



Cultural Emergency Response



Impact
Report

2023

“We are making sure that our cultural heritage is here for a long time. It’s not so much about the objects, it’s about people and access to their own cultural heritage.”

Oleksandra Kovalchuk
Director of the Odessa Museum
of Fine Arts and founder of the
Museum for Change initiative

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A message from the CER Board

On behalf of the CER board, I am expressing my appreciation for the outstanding achievements of the CER activities throughout the year 2023.

CER has accomplished significant milestones in its brief existence by playing a pivotal role in safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage amidst crises. The small yet highly skilled and adaptable CER team has demonstrated dedication and resilience, firmly establishing itself as an independent and influential entity in the cultural heritage sector, particularly during times of disaster. CER's contributions to emergency response efforts aimed at preserving cultural heritage in major disasters, such as the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the earthquakes in Türkiye-Syria, armed conflicts in Sudan, and devastating storms in the Philippines, have been exemplary.

CER's primary approach of engaging directly with local communities and responders underscores its commitment to protecting endangered cultural heritage. The successful establishment and support of regional hubs have further enhanced our ability to identify and address regional needs while strengthening existing local capacities and infrastructure. The operational readiness of the Levant, Western Balkans, Central America, and Caribbean Regional Hubs, with plans underway for the Black Sea Regional Hub in Ukraine, is a significant achievement in CER's mission. Through these Regional Hubs, CER serves as a beacon of support for local communities, ensuring that their cultural needs are met through organic and localised approaches.

In the realm of training and capacity-building, CER has successfully conducted a regional course on the protection of endangered documentary heritage in Ecuador and collaborated on an international leadership programme with the The Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative. These initiatives reflect our commitment to equipping individuals and organisations with the skills

and knowledge necessary to safeguard cultural heritage in times of crisis.

Looking ahead, CER remains steadfast in its vision to protect cultural heritage during crises. We recognise the importance of investing in human resources, strengthening Regional Hubs, and implementing a clear response strategy. Moreover, we are fully committed to mitigating risks to cultural heritage, advocating risk preparedness, and fostering closer collaboration with the humanitarian sector to ensure that cultural heritage considerations are integrated into broader humanitarian efforts.

I extend my sincerest gratitude to all of CER's supporters, including the funders, partners, and dedicated individuals within the CER's network and Regional Hubs. Special thanks are also due to the exceptional efforts of the entire CER team.

Thank you, once again, for your unwavering support and dedication in safeguarding our invaluable cultural heritage for future generations. Together, we are making a difference.

**On behalf of Mechtild van den Hombergh
and Alexander Ribbink,**

Dr Bijan Rouhani
Chairperson, CER Board

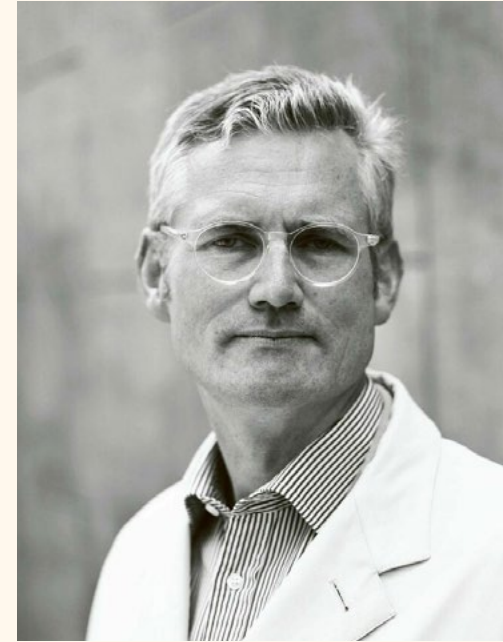
A message from the CER Board



Dr Bijan Rouhani
Chairperson



Mechtild van den Hombergh
Treasurer



Alexander Ribbink
Secretary

“CER has accomplished significant milestones in its brief existence by playing a pivotal role in safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage amidst crises.”

Director's Letter

Sanne Letschert

2023 marked the first year for Cultural Emergency Response as an independent organisation and our journey so far has been truly remarkable. Looking back, it's impressive to see what we've achieved as a new organisation. We established ourselves internationally, strengthened our operations and way of working, and continued to show up for our partners to prepare for and respond to crisis situations.

While there have been many accomplishments to be proud of, it has also been a year in which we have had to respond to a growing number of emergencies around the world. Our mobilisation reached unprecedented levels, responding to intricate crises where communities and their culture were both targets and victims. This report tells stories of how we worked alongside our partners on the ground to address the impact of ongoing wars, disasters, and environmental crises.

Amidst the global crises and the immense suffering experienced by many around the globe this year, at CER, we have been constantly asking ourselves- how can we continue to make a meaningful difference?

While the hurdles have been difficult, these truths have made clearer that culture plays a pivotal role in resilience and recovery. Our annual report aims to shed light on the urgency of our work, further highlighting the need for cultural first aid. At the same time, it shares all the cross-sectoral work that can be done and how the right kind of support can bring a lasting positive impact to individuals and communities. At the core of all our actions are our partners on the ground, for whom I have a deep admiration.

This year, we continued to work closely with the coordinators of the CER Regional Hubs, including new partners in the Caribbean. Their trust, willingness to innovate, and commitment to inclusive emergency

response have been instrumental. The Regional Hubs have been incredibly successful this year in building decentralised response networks and quick deployment to support culture in crises at a regional scale. I am excited to continue working together on rethinking our work and transforming the field.

The CER board has been instrumental in shaping our vision and strategic priorities this year; I am grateful for their time and commitment. Our network of partners and donors have also been vital in making sure that we build an organisation that continues to make an impact. I extend my gratitude for their invaluable contributions. Lastly, I am inspired by the dedication and care of my team in showing up for our partners and making sure our 'cultural ambulance' moves to places where it matters most.

In this formative year for CER, we continued to test, learn, and think to develop our way of working and long-term goals. As we venture into 2024, the lessons learned in 2023 will serve as a compass for our journey ahead. Our commitment to evolving and responding to cultural emergencies remains steadfast. We envision refining our mechanisms, expanding networks, and fostering deeper coordination with international partners to build a future-proof organisation. I invite you to delve into this report, recognising the urgency of cultural protection in today's world, and to join us in our mission of safeguarding culture in crisis.

Together, we can create a legacy of resilience and hope.

Sanne Letschert
Director

Director's Letter

“At the core of all our actions are our partners on the ground, for whom I have a deep admiration.”



Our Mission & Vision

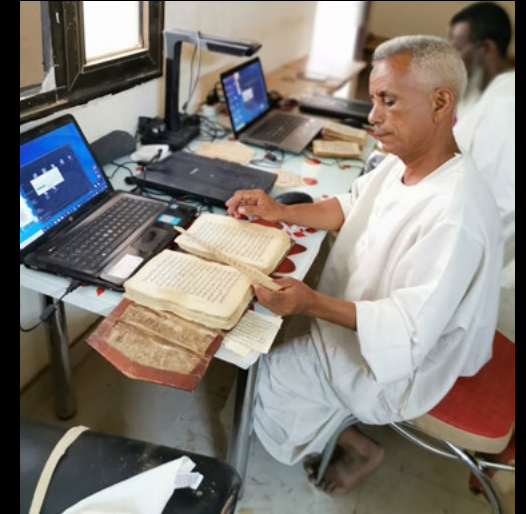
Imagine a world without cultural heritage—our identity would be at risk. When culture faces threats, so do we. This is why protecting cultural heritage is crucial, especially in crisis situations.

Cultural Emergency Response (CER), an international NGO, collaborates with local partners to safeguard heritage at risk from conflict or disaster. Acting like a cultural ambulance, we provide fast and flexible first-aid to culture in crisis through a decentralised network.

Our approach involves working closely with local communities affected by crises, supporting and coordinating efforts to protect their cultural heritage. We empower them through training, dialogue, and knowledge exchange. We envision a future where all heritage communities can preserve their culture during crises, contributing to a diverse, inclusive, and sustainable emergency response system that recognizes cultural heritage as a humanitarian issue.

The need to preserve cultural heritage has become more urgent due to the growing number and severity of threats. Recognising the dire consequences of inaction, CER is committed to strengthening its efforts to save hundreds of heritage sites, collections, and cultural spaces worldwide.





