of migrants and refugees.



Data on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cultural sector is becoming more complex and voluminous by the week. The results of surveys by governments and civil society groups are beginning to be published, giving a clearer picture at the local, national, regional and international levels.

The latest data from the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) points to a loss of 67 million international arrivals and about USD 80 billion in losses for the first quarter of 2020. These figures could mean up to 120 million direct tourism jobs at risk, which also has an impact on people working in the cultural sector and artists' mobility, including due to the cancellation of festivals. However, there remains uncertainty, depending on the evolution of the pandemic. UNWTO models three scenarios of the impact on international tourism figures, depending on the dates for the reopening of international borders. The range varies from scenario 1 (-58%) based on the gradual opening of international borders and easing of travel restrictions in early July to scenario 3 (-78%) for such changes in early December.

**MANY WORLD HERITAGE SITES RELY LARGELY ON INTERNATIONAL VISITORS AND SOME ARE NOW REOPENING TO DOMESTIC AUDIENCES ONLY.**

**HA LONG BAY IN VIET NAM IS OFFERING FREE ENTRY UNTIL THE END OF MAY TO ENCOURAGE LOCALS TO REDISCOVER THEIR HERITAGE.**



Two recent studies by UNESCO and ICOM show that nearly 90% of museums around the world are closed, and 13% may never reopen. The recently-published results of the Network of European Museum Organizations, show that most of the nearly 1,000 museums in 48 countries surveyed expect to reopen in May or June but that their operations will be quite different. It shows that three out of ten museums are losing an average of 20,300 euros a week, whilst larger museums and those in touristic areas are losing hundreds of thousands of euros a week – amounting up to 70-80% of their budgets. For the time being this has not yet translated into jobs losses for permanent staff for the museums of this survey but 3 out of 5 museums have put on hold contracts with freelance workers.





# ASSESSING THE IMPACT



Stopgap Dance Company (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

In its recent assessment, the International Labour Organization placed workers in the “arts, entertainment and recreation, and other services” in a medium-high risk category (as certain sectors are more robust than others). Its baseline data estimates that artists and cultural workers make up 5.4% of the global workforce. Representing US\$2,250bn annually and nearly 30 million jobs worldwide, according to the 2015 “Cultural Times” report, this is a significant economic sector. Beyond the economic implications, the arts and culture contribute significantly to the vibrancy of a society and provide a vehicle for all segments of society to express their identities, contributing to social cohesion and intercultural dialogue.

## EXAMPLES OF GLOBAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

### CREATIVITY AND CATHARSIS

In **Jordan**, the Royal Film Commission has launched a short film competition about experience of confinement

### INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

The **Russian Federation** has begun making preparations for an online cultural marathon to support international cultural dialogue

### CREATIVITY FOR SCIENCE

In **Brazil**, the UNESCO Creative City of Design, Curitiba has mobilized design and innovation experts to produce 3D-printed face shields for healthcare workers

### AWARENESS RAISING

In **China**, Wuhan - a UNESCO Creative City of Design - has launched a call for graphic designers to share posters, illustrations, videos, children's paintings and digital works raising awareness about the pandemic

### AWARENESS-RAISING

In **Burkina Faso**, the Ministry of Culture has allocated 10 million FCFA for cultural actors in awareness-raising initiatives through the production of songs and sketches

This year's World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, (21 May) will be celebrated in the highly unusual circumstances of a culture lockdown. Harnessing cultural diversity, and particularly linguistic diversity, has been vital for tackling the global pandemic at the local level. Whilst some countries around the world have several national languages due to their multi-ethnic populations, many other countries have diverse migrant populations also with several languages. Translators Without Borders warns that terms such as "social distancing" may not translate easily into some languages.

The pandemic has also revealed the power of culture in bringing communities together in times of crisis. Through the safeguarding of living heritage, the live-streaming of a variety of films, concerts and other performances, or the possibility to take a virtual tour of a World Heritage site on the other side of the world, this crisis has often harnessed an increased appreciation for cultural diversity.

