



Amman Office  
مكتب عمان

United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للثقافة والتعليم والتربية



# UNESCO Amman Office

## Culture Unit

Culture's power to transform societies is clear. Its diverse manifestations – from our cherished historic monuments and museums to traditional practices and contemporary art forms – enrich our everyday lives in countless ways. Heritage constitutes a source of identity and cohesion for communities and creativity contributes to building open, inclusive, knowledge societies.

UNESCO is leveraging culture for sustainable development in Jordan. In parallel, UNESCO is working on the ground to support government and local stakeholders to safeguard heritage, strengthen creative industries and encourage cultural pluralism.



SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT

GOALS



# World Heritage

Positioned on the historical trade routes of the Middle East, Jordan has been home to a mix of cultures and religions throughout time. UNESCO is focused on enhancing the management framework at Jordan's World Heritage properties and further protecting the country's heritage, in line with the 1972 Convention.

The UNESCO Amman office provides technical assistance to Jordan's national authorities to enhance the management and preservation of cultural and natural heritage sites registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List as well as those sites on the Tentative List.

## The following objectives are being achieved:

- In coordination with the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, the culture team has been engaged in supporting the elaboration of an Integrated Management Plan for Petra. In November 2019, the plan was officially endorsed and launched. The Plan acts as a practical operational guide to establishing an appropriate balance between the needs of cultural and natural resources, conservation, tourism, access, sustainable economic development and the interests of the local community.
- Technical Assistance for the implementation of priority conservation interventions at the site of Um Er-Rasas in line with World Heritage requirements.

Currently, five sites in Jordan are inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List:

### **Petra** (1985)

Wonder of the world where ancient Eastern traditions meet Hellenistic architecture through the marvelous remains of the Nabataean civilization.

### **Qusair Amra** (1985)

Exceptional testimony to the Umayyad civilization.

### **Um Er-Rasas** (2004)

Ancient Byzantine churches and mosaic floors representing a masterpiece of human creative genius.

### **Wadi Rum** (2011)

Stunning desert landscape witness to 12,000 years of human interaction, famous ancient petroglyphs and inscriptions.

### **Baptism Site "Bethany Beyond the Jordan"** (2015)

The place where Jesus is said to have been baptized, alongside the remains of Roman and Byzantine churches and chapels.



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# UNESCO's Work



*UNESCO promotes cultural diversity, creativity and innovation as a vector for dialogue, cooperation and mutual understanding. The Amman office works towards ensuring sustainability through projects focused on resilience building.*

*Jordan possesses tremendous cultural assets, including remarkable archaeological and historical sites and rich intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO's renowned cultural conventions provide a unique global platform for international cooperation and establish a holistic cultural governance system based on human rights and shared values. These international treaties endeavor to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage, intangible cultural heritage, museum collections, oral traditions and other forms of heritage, and to support creativity, innovation and the emergence of dynamic cultural sectors.*

*These cultural assets also offer a unique opportunity for the promotion of sustainable socio-economic development in Jordan, especially amongst marginalized groups.*

## Current Projects

### **SUPPORT TO LIVELIHOODS THROUGH CULTURAL HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT**

In line with governmental priorities, this initiative seeks to engage both Jordanian and Iraqi experts, as well as Syrians and young people in their respective communities in the preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage sites for tourism purposes in the northern districts of Jordan (Irbid and Mafraq) and Iraq (Erbil and Duhok). In parallel, the initiative tackles the creation of decent job opportunities in the short term while focusing on developing a sustainable framework to support the preservation of cultural heritage, with complementary engagement of the private sector.

### **PRESERVING PETRA'S NABATAEAN ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH THE STUDY OF THE ROYAL TOMBS WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND THE CONSERVATION OF THE PALACE TOMB**

In line with UNESCO's long-term approach towards the preservation of Petra's outstanding heritage and building upon previous conservation initiatives at the site, this project aims to ensure the preservation of one of the most prominent rock-cut façades within Petra: the Palace Tomb. Following a feasibility study of the Royal Tombs water management system, the project seeks to respond to a strongly felt need to develop local heritage conservation skills while conserving one of the most outstanding rock-cut façades and raising community awareness surrounding the importance of heritage preservation.



## YOUTH FOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RISK PREVENTION IN PETRA

The 'Siq' canyon is a 1.2 km gorge serving as the main entrance of Petra. It is particularly exposed to hydro-geological risks which pose a major threat to monuments, visitors and the local community. Since 2009, alongside key partners, UNESCO has been striving to mitigate the immediate hazards of rock falls and floods with the goal of preserving this natural wonder and ensuring its safety.



Capitalizing on the achievements of the "Siq Stability" project, the overall purpose of the initiative is to enhance the capacities of and provide employment opportunities to youth, focusing on cultural heritage preservation and risk prevention by contributing to the implementation of priority landslide risk mitigation works in Petra.

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE SAFEGUARDING IN JORDAN

This cultural heritage preservation initiative seeks to create short-term job opportunities, through the application of "Cash for Work" schemes, for Jordanians and Syrians as a contribution to sustainable socioeconomic development while utilizing culture as a source of resilience. The basic rehabilitation and conservation of cultural heritage sites, notably one archaeological site in the Mafrāq Governorate and one UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Ma'an Governorate, for tourism purposes will be undertaken, providing short term employment for Syrian refugees and Jordanians living in host communities. This initiative links humanitarian and development assistance with a resilience-based approach, providing a venue for longer term investments in cultural heritage safeguarding, while addressing immediate needs for employment creation.



## SAFEGUARDING INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

The UNESCO Amman office has been providing technical support to the Government of Jordan to safeguard intangible cultural heritage (ICH), working to strengthen the capacities of national authorities, local communities and cultural actors. Responding in line with the 2003 "Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH", capacity enhancing trainings were initiated based upon UNESCO's

global capacity-building strategy. A pilot initiative to train the local community in Mafrāq on community-based inventorying of ICH was undertaken by UNESCO in an effort to collect precious traditional knowledge.

## HERITAGE EMERGENCY FUND

In response to the need for a strategic action plan to enhance Petra's resilience to flash-floods further to 2018 threatening events occurred at the site, UNESCO has responded to a Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA) request for support, providing funds from the Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF). The support will enable the PDTRA to identify priority flash flood risk reduction measures at the site in the short term and further implement the preliminary designs that will be developed as part of the present activity. Established by UNESCO in 2015, the HEF is a multi-donor and non-earmarked funding mechanism that seeks to respond quickly and effectively to global crises resulting from armed conflicts and disasters caused by natural and human-made hazards.



## The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda marks a substantial step forward for sustainable development across many fields and particularly for culture as it is the first time that the international development agenda refers specifically to culture. UNESCO believes that no development can be sustainable without a strong culture component. Culture contributes to human and socio-economic development, quality education, social inclusion, sustainable cities, environmental sustainability and peaceful societies.

The Culture team is striving to mainstream the SDGs into ongoing projects, focusing on the following goals and targets:



**SDG 4:** Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.

- **Target 4.7:** By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.



**SDG 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

- **Target 5.5:** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.



**SDG 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

- **Target 8.5:** By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
- **Target 8.9:** By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.



**SDG 11:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

- **Target 11.4:** Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.



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## Stay in touch

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We wish to thank the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund Donors: the Qatar Fund for Development, the Kingdom of Norway, the Government of Canada, ANA Holdings INC., the Principality of Monaco, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Republic of Estonia, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Slovak Republic, the Principality of Andorra and the Republic of Serbia.