2023





Our Journey



CER in Numbers

51

Requests for urgent
emergency support

Breakdown of incoming requests for
urgent emergency support



4

Number of CER
Regional Hubs

19,262

Number of raised voices online
(engagement)

34

Cultural leaders
trained

16

Countries that benefited
from CER support

11

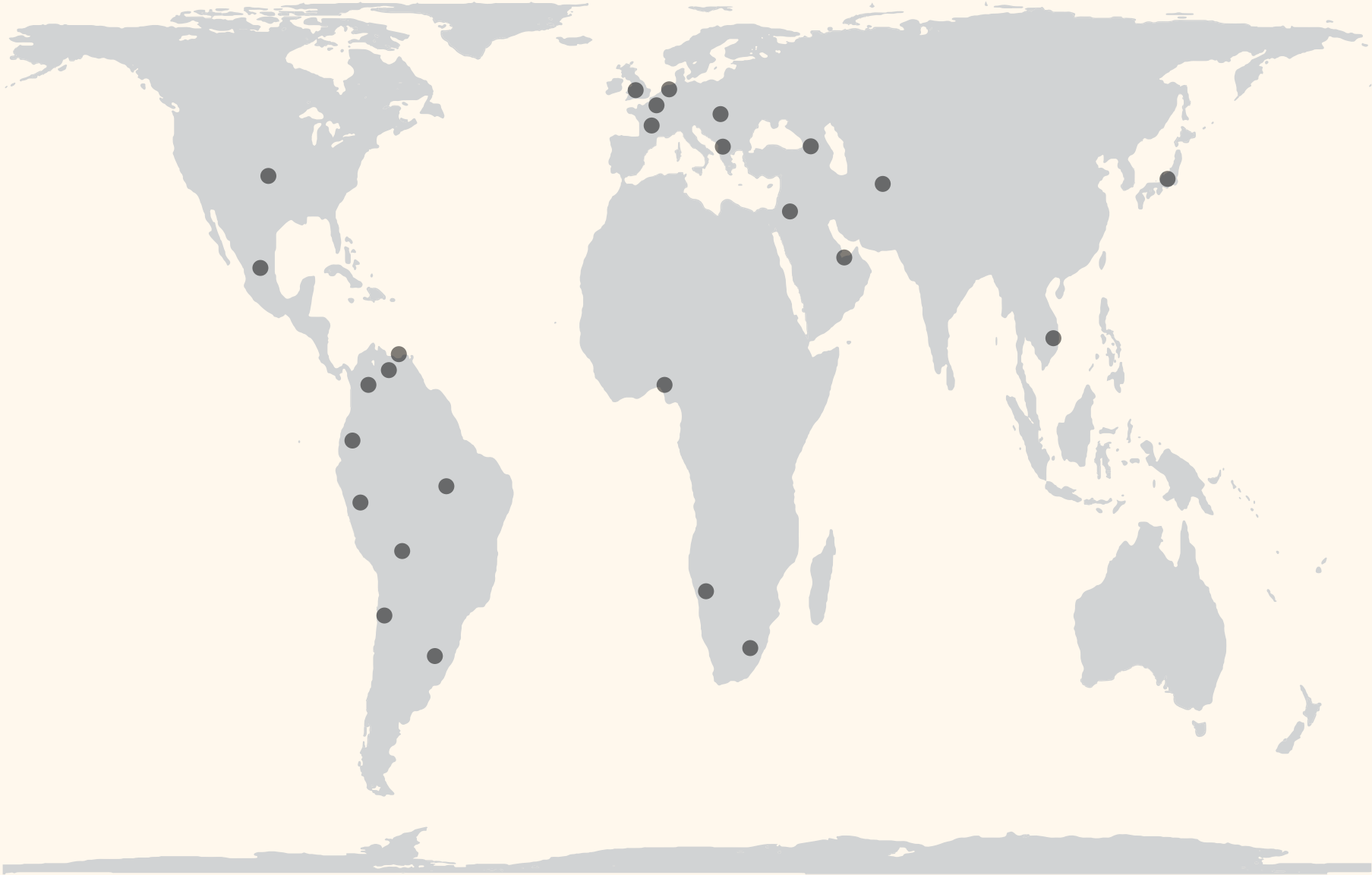
New partners in cultural
emergency response

35

New cultural emergency
response actions

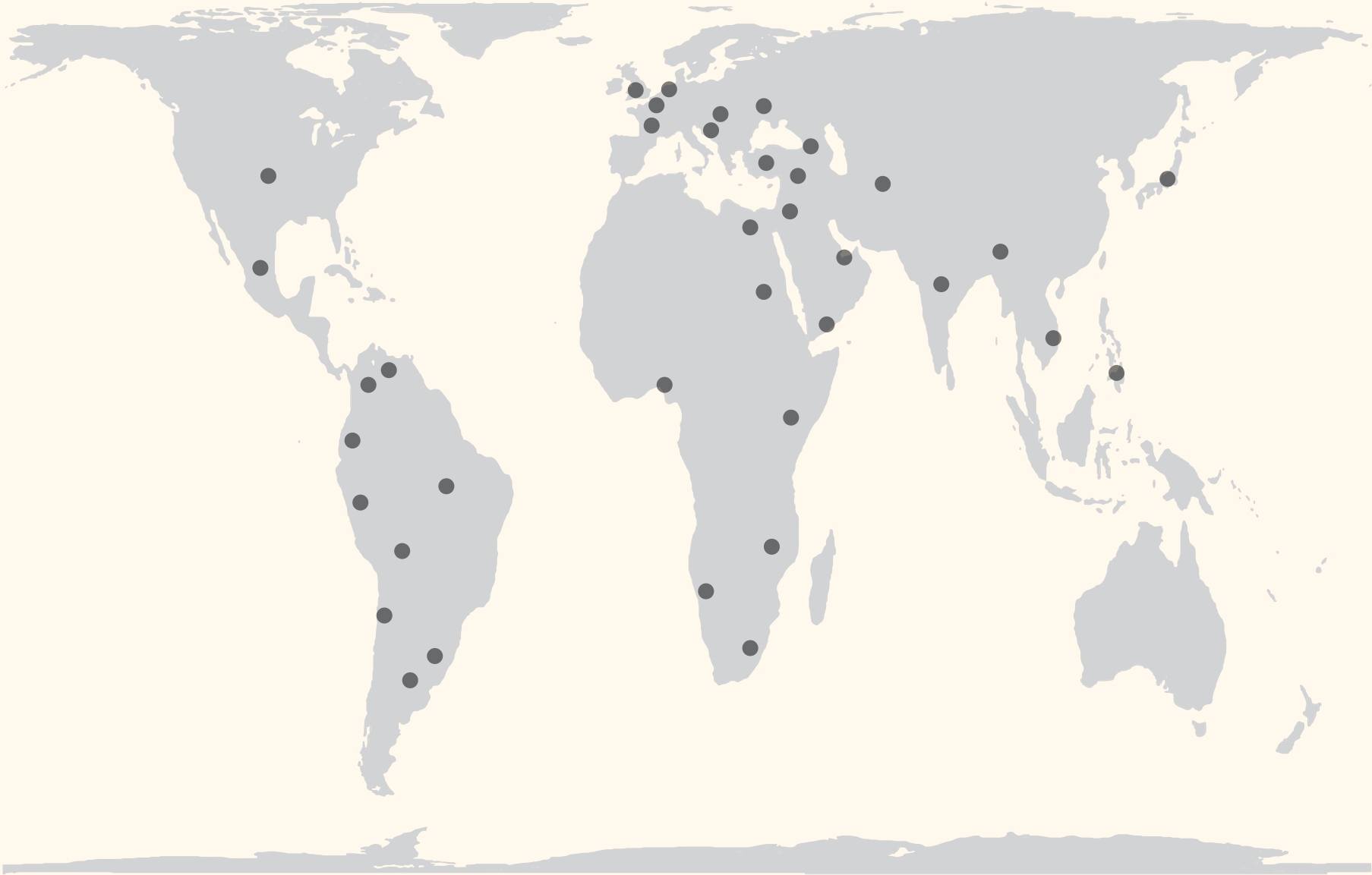
CER Map

Click on a location
for more impact



CER Map

Click on a location
for more impact



CER Map

Where participants have come from:
22 countries

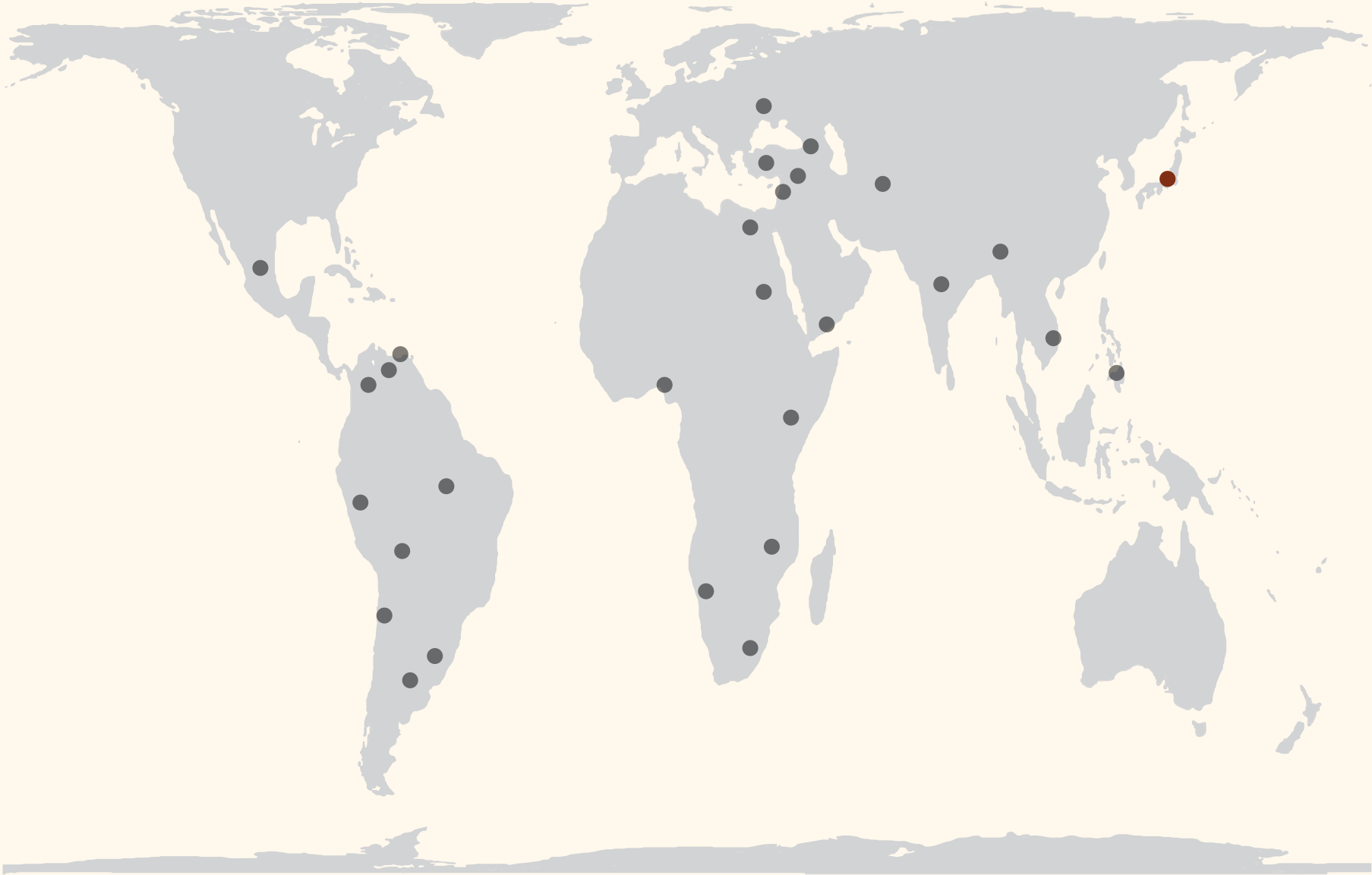
Cameroon	Japan
Afghanistan	Argentina
United States	Bolivia
Vietnam	Brazil
Ukraine	Chile
Turkey	Colombia
Georgia	Ecuador
Lesotho	Mexico
Namibia	Peru
Barbados	Uruguay
Nigeria	Venezuela