Yet, it has also revealed fault-lines in our communities. Culture can be the vehicle for new conversations to ensure that communities recover more quickly and become stronger than before. World Heritage sites, living heritage and cultural expressions can all play a role in contributing to more cohesive, peaceful societies through their inclusive approach to different groups. As government policies begin to shift from the immediate health impact of the current crisis to adaptations to a new reality, culture will inevitably play a role.

### CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY FOR PREVENTION

From the very start of the health crisis, the **Philippines'** Department of Health has disseminated information on COVID-19 to a country that speaks around 130 languages, and mobilised a network of volunteer interpreters. Similarly, in **Peru**, the Ministry of Culture, prepared materials in more than 20 languages of its different indigenous populations that were adapted to their cultural context. **Guatemala, Fiji** and **Colombia** have also translated health-related materials into local and indigenous languages. In **Chad**, some 80 troubadours (traditional story-tellers) are travelling to the remote areas of the country where there is little radio coverage, in order to raise awareness about health measures in local languages. Meanwhile, in countries such as **Niger**, performing artists have come together to perform an awareness-raising song in the four national languages of the country. The song, entitled "Sogha", is also a mix of traditional instruments and modern musical influences, such as slammers.

### LEAVING NO-ONE BEHIND

# 2

In recognition that certain communities are especially vulnerable, particularly indigenous and fishing communities that rely on the informal economy or live in marginalised urban areas, 80 municipalities in **Ecuador** received online training in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies. In **Denmark**, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Health and the Elderly have announced a new agreement that provides DKK 10 million of funding dedicated to cultural initiatives for the elderly during the crisis, which is open to collaborations between cultural and social actors. In the **United Kingdom**, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the University of Atypical have announced a new fund specifically for D/deaf and disabled artists in response to the COVID-19 outbreak whilst in **Russia**, a fund has been launched for museums and cultural associations to carry out projects with elderly, people with no fixed abode, poor citizens, people with disabilities, orphans, and residents of remote and inaccessible settlements. In **Morocco**, the Institut Français has launched a call for artistic projects that strengthen social cohesion. In **Montenegro**, the City Theatre of Podgorica, is organizing the First Internet Regional Festival of Theatre specially for children offering a range of regional plays for the young audience. Many women's museums around the world are continuing their activities, such as the virtual tours of the Women's Museum Ha Noi, **Vietnam** and the webinar series on gender-related topics of Mexico City's Women's Museum, **Mexico**.

“ WE CANNOT LET THIS HEALTH CRISIS BECOME A  
CRISIS OF HUMANITY

MR NAURIS PUNTULIS, MINISTER OF CULTURE, LATVIA  
UNESCO ONLINE MEETING OF MINISTERS OF CULTURE, 22 APRIL

### MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

# 3

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased instability in the lives of migrants, refugees and internally displaced people, which are already vulnerable groups. In **Belgium**, in the Flemish region, work permits have been granted to non-European Union migrants who were unable to return to their country of origin, including artists. The **Philippines'** National Commission for Culture and the Arts is set to give out PHP 4 million (US\$ 78, 872) cash assistance to artists and cultural workers displaced by the pandemic, prioritising freelance artists and cultural workers without regular income nor benefits. The ResiliArt debate organized in **Yemen** this week, also made an effort to reach out to the diaspora population, in recognition of the fact that culture is a source of resilience, particularly in times of crisis, whilst in **Palestine**, artist Fidaa Al-Ladawi has been making games and dolls in the form of the "corona virus", targeting the children in the Nusseirat refugee camp to educate them about the pandemic.



FIND OUT MORE...

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### Art-Lab Special Edition-UNESCO Webinar 22 May, 2020, 4.00 p.m. to 5. p.m. (Paris-time)

To commemorate World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development UNESCO, is organizing a special edition webinar entitled "Art-Lab for Human Rights and Dialogue" in response to COVID-19 and beyond.