Total of 34 people trained



CER Map

Click on a location
for more impact



1

Cultural Emergency Response



1

Cultural Emergency Response

The global landscape poses increasing threats to culture, necessitating collective action to safeguard cultural heritage for future generations.

The effectiveness of CER's emergency grant mechanism hinges on a dynamic network of trusted partners in vulnerable regions globally. This network enables continuous monitoring of crisis situations and proactive readiness to respond to threats to cultural heritage arising from disasters or conflicts. CER's emergency mechanism involves providing rapid and flexible emergency grants to local actors, empowering them to

safeguard endangered sites, collections, or buildings. Local actors determine the priorities and approach for stabilising the situation, preventing further damage, and implementing basic repairs. CER is always on standby to offer technical support and advice while facilitating connections with expertise whenever needed. Applications for grants are accepted at any time.

Since our first responses to the Bamiyan Buddhas and Iraq Museum looting two decades ago, CER has made a substantial impact. For over 20 years, we have supported more than 500 projects globally.



Action Plan

Türkiye & Syria Earthquake Response

Theme

Multidisciplinary collaboration

Type of emergency

Disaster

Grant

€ 242,359

Location

Impacted areas

Following the devastation caused by the earthquakes in southern Türkiye and northern Syria in February 2023, CER quickly responded to the need of assisting heritage stewards in the affected areas. The sheer extent of humanitarian catastrophe necessitated that in the early stages of the tragedy, we reached out to partners and friends, gathered information about affected heritage, and planned a multifaceted response that could address needs on the ground, include a diverse array of stakeholders, and integrate heritage safeguarding into ongoing humanitarian efforts sensitively and pragmatically. Extensive network development was carried out, resulting in the creation of an Action Plan. The plan consisted of activities that aimed to assess earthquake-affected damage, provide first aid to tangible cultural properties, and support cultural workers and intangible heritage. The Action Plan also included support to a range of new and existing partners. We are proud to have pooled funding of €324,847 for the implementation of the Action Plan with the J. M. Kaplan Fund and the Cultural Protection Fund, managed by the British Council in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) of the United Kingdom. Together, our combined support enabled a total of eight projects for €242,359.

In Türkiye, we were thrilled to partner with Middle East Technical University's Centre for Research & Assessment of the Historical Environment (METU TAÇDAM) to conduct a thorough damage assessment of the city of Antakya. Originally, the project aimed to inform stakeholders on the necessary considerations, needs, and methodologies for sensitive restoration and representation of local community hopes and needs in heritage safeguarding and salvage.

Unfortunately, the project had to change its focus due to the hasty large-scale demolition of Antakya's urban fabric by governmental decree after the earthquakes.

Project coordinator (Türkiye)

Ayşe Güliz Bilgin Altınöz, Middle East Technical University's Centre for Research & Assessment of the Historical Environment (METU TAÇDAM), & Sezer Cihan, Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality

Supporting partner (Türkiye)

J. M. Kaplan Fund; the Cultural Protection Fund, managed by the British Council in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) of the United Kingdom

Project coordinator (Syria)

Joanne Farchakh Bajjaly, NGO Biladi (Lebanon), Isber Sabrine, Heritage for Peace (Spain), & Abdullah Alkafri, Ettijahat – Independent Culture (Belgium)

Supporting partner (Syria)

J. M. Kaplan Fund; the Cultural Protection Fund, managed by the British Council in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) of the United Kingdom



As a response to these destructive actions, our Action Plan has shifted to raise awareness about these demolitions and the retrospective viability of heritage safeguarding and recovery plans. The project emphasises the need to prevent similar actions in future earthquake responses in Türkiye and around the world.

Additionally, we were delighted to assist the Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality in providing first aid to two public spaces damaged by the earthquakes. Fast, precise, and sensitive intervention enabled the Municipality to make the Millet Inn and Öğretmenevi Plaza, two vital cultural and economic spaces, fully accessible and safe to the public, thus facilitating cultural continuity for the local community. Along with this, we supported a volunteer-led grassroots initiative in the cultural sector to redistribute small financial stipends to approximately 75 heritage workers, artists, and cultural workers affected by the crisis.

In our response efforts for Syria, we mobilised the [Regional Hub in the Levant](#), hosted by NGO Biladi.

The Regional Hub succeeded in leading and informing a comprehensive response effort, beginning with assessing how and where we could support heritage experts in documenting earthquake damage and preparing for recovery. We ultimately supported the Regional Hub and NGO Heritage for Peace in preparing, training, equipping, and coordinating third-party damage assessments specifically for earthquake damages in all the regions affected by the seismic events, working inclusively with a diverse range of experts. Despite the insurmountable challenges in safeguarding work over the last 12 years in this area, the result was an exceptional mobilisation of heritage professionals. Regional teams on the ground produced more than 1500 assessments covering earthquake damages in all affected areas. They examined public spaces, cultural sites, religious sites, schools, markets, workshops, archaeological sites, and more. Additionally, we worked with Ettijahat – Independent Culture to distribute substantial financial stipends to 14 cultural workers and heritage practitioners whose work was directly interrupted by the earthquakes in Syria. This enabled them to continue their work even in the prolonged aftermath of devastation.

Ettijahat reports that “all of them faced exceptional situations, losing their homes, dealing with money and health issues, not being able to afford medicines and facing legal problems following the loss of their papers in the earthquake.” In this regard, Ettijahat gave special focus to supporting especially vulnerable groups, such as at-risk artists, single mothers, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community, without any discrimination of age.

Before demolition, Türkiye ↓



After demolition, Türkiye ↓



Despite the humble scale of our efforts in the aftermath of the earthquakes, we take pride in collaborating with so many hardworking, good-spirited and dedicated partners to support cultural continuity amid the profound devastation, and complementing the work of innumerable other actors. Our respect and admiration endure for our partners and all those with whom we coordinated in the earthquakes' responses.

The swift mobilisation of CER's emergency mechanism, marked by the inaugural deployment of a Regional Hub leading the response, positioned us as one of the first organisations to provide crucial aid to culture in the disaster's aftermath.

The observed cultural devastation, in both Türkiye and Syria, is staggering. Beyond damaged heritage sites and cultural spaces, the earthquakes disrupted the practices of many artists and cultural practitioners, intensifying the challenges they faced in maintaining cultural traditions amidst loss and trauma. The humanitarian crisis exacerbated vulnerabilities in local cultural life. CER's rapid response not only addressed immediate needs but also contributed to the sustainable recovery of livelihoods, well-being, trauma processing, and the vital continuity of culture.

We are proud to have implemented the Action Plan, with co-funding and in-kind support from the J. M. Kaplan Fund and the Cultural Protection Fund, managed by the British Council in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) of the United Kingdom.





“We learned that in spite of all kinds of disasters people don’t give up on their heritage. The way the damage assessors worked on the project with devotion and enthusiasm, overcoming obstacles with creativity shows their attachment to their heritage.”

Joanne Farchakh Bajjaly
Project coordinator, NGO Biladi
Regional Hub in the Levant

Action Plan

Ukraine Action Plan

Theme
Cultural continuity

Grant
€ 319,350

Type of emergency
Conflict

Location
Ukraine

Addressing the on-the-ground needs of the war in 2023, CER continued providing support to key local actors in Ukraine. Their response actions spanned from transporting materials to conducting forensic documentation of cultural heritage damage, to implementing stabilisation measures for damaged buildings winterised in 2022. The successful execution of these actions was made possible thanks to the generous and reliable support of our valued partners.

Our evolving response to the escalation of the war

In 2023, we continued our support to local initiatives and to our on-the-ground partners that had expansive networks in heavily affected areas. Notably, in 2022 we helped the Museum for Change, focused on southern Ukraine, with the winterisation of important heritage buildings and in 2023 our flexible aid has prompted their response to the recent bombardment of the world heritage city of Odessa. Collection saving actions such as refilling fire extinguishers, providing emergency training, and fireproofing roofs of museum buildings increased resilience against escalating war risks. The implementation of such preparations meant that the museum staff were well-equipped in case of emergency to safeguard the heritage and they were also able to provide expertise and support to over 17 local memory institutions in Mykolaiv and Odessa regions.

CER also continued foundational backing for the Heritage Emergency Response Initiative (HERI). Initially funded in 2022 together with the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI), HERI evolved in 2023 into branches: the [Heritage Monitoring Lab \(HeMo\)](#) and the [Agency for Cultural Resilience \(ACURE\)](#) to respond to the evolving war circumstances.

Project coordinator

Museum for Change, Heritage Emergency Response Initiative (HERI) – Heritage Monitoring Lab (HeMo), HERI-Agency for Cultural Resilience (ACURE), Museum Open for Renovation, Kharkiv Korolenko State Scientific Library, Ukrainian State Scientific and Project Institute “UkrNDIprojectrestavratsiya”, Okhtyrka Local History Museum & NGO “Initiatives of Development”, World Monuments Fund (WMF)

Supporting partner

Pooled funding- The J.M. Kaplan Fund for Heritage Conservation, The British Council's Cultural Protection Fund, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs



The Heritage Monitoring Lab (HeMo)

Our ongoing support enabled HERI-HeMo to conduct 30 field missions in Kharkiv and an expedition to Odessa, documenting damage at 34 sites in the aftermath of the July bombardments. Another mission in the Mykolaiv region forensically documented 17 damaged heritage sites. HeMo's centralised heritage.in.ua database played a crucial role for stakeholders, including: grantmakers, journalists, researchers, preservationists, museum workers, ethnographers, and archaeologists planning their follow-up actions. The information gathered is critical for the informing of the recovery phase when in-depth restorations and conservation interventions will be possible.

Through HeMo, our collaboration with SCRI also supported the provision of equipment for the National Conservation Centre in Ukraine, aiding the restoration of damaged objects in collections.



The Agency for Cultural Resilience (ACURE)

In 2023, HERI-ACURE initiated a pilot project employing mobile labs for documenting and digitising endangered heritage collections. These units, staffed with experts trained in digitisation are of vital importance in the midst of the ongoing conflict as it mitigates the risk of looting and trafficking of cultural heritage during the war. Having concrete evidence of the Ukrainian provenance of the objects, will be necessary in facilitating the repatriation of the same in the post conflict phase, if looted and trafficked.

We proudly collaborated with the International Alliance for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Conflict Areas (ALIPH) on this important project.



Fostering the cultural heritage dialogue

As a knowledge hub, CER facilitated various initiatives through its network in 2023. Partnering with DutchCulture, we contributed to the organisation of a visitor's program for seven Ukrainian professionals to the Netherlands, fostering exchange and technical collaboration in the museum sector. This led, among other things, to a valuable partnership with the National Archives of the Netherlands, contributing equipment to HERI-ACURE's mobile lab. Additionally, CER has been selected as a member of the expert group from the [European Commission](#), taking part in discussions on current and future cultural heritage needs and recovery processes in Ukraine, which will be financed by the European Union.



Joining forces in aid of damaged cultural heritage

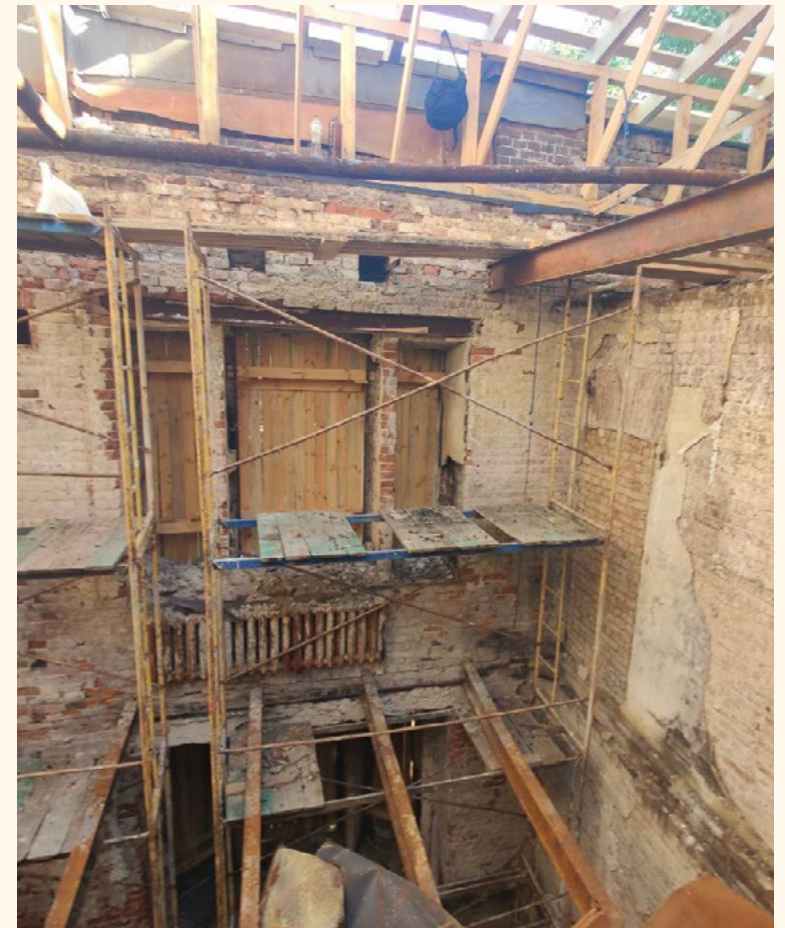
In order to make a more tangible impact, we continued to partner with The J.M. Kaplan Fund for Heritage Conservation and The British Council's Cultural Protection Fund to continue implementing our Ukraine Action Plan, started in 2022. This fund focuses on aiding Ukrainian experts and cultural organisations in safeguarding damaged cultural heritage. It also supports the transportation of materials donated by the International Cultural Heritage Protection Office, operating under the UK's Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS).

CER and World Monuments Fund (WMF) jointly funded and implemented three projects, enhancing existing infrastructure at the Okhtyrka Museum of Local History and the Kharkiv Korolenko State Library. Recognising the urgency of analysing damaged buildings, together with WMF, we established a mobile laboratory in collaboration with the Ukrainian State Scientific and Project Institute "UkrNDIprojectrestavratsiya." This lab, involving students from Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture and National Academy of Arts and Architecture, enables faster analyses crucial for timely stabilisation and basic repairs by first aid teams whilst addressing the shortage of experts in the field by involving the cooperation of students. Additionally, CER and WMF worked together to swiftly winterise and stabilise heritage buildings in the Chernihiv and Sumy regions. These interventions were made possible by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' funding in 2022.

Looking Ahead

As the war continues, at CER, we remain committed to our cultural emergency response in Ukraine, anticipating increased demand for urgent stabilisation of heritage sites. Recognizing the evolving needs, our local network of heritage heroes continues to coordinate efforts to address emerging challenges. We feel proud in working alongside such inspiring and hardworking partners in protecting cultural heritage and we are grateful to continue supporting their efforts in the field during these challenging times.

We are therefore very grateful for the continuation of our partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and their additional contribution of €725,000 to continue the urgent support for the protection of cultural heritage in Ukraine in 2024.





Emergency Response Action: Empowering local communities through sustainable conservation in Yemen