[Art Lab dossier for webinar](#)

Join [here](#)

Password: 668978



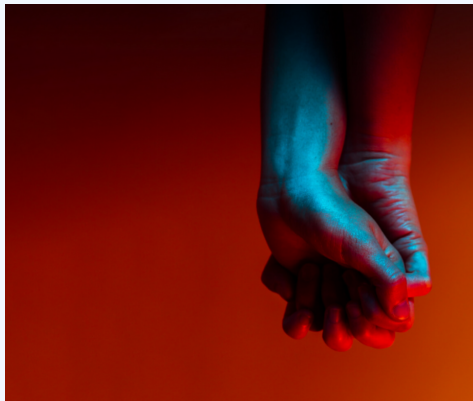
### Ibermuseos Panels: museums, culture and heritage

Webinars on the present and future of museum institutions in times of physical distancing, as part of the ResiliArt movement.

**18 June** Museums and the public in times of crisis – dissemination, communication, accessibility, inclusion and equity

**16 July** Museums and territory – reaffirmation of the social role in times of pandemic

More information: [www.iber museos.org](http://www.iber museos.org)



### ResiliArt events around the world:

Thailand: 19, 26 May | Namibia: 20, 26, 29 May | Germany: 20 May | Cuba: 21 May | Ghana: 21 May | Kenya: 21 May | India: 21 May | Serbia: 21 May | Republic of Korea: 22 May | Chad: 22 May | Japan: 23 May | Global: ResiliArt Special Edition: #Don'tGoViral : 25 May (Africa Day) | Mozambique: 26 May | Caribbean: 26 May | Global: International Music Council : 27 May | Canada: 28 May, 10, 23 June, 7 July | Canada: 8 June | Iberoamerica: Ibermuseos and UNESCO: 18 June, 16 July | Comoros: 21 June

For more information click [here](#)

### International Day for Biological Diversity - 22 May

Celebrated this year under the theme "Our solutions are in Nature", UNESCO will also explore the intimate linkages between biological diversity and cultural diversity. Some World Heritage properties are recognised specifically for their biodiversity values whilst at others, including those managed by indigenous peoples, communities depend on nature-based livelihoods.

For more information and links to the pre-recorded webinar please click [here](#)







FIND OUT MORE...



In an unprecedented context marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, arts education has been recognised for its importance for human development, in particular the role it plays in providing emotional support to build resilience during confinement, but also its contribution in supporting children's development through quality education at a distance, often using digital platforms.

Art, in all its diversity, is an essential component of a comprehensive education for the full development of the individual. This can be achieved either by education in the arts - teaching specialized art disciplines but also teaching art history which refers us to our historical and cultural heritage - or by education through the arts - using the arts as a pedagogical tool for the teaching of other disciplines.

The celebration of the International Arts Education Week this year will shed light on the strong synergies between culture and education, in collaboration with the World Alliance for Arts Education.

For more information, see:

<https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/artseducationweek>

### USEFUL LINKS

- [Human Rights Watch: Covid-19 Fueling Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia Worldwide](#)
- [Statement by the UN Secretary-General on combatting xenophobia](#)
- [UNTWO latest statistics](#)
- [NEMO survey report and recommendations](#)
- [ILO's Report on COVID-19 and the World of Work \(statistics of the impact on arts, entertainment and recreation sectors.\)](#)
- [Cultural Times Report \(2015\)](#)
- [UNESCO press release on findings from museums survey](#)
- [Translators Without Borders](#)
- [OSCE guidelines on inclusion in times of COVID-19](#)
- [UNESCO 2001 Declaration on Cultural Diversity](#)

This update is published by UNESCO

To contribute, please send inputs to: [platform.culture2030@unesco.org](mailto:platform.culture2030@unesco.org)

Follow us on social media: [#ShareCulture](#)