Grant
€ 31,720

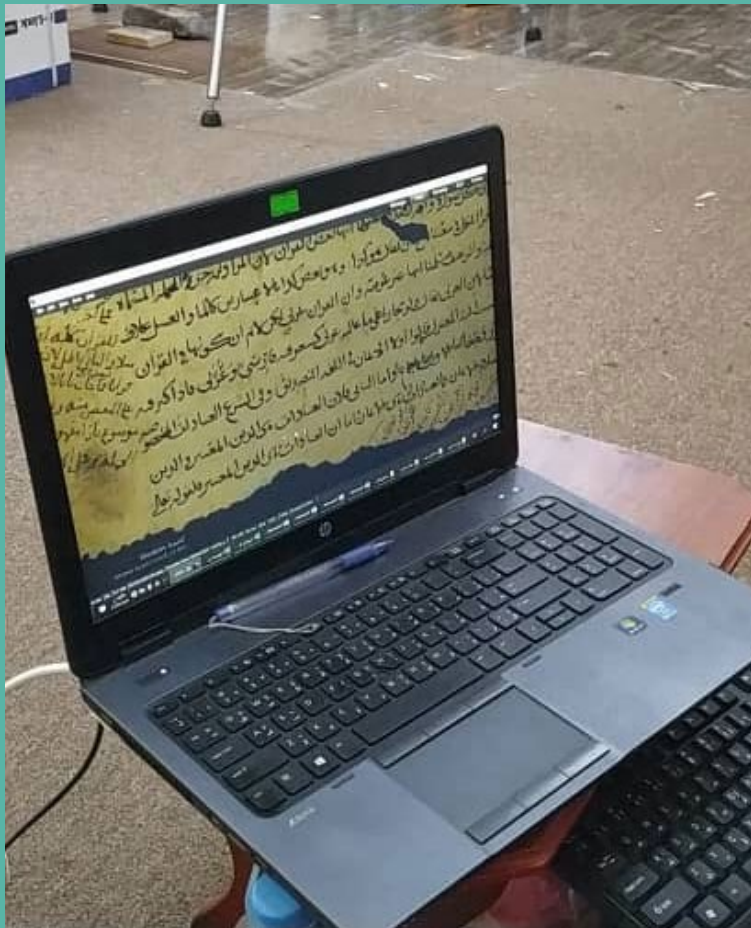
Location
Yemen

Type of emergency
Climate emergency

Theme
Community resilience

Project name
Amran Manuscript Library

Project coordinator
Ahmed Aldali, Save Yemen Organization

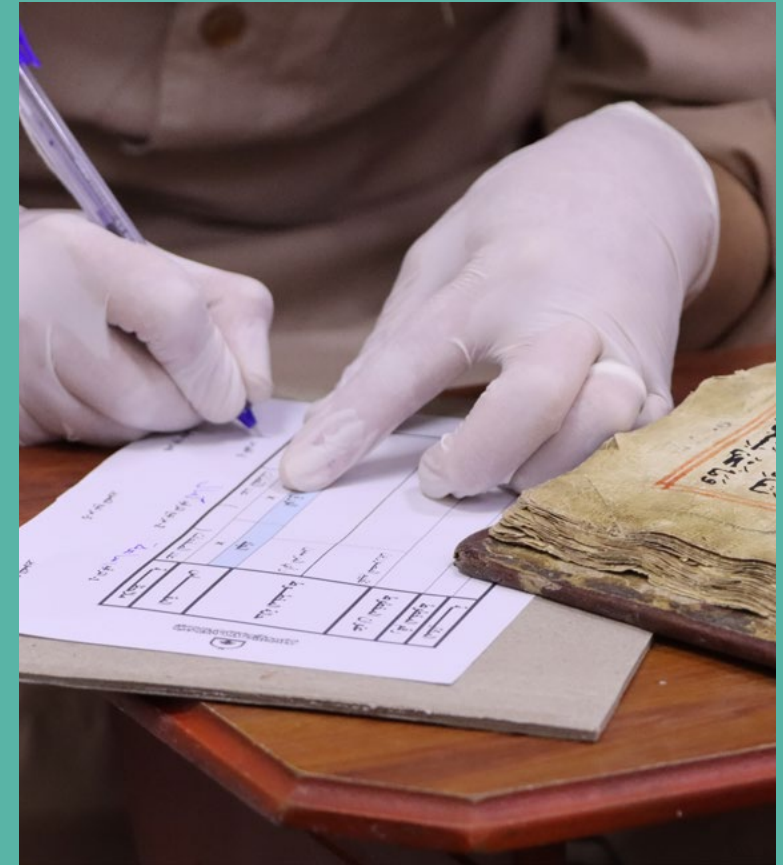


The manuscripts of the 'Amran Manuscript Library contain centuries of thoughts and traditions, including collective memory, religious discourse, beliefs, jurisprudence, and the history of Yemen. Unfortunately, they have been damaged over the years by pests and extreme humidity caused by rains and flooding. To address this issue, Save Yemen Organization conducted a total inventory, restored the 103 most affected manuscripts, replaced decaying packaging materials and storage facilities, created digital copies of the manuscripts before and after restoration, and published a catalogue of the manuscripts with samples online.

This project not only prevented further degradation or destruction of the manuscripts but also made them more widely available and usable for their owners, researchers, the wider scholastic community, and enthusiasts of ancient Yemeni cultural heritage. However, the project's impact went beyond this as the Save Yemen Organization engaged with local communities. The project team invited interested members of the local community, including owners and custodians of other manuscript collections, to participate in basic cleaning and learn about proper storage. The team also spent a considerable amount of time building trust and rapport with the library custodians, living and working alongside them in rural 'Amran for extended periods.

“Empowering local communities leads to sustainable conservation when they have ownership and pride in their heritage,” added project coordinator Ahmen Aldali about the impact of the project. Save Yemen Organization later invited enthusiastic young locals for training in the manuscript preservation laboratory. Despite facing challenges like lack of electricity, lighting, and shortages of necessities, the organisation demonstrated resilience and passion, working tirelessly to engage communities with their heritage. It is thanks to the invaluable work and dedication of partners like Save Yemen Organization that we are able to preserve cultural heritage for future generations.

CER is proud to support Save Yemen Organization in its effort to provide first aid to a vast manuscript collection on the brink of total loss in rural 'Amran, Yemen. The project ran under the expertise and leadership of Ahmed Aldali, Founder & Director of Save Yemen Organization, in partnership with Imam Zaid Bin Ali Cultural Foundation, represented by Abdulrahman Alneamy, an alumnus of the 2021 CER and Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI) course Leadership for Cultural Heritage Stewards in Challenging Circumstances.



“The project team's dedication, supported by esteemed organisations, was truly inspiring. Despite the many challenges encountered, their unwavering passion for safeguarding cultural heritage and the positive impact it had on the community deeply moved us. This project exemplifies the profound impact of heritage preservation on social cohesion, cultural wellbeing, and community resilience.”

Ahmen Aldali
Project coordinator, Founder &
Director of Save Yemen Organization

Emergency Response Action: Giving a new lease of life to a global cultural treasure in Yemen

Grant
€ 626,411

Location
Yemen

Type of emergency
Conflict & climate emergency

Theme
Principles of inclusivity

Project name
The Rehabilitation of the Governor's HQ Complex (former British Residency) in Mukalla

Project coordinator
Daw'an Architecture Foundation (DAF)

Supporting partner
British Council's Cultural Protection Fund (CPF), in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)



The Governor's HQ Complex in Mukalla is not just a mere building; it is a significant landmark in the heart of the old city that displays the traditional Yemeni earth architecture. The palace is an essential example of Hadrami earth construction in mudbrick and stone, utilising the traditional methods of nurah, mud mortar, and saruj for damp proofing and insulation.

Originally built in the 1920s as a palace for the Qu'aiti sultans, it represents a blend of Islamic, Ottoman, and British influences amidst a landscape dominated by concrete structures. It stands out among the concrete structures that have taken over the city, reminding us of the importance of preserving our cultural heritage.

In 2015, the complex was brutally attacked and damaged, leaving behind a scarred and abandoned site. But thanks to the generous support of the Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) and the efforts of CER and Daw'an Architecture Foundation (DAF), the complex is being restored to its former glory.

The restoration project aims not only to rebuild the physical structure but also to revive its cultural significance. This involves creating green spaces, documenting traditional earth architecture techniques, providing capacity-building programmes for local youth, developing a post-reconstruction management plan, and organising public events to promote cultural heritage. Through passion, professionalism, and partnership, this project serves as a model for heritage preservation. The Governor's HQ Complex represents not just local heritage but a global cultural treasure belonging to both the community and the world.

For the last 15 years, we have been working with DAF to protect Yemen's cultural heritage. As Yemen remains one of our priority countries, we feel honoured to work alongside DAF. Our partnership is thriving, and we are grateful for their continuous efforts.

The Governor's HQ Complex (former British Residency) project is implemented by DAF in partnership with CER, and funded by the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund, in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).





“The project's success has revitalised this Mukalla landmark, showcasing its cultural significance. As a solid, attractive, and impressive structure ready to house the Governor's HQ functions, it stands as a testament to cultural resistance triumphing over destruction.”

Project evaluator
Daw'an Architecture Foundation

2

Network of Regional Hubs



2

Network of Regional Hubs

CER collaborates with local heritage rescue organisations worldwide to decentralise emergency response activities, supporting the development of regional capacities and infrastructures.

Together, we are creating a network of regional coordination points for cultural emergency response which can mobilise in the event of crisis and support heritage stewards globally.

In 2023, our focus on the network of CER Regional Hubs intensified, culminating in the inaugural Annual General Meeting. Programme coordinators from Lebanon, Guatemala, Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Curaçao, and Barbados joined us in Tirana, Albania, for strategic discussions, programme development, and knowledge exchange. The meeting emphasised peer collaboration, ensuring a collective approach to decentralising safeguarding efforts at a regional level. Honest conversations were central to the discussions. CER believes that by designing the programme together with our partners, we can make global heritage protection more inclusive, sustainable, and locally led.



2

CER Regional Hub in Central America

Organisation
Casa K'ojom

Since
2018

Region of action

Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, other neighbouring and nearby countries where possible

Type of emergencies

High threat posed by natural hazards such as earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes and floods, and urban hazards such as pollution and accidental fires

Heritage at risk

Archives, libraries, museums, archaeological sites, built heritage, and underwater heritage

1

Damage assessment

3

Emergencies

7

Site visits

32

Training participants

1

Workshop

In 2023, the Regional Hub in Central America faced a year filled with emergencies, prompting Casa K'ojom, the host organisation, to position itself for emergency response multiple times. Despite not requiring actual activation, the Regional Hub was directly involved in community outreach and education on risk mapping and analysis, particularly in the Mayan Biosphere in Petén, the Regional Hub's satellite office in northern Guatemala. The objective was to democratise heritage stewardship and simplify access to threatened cultural heritage. A successful training workshop equipped young volunteers with mobile phones and a mapping application to explore an area damaged by Hurricane Julia in October 2022, which contributed valuable data on heritage sites for further analysis. This initiative marked the successful collaboration with the Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab (CHML) - a partnership between the Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) and the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI)- and the completion of the establishment of the Regional Hub's satellite office in Petén, a collaborative effort with the NGO Asociación Bien Común (ABC) supported by CER.

Throughout the year, CER's Head of Programmes Vanessa Fraga Prol worked with the Regional Hub to develop its long-term strategy and sustainability trajectory within CER's broader vision. The Regional Hub complemented its workshop with presentations for key stakeholders, including UNESCO, Consejo Nacional para la Protección de La Antigua Guatemala (CNPAG), La

Antigua Municipality, and La Antigua Fire Brigade.

Later in the year, Regional Hub Coordinator Samuel Arce Franco participated in the Regional Course for Emergency Response to Documentary Heritage in Quito, Ecuador. During the course, he led heritage stewards in training to become experts in safeguarding collections and facilitated the strengthening of this nascent cultural emergency responder network in Latin America.

During the rest of the year, the Regional Hub collaborated with the Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab to address warnings of a potentially catastrophic volcanic eruption in Nevado del Ruiz, Colombia. Mapping heritage institutions and providing guidance to those likely to be affected, the Regional Hub played a crucial role, ensuring preparedness in the face of what turned out to be a mild volcanic activity. However, the Regional Hub's preventive preparations meant that innumerable vulnerable heritage stakeholders could rely on more than luck alone in case of disaster.

Facing domestic challenges during the Guatemalan general election, the Regional Hub navigated political instability, disseminating information on risk mitigation and preparedness for heritage sites and memory institutions. Serving as a vital disseminator of information, the Regional Hub utilised its extensive national network to prepare heritage custodians for potential risks.



2

CER Regional Hub in Central America

The experiences of the Central America Regional Hub underscore the importance of decentralisation in cultural emergency response; a value at the core of the Network of Regional Hubs. Despite not facing major crises, the Regional Hub's active engagement and dedicated responsiveness demonstrated its crucial role in uniting heritage stakeholders, sharing knowledge, and improving readiness for potential emergencies.



“The sharing of stories from other CER Regional Hubs – this networking is priceless. We are members of many networks, more or less productive or inspiring, but nothing could compare with the CER Network of Regional Hubs.”

Samuel Arce Franco
Regional Hub coordinator,
Casa K'ojom



Samuel Franco
Regional Hub coordinator



Maria Jose Ramos
Regional Hub coordinator



2

CER Regional Hub in Western Balkans

Organisation

Cultural Heritage Without Borders (CHwB) Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Since
2021

Region of action

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo, neighbouring countries where possible

Heritage at risk

Archaeological sites and historical cities and villages, museums and their collections, and archives and libraries

Type of emergencies

Climate emergency & disaster

In 2023, the Regional Hub in the Western Balkans achieved significant milestones in bolstering the cultural heritage sector's efficiency and responsiveness in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Kosovo. Marking the final year of its establishment phase, the Regional Hub, hosted by the national offices of Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB), accomplished various goals set over the past years.

A notable triumph was the translation of the First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis handbook and toolkit, published by CER, ICCROM and Prince Claus Fund, into Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian (in both the Cyrillic and the Latin alphabet). The Regional Hub also hosted the inaugural regional conference of Balkan Cultural Aid Response for Emergencies (B+CARE) in Tirana, fostering collaboration among approximately 50 stakeholders from the region and the international heritage community. The gathering fostered knowledge exchange and reinforced collaboration among various organisations. Moreover, it celebrated their collective achievements in safeguarding the Balkan region's vast heritage ecosystem.

Within their national contexts, Regional Hub offices made significant progress. CHwB Albania developed a digital damage assessment application in Albanian for all nationally registered heritage sites, training 23 personnel to utilise it effectively. Meanwhile, CHwB teams in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Kosovo conducted critical training for

large groups of museum staff, focusing on evacuation planning and emergency response preparedness. The knowledge gained promises to enhance existing emergency response processes significantly. All three national CHwB offices developed standard damage assessment forms and engaged with public sector and civil society stakeholders for future collaboration efforts.

As the Regional Hub looks to its next phase, it is equipped with significantly more data about the needs and capacities of the regional heritage sector and of their individual states, which it intends to filter into the design of future programming.

In addition to these exemplary preparedness efforts, the Regional Hub played a crucial role in executing emergency interventions. Following flooding in Peja, Kosovo, the Regional Hub assisted local heritage stewards in responding and developing preparedness plans. In Dhuvjan, Albania, severe rainfall caused the partial collapse of Saint Nicholas' Church, prompting the Regional Hub to secure the roof and winterise the building ahead of planned rehabilitation in 2024. Moreover, a third emergency project commenced in Bosnia & Herzegovina after an arson attack on Husejnija Mosque, emphasising the ongoing vulnerability of cultural heritage in the region, even long after the cessation of conflict in this area.

50

Conference participants

23

Damage assessment application trainees

2

Emergency response operations

64

Heritage professionals trained

5

Site visits

2

CER Regional Hub in Western Balkans

We are therefore proud and privileged to continue our collaboration with CHwB in building regional capacities and deploying to protect culture in crisis, with plans to build on our achievements in 2024 and beyond.



30

Speakers,
trainers and
panellists

>30

Stakeholder
meetings

5

Translations of
the ICCROM, PCF,
and CER First
Aid to Cultural
Heritage in
Times of Crisis
(FAC) Toolkit and
Handbook

“This niche in the heritage field is very much needed and should be in the focus of heritage activities. We feel like we have just scratched the surface with this project.”

Regional Hub coordinator



Erinë Mulolli
Regional Hub coordinator



Elena Mamani
Regional Hub coordinator



Adisa Dzino
Regional Hub coordinator



2

CER Regional Hub in the Levant

Organisation
NGO Biladi

Since
2022

Region of action
Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq

Type of emergencies
Conflict & disaster

Heritage at risk
Cultural practices, archaeological sites, historical cities and villages, museums and their collections, libraries and archives

9

Participating institutions

2

Emergency response operations

6

International training & advocacy events

9

Participating institutions

270

Trainees

In its second year of operation, the Regional Hub in the Levant, hosted by NGO Biladi, continued its remarkable efforts, focusing on comprehensive training through Jouhouzia. This initiative provided exemplary multi-leveled training for 270 participants, including the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Directorate General of Antiquities, the Lebanese Red Cross, the Lebanese Civil Defence, and various museums, universities, and stakeholders in the Lebanese heritage sector. The goal was to instil best practices in emergency preparedness and response among diverse frontline heritage protectors.

A significant achievement during the year was the inauguration of the Cultural Property Protection and Emergency Response Training Center (CPPER) at the Independent Works Regiment of the Lebanese Armed Forces, a one-of-a-kind facility in Lebanon.

The Regional Hub not only surpassed expectations with successive training curricula but also took the lead in coordinating damage assessments and emergency response plans following the **2023 Türkiye – Syria earthquakes** of February 2023. During the aftermath, the Regional Hub played a crucial role in coordinating the damage assessments and emergency response plans. They collaborated with leading third-party experts on the ground and provided them with exceptional in-kind support.

The Regional Hub also had a significant impact on the work of others globally. They provided training to

heritage stakeholders in Jordan, strengthened their relations with counterparts in Iraq, offered in-kind support to damage assessors in Türkiye, shared knowledge and insight with heritage stewards in Ukraine. Additionally, they raised awareness about regional needs by participating in the Paris Peace Forum, for which Jouhouzia was awarded participation in the Scale-up Program (SCUP) in 2022.

In response to the Israel-Hezbollah conflict in October 2023, the Regional Hub played a pivotal role in coordinating efforts to protect Lebanese cultural properties at risk of collateral damage. Collaborating closely with Lebanese Armed Forces, the Directorate General of Antiquities, the National Museum of Beirut, and Sursock Museum, the Hub facilitated urgent preparedness actions, such as packaging, protection, and evacuation planning. Many involved in these efforts were Regional Hub's Jouhouzia training alumni, emphasising the tangible impact of the training. The fact that the stakeholders involved coordinated so efficiently is a clear testament to the impact of the Regional Hub's work. Overall, this year's effort underscored exactly how an expert stakeholder from civil society can complement, collaborate, and cooperate effectively with state entities during an emergency, making a significant impact on heritage protection in crisis situations.



Rana Dubeissy
Regional Hub coordinator



Joanne Farchakh Bajjaly
Regional Hub coordinator



“In the beginning, I wasn't sure why I was participating in the Jouhouzia training. However, as the training progressed, our perspectives began to broaden and we started to see the importance of cultural heritage in people's lives and how it nourishes the soul. Personally, I feel that my skills have been sharpened and I have learned a lot about heritage objects, documentation, and evacuation. The training was a great opportunity to collaborate with people from different institutions and work towards a common goal.”

Jouhouzia trainee
The Lebanese Red Cross

2

CER Regional Hub in the Caribbean

Organisation

Cultural Heritage Emergency Network (CHEN), an initiative of the Caribbean Regional Branch of the International Council of Archives (CARBICA)

Since
2023

Region of action

All Caribbean Sea islands and Suriname

Heritage at risk

Documentary heritage, built heritage, museums and collections, intangible heritage, and archaeological sites

Type of emergencies

Climate emergency

25

CHEN expert members

4

Years to establish

In 2023, we proudly inaugurated the Regional Hub in the Caribbean, a crucial initiative developed in collaboration with the Cultural Heritage Emergency Network (CHEN) under the Caribbean Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (CARBICA). The establishment of this Regional Hub marks a significant advancement in strengthening cultural heritage protection throughout the Caribbean region, where diverse cultural assets face a myriad of threats.

The Caribbean, known for its rich cultural mosaic, confronts challenges such as hurricanes, earthquakes, climate crises, political unrest, and illicit activities like looting and sand mining. These threats, often exacerbated by the climate crisis, necessitate a proactive response to safeguard the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the region. The creation of the Regional Hub in the Caribbean is a direct response to this imperative, serving as a central point for coordination and collaboration to protect the region's cultural assets.

In partnering with CHEN, we aim to expand our network of regional stakeholders, fostering a collective effort towards inclusive and sustainable heritage protection. The Regional Hub will play a crucial role in coordinating responses to cultural emergencies, establishing decentralised mechanisms for emergency response, and enhancing capacity through training, resource provision,

and facilitating heritage and threat mapping.

This collaboration extends beyond the Caribbean, as CHEN integrates into a wider network that includes Regional Hubs in Central America, the Western Balkans, and the Levant. This interconnected approach ensures that the Caribbean region benefits from shared expertise, resources, and tools, creating a comprehensive and adaptable response to cultural emergencies. The day-to-day operations of the Regional Hub will be based in Curaçao, managed by a dedicated Secretariat.

The objectives of the Regional Hub go beyond mere coordination, aspiring to develop channels and protocols for seamless collaboration among authorities, civil emergency actors, and cultural heritage institutions. This includes integrating cultural heritage into disaster response mechanisms at local, national, and regional levels. A notable achievement in this regard is the integration of cultural emergency response elements into Curaçao's National Crisis Management Plan, a precedent-setting accomplishment under the leadership of CARBICA President and CHEN Co-Chair Max Scriwanek. The initiative drew inspiration from past successes, such as the collaboration with Gerda Henkel Stiftung to support CHEN Co-Chair Rita Tjien Foooh's project to enhance preparedness and fast, efficient response in Suriname. This project demonstrated a



2

CER Regional Hub in the Caribbean

substantial demand for cultural emergency planning in the Caribbean and set in motion the Regional Hub creation process.

The launch of the Regional Hub in the Caribbean signifies a pivotal moment in ongoing efforts to protect and preserve the region's cultural heritage. With a collaborative approach, strategic positioning, and a commitment to capacity building, the Regional Hub aims to create a resilient cultural emergency response ecosystem, showcasing the power of coordinated action in safeguarding the Caribbean's cultural legacy for future generations.





Halcyon Wiltshire-Busby
Regional Hub coordinator



Maximiliaan Scriwanek
Regional Hub coordinator



Rita Tijenfooh
Regional Hub coordinator



Emergency Response Action: Safeguarding Mayan cultural identity in Guatemala

Grant
€ 35,000

Location
Guatemala

Project name
La Blanca Guatemala

Type of emergency
Climate emergency

Project coordinator
Rosa Maria Chan, ProPetén Foundation

Theme
Cultural continuity



The La Blanca archaeological site, dating back to 250 - 600 CE, holds vital records of Mayan communities. Its acropolis contains writing that dates back to the 18th century. This project is a continuation of another project supported at the site in 2013 by the University of Valencia. A project that faced challenges in 2019 due to COVID's mobility restrictions which made the site inaccessible by the project team. Subsequently, Hurricane Iota posed severe risks to the preservation of its cultural heritage causing damages to the protective structures. Responding to the increasing risks of heritage loss, the ProPetén Foundation was able to replace damaged thatched roofs and stabilise stuccoes and mural paintings.

The risk of illicit trafficking in Mayan cultural heritage is high in the region, exacerbating the disruption of heritage communities' access to this knowledge. The Mayan writing system is one of the oldest writing systems in the world and there are numerous initiatives in progress to revitalise the language for writing purposes. For this reason, La Blanca is a key repository of Mayan hieroglyphs as it supports language revitalization initiatives. An interpretation centre at the site contributes to wider accessibility, making it a valuable educational resource in the region. It is essential for the cultural continuity initiatives in progress in the region that in-country repositories of the Mayan languages exist and be accessible to indigenous communities in the surrounding areas.

The collaboration between our trusted on-the-ground partners and heritage communities ensures they lead in safeguarding their cultural identities and significant heritage. The project's urgency lies in protecting this rich cultural heritage from irretrievable loss, providing a model for inclusive heritage preservation.

“Enthusiasts in Mayan culture will be able to continue appreciating important and special features of the pre-Hispanic and historical culture that few sites in the region show - aspects that still need further scholarly examination.”

Rosa Maria Chan
Project coordinator, ProPetén
Foundation

Emergency Response Action: Collaborating with the local community to preserve temples in India

Grant
€ 23,000

Location
Himachal Pradesh, India

Project name
Safeguarding of Kathkuni Temples in Himachal Pradesh

Type of emergency
Disaster

Project coordinator
Madhusudan Singh, Foundation for Living Knowledge (FOLK)

Theme
Community resilience



The Laxmi-Narayan and Thakurdwar temples in Himachal Pradesh, India, boast traditional Kathkuni architecture and intricate Himachal wood carvings with a rich history spanning 300-400 years. Beyond their aesthetic and historical significance, these temples have served as communal shelters for family heritage during emergencies, contributing to the preservation of intangible heritage. Recent earthquakes and landslides inflicted severe damage to the temples, accentuating the urgency for their protection, especially following a major flash flood disaster in the summer of 2023 in the Himachal Pradesh region.

Under the leadership of Madhusudan Singh, Director of the Foundation for Living Knowledge (FOLK) and a graduate of our Leadership Course[2], this project focused on safeguarding the temples and the broader cultural heritage of the region. Initial repair and stabilisation were conducted by local masons, followed by a training program on disaster management and emergency response for five vulnerable villages, each preparing a community-level disaster management plan. Throughout the project, Q-GIS mapping activities documented temples, conducted hazard risk vulnerability assessments, and recorded intangible heritage associated with these structures.

The project's impact extended beyond physical preservation, contributing to the community's welfare and reinforcing their incorporation of intangible heritage into daily life. Community activities, rooted in the spirituality of the temples, involved conservation practices that integrated intangible heritage into devotional activities, local festivals, folk music, and dance. The community demonstrated heightened awareness of heritage protection and disaster risk reduction (DRR), embracing local indigenous knowledge in heritage and environmental conservation. The project's legacy endures in the community's cultural practices and heightened awareness.





“Heritage-enthusiasts volunteers and the local community, known as Thabi, who are the experts in Kathkuni architecture worked together on this project. For them safeguarding the temples' structure meant protecting their sacred space where the community comes together through festivals and celebrations. We are so grateful to see the community's involvement and excitement carry on from this project and foster documentation on intangible community heritage.”

Madhusudan Singh
Project coordinator and director,
Foundation for Living Knowledge
(FOLK)

3

Training & Mentorship



3

Training & Mentorship

As part of our commitment to supporting locally-led responses, CER collaborates with other cultural heritage emergency organisations to strengthen the necessary capacity and infrastructure required for effective intervention. Our approach is centred around empowering international heritage professionals with the skills and knowledge necessary to address cultural emergencies.

This year, CER co-organized two courses: one in The Hague, Netherlands and one in Quito, Ecuador. These courses brought together 34 participants from 22 different countries.



3

An update on our Leadership Course in 2023

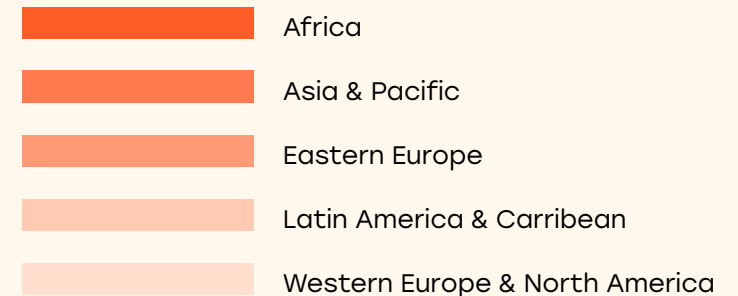
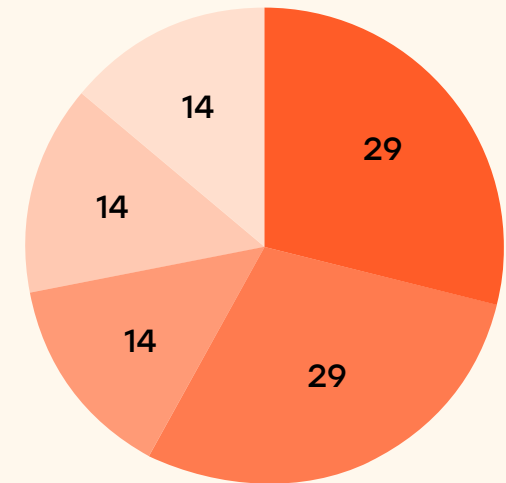
Between September 24th and 29th, 2023, CER and the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI) successfully organised the fifth edition of the Leadership Course for Cultural Heritage Stewards in Challenging Circumstances. Out of 62 applications, 14 participants from 13 different countries including Afghanistan, Barbados, Cameroon, Georgia, Japan, Lesotho, Namibia, Nigeria, Peru, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United States, and Vietnam were selected to take part in this year's Leadership Course.

Participants in the five-day course engaged in interactive workshops that focused on developing leadership and project management skills. The programme featured expert talks on psychosocial well-being and team care, as well as panel discussions covering critical aspects like fundraising. Additionally, expert lectures on project development, funding strategies, management practices, and effective communication were included in the comprehensive curriculum.

On the final day, the programme featured a mock funders panel, moderated by the President of UNESCO Netherlands. Representatives from other heritage grant makers such as the ALIPH Foundation, Cultural Protection Fund, The J.M Kaplan Fund, and the Gerda Henkel Stiftung shared insights, enriching the participants' understanding of the diverse landscape of cultural heritage funding.

Amongst the participants, Stephanie Grant from the Cultural Protection Fund expressed, "we are thrilled to be connected to a network of heritage funders with Cultural Emergency Response and other valuable partners. It was a privilege to join this last week and see an excellent and diverse range of projects, pitched by an impressively experienced cohort of leaders. We can achieve so much more when we work together."

We are proud to see that each year, our course empowers a diverse cohort of cultural practitioners to lead the charge in safeguarding cultural heritage and ensuring a more resilient, inclusive response to emergencies worldwide.





“I am just so very grateful for this opportunity, I feel like I'm ready for part two of my career in a way I did not anticipate before I came!”

Sarah Miller
Leadership Course participant,
Florida Public Archaeology Network

3

New Regional Course for Emergency Response to Documentary Heritage

The first Regional Course for Emergency Response to Documentary Heritage, organised by CER and Conservartecuator Foundation, with the generous support of the Whiting Foundation, was a truly inspiring event. Held in Quito, Ecuador, this course brought together 20 professionals, out of 63 applications, from 10 Latin American countries: Ecuador, Uruguay, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, and Peru.

The course aimed to address the challenges and best practices in preserving endangered documentary heritage, and to empower participants with practical skills and effective solutions for safeguarding documentary heritage in times of crisis.

On November 13, the course was inaugurated at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Quito, addressing key challenges and best practices in preserving endangered documentary heritage. High-level representatives delivered opening remarks, regional organisations - the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the American Library Association (ALA), UNESCO - and funding organisations presented collaboration opportunities.

Throughout the course, participants were able to immerse themselves in both theoretical insights and practical frameworks aimed at strengthening the protection of documentary heritage collections before, during, and after emergencies. The course culminated in a final simulation, where participants tackled recovery steps for wet, torn, and burned documents and books in a simulated earthquake and fire scenario.

The training provided valuable opportunities for collective reflection, hands-on exercises, and constructive dialogue. It brought together professionals from high-risk areas and created an opportunity for peer learning and networking. The course aimed to empower participants with the knowledge and skills to safeguard documentary heritage in times of crisis, and the participants left feeling inspired and motivated to continue their important work.





“The course was an eye-opening experience as it equipped me with the skills to respond effectively to emergencies and safeguard important documents. Inspired by the learnings and experiences gained, I am now eager to incorporate emergency response strategies into our existing courses at my institution. This was also an invaluable experience to come in contact with various Latin American realities and many institutions, both public and private.”

Filomena Luciene Cordeiro Reis
Regional Course participant,
Universidade Estadual
de Montes Claros

3

Co-creating a curriculum for cross-sectoral learning

This initiative aims to strengthen local capacities and further support local heritage stewards. It is based on the principles of the 1954 Hague Convention and its Protocols, which aim to safeguard cultural heritage during times of crisis. The initiative encourages emergency responders and heritage stewards to work together in developing cooperative strategies for preparedness, response, and recovery. The goal is to promote synergy between these two sectors. While the Hague Convention is an important inspiration for the workshop, it is just one of many initiatives and principles that have influenced the formulation and ideation of this educational resource.

Online meetings were conducted to establish the purpose, activities, and extent of the programme. In September, CER, Blue Shield International (BSI) and The Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI) convened in The Hague for a workshop on curriculum development. As part of the workshop, military and humanitarian experts were invited to discuss ways of collaboration and provide insights for the programme's development.



Emergency Response Action: Preserving local antiquities from the Merowe Land Museum in Sudan

Grant
€ 43,675

Location
Sudan

Project name
Merowe Land Museum

Type of emergency
Conflict & disaster

Project coordinator
National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums and
Mallinson Architects

Theme
Cultural continuity

Supporting partner
Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI) & International
Council of Museums (ICOM) Netherlands



Sudan's rich heritage is currently under threat amid the country's devastating war. In their first report, the Sudan Heritage Protection Initiative (SHPI) in 2023, which is part of the non-governmental organisation Heritage for Peace, documented the scale of destruction so far, which has reached at least 28 cultural and archaeological sites.

The country boasts a variety of unique heritage sites, and its museums house a diverse collection of artefacts from local communities, historic periods, and modern times.

Established in 2009, the Merowe Land Museum preserves antiquities from communities displaced due to the construction of the Hamdab dam. Unfortunately, the museum has been inaccessible to the public for the past five years due to ongoing conflict and flooding.

In response to these unstable and harrowing circumstances, our Sudanese partners urgently sought assistance to relocate the museum's collection to a safer location. This initiative involved the digitisation and evacuation of over 190 objects, along with their exhibition cases, ensuring the preservation of this valuable collection for current and future generations of Sudanese people.

The collection, which has been inaccessible for many years, will finally be on display at its new location, showcased as the centrepiece of a new community museum that is being developed there. The upcoming exhibitions will celebrate the traditions of the collection and allow the community to better understand its history through active participation.

The project is being implemented by the National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums (NCAM). The project is funded by Cultural Emergency Response (CER), the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI), and ICOM The Netherlands.





“I extend my heartfelt thanks for CER's invaluable efforts in safeguarding Sudan's cultural heritage. Your support in relocating museum collections amidst conflict and flooding is truly commendable. The dedication of the Sudan National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums staff on the ground coupled with your funding through SCRI and ICOM The Netherlands, highlights the collaborative spirit crucial in this difficult period in the history of Sudan.”

Ali Nour
Project coordinator, National
Corporation for Antiquities and
Museums and Mallinson Architects

Emergency Response Action: Rescuing collective memory in Sudan

Grant
€ 23,640

Location
Sudan

Project name
Memory Project

Type of emergency
Conflict & disaster

Project coordinator
Wahbi Addelrahman, Nile Valley University

Theme
Cultural continuity

Supporting partner
Whiting Foundation



In April 2023, the civil war in Sudan triggered significant displacement away from conflict zones, compounding existing economic and political crises. Recognising heightened risks of looting and trafficking of cultural heritage, particularly the privately held Berber manuscripts, CER focused on safeguarding this intergenerational heritage. The manuscripts faced additional threats from heavy rains and extreme humidity in the region. Given the location of the region on a historic pilgrimage and trade route, it was clear that it was an area rich in documentary heritage. Previous surveying of the area showed that some collections dated as far back as the 1700s.

Responding to these emergencies, CER collaborated with a trusted local partner to swiftly digitise approximately 1,000 heritage objects and, when necessary, evacuate these collections to safer locations. Covering approximately 300 kilometres along the River Nile, from Aldamer in the south to Abu Hamad in the north, the project involved cities like Aldamer, Atbara, Berber, and Abu Hamad, as well as surrounding villages and suburbs. This initiative showcases community resilience in difficult circumstances and underscores the importance of local leadership in implementing effective on-the-ground actions. The project's outstanding success relied on the partner's established trust within affected communities and the relationships cultivated over time. This project's significance lies in its ability to ensure that these cherished private libraries can persist in educating future generations about their history.

This project is implemented in partnership with CER and funded by The Whiting Foundation through the joint initiative First Aid to Documentary Heritage under Threat.



Emergency Response Action: Preventing heritage loss due to climate breakdown in Kenya

Grant
€ 27,953

Location
Kenya

Project name
Kabarnet Museum in Kenya

Type of emergency
Climate emergency

Project coordinator
Lillian Amwanda, Kabarnet Museum

Theme
Community resilience

The Kabarnet Museum in Baringo County, Kenya, renowned for its ethnographical and paleo-archaeological collections, has served as a hub for anthropologists and archaeologists since the 1980s. This project aimed to revitalise the museum, addressing specific gallery needs and preventing further deterioration, particularly for 320 ethnographic artefacts out of a total collection of 643.

The museum's overall condition has significantly declined due to damage from successive heavy rainfall and floods, exacerbated by climate change. The structural impact includes water damage to roofs, termite infestations in the inner structure, and potential permanent loss of various artefacts. Notably, the ethnographic collection suffered severe damage in a leaking storage space, risking the loss of donated artefacts representing local communities.

Beyond serving as a repository for local communities' artefacts, the museum plays a crucial role in preserving cultural identity. It actively displays ethnographic artefacts to maintain the cultural memory of different local communities. Additionally, the museum functions as a communal space for various cultural activities, including gatherings for artists, women groups, people with disabilities, and Indigenous herbalists.

This renovation project addresses the urgent need to safeguard the museum's structure, prevent further damage to artefacts, and preserve the vital cultural heritage tied to local communities in Baringo County. The renovation project aimed to urgently safeguard the museum's structure, prevent further damage to artefacts, and preserve vital cultural heritage in Baringo County. CER's support included stabilising and renovating the physical structures of various galleries, addressing roofing issues, drainage



improvements, waterproofing, termite treatment, fumigation, and repairing floors and walls. Collections were cleaned and fumigated.

Throughout this whole process, the involvement of the community was of our utmost importance for the successful completion of the project. Three community consultation sessions were held at the start of the project attended by a total of 150 people amongst them: University lecturers, schoolteachers, county government of Baringo, representatives from the National government, cultural groups, members of the heritage community. The project evaluation also involved ICOM-Kenya officials.

The progress report as of September 2023, highlighted the completion of exterior renovations on the Moi Gallery and Exhibition Hall, including roof replacements. Interior painting restoration and ongoing exterior and interior renovations of the Education Hall were also noted. After a successful planning process, the museum moved the collections into temporary storage, ensuring compliance with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements for handling and storing cultural heritage items. The community consultations were also successfully completed, engaging 50 stakeholders during a one-day event. The project demonstrated how CER can support local partners in providing effective preservation measures in both physical structures and cultural artefacts while unleashing and fostering the power of collective action from local communities and partners.





“What I am most relieved about is that we no longer need to worry about leaks in the museum galleries during the rainy season, especially at night. This has spared my team and me from the annual task of shifting exhibition showcases to avoid roof leaks, a practice we endured for the last two years. CER has truly rescued the museum and indeed worked as our cultural heritage ambulance.”

Lillian Amwanda
Curator, Kabarnet Museum

4

Cultural
Emergency
Response
...ing culture in c

Making the Case



4

Making the Case

Cultural heritage is a crucial part of our individual and collective identities; it enriches our lives in countless ways, connects us to our past, helps keep communities together and provides a foundation for our future.

Culture makes us human, yet cultural heritage protection is often overlooked in disaster-response mechanisms. To address this oversight, we make active efforts to create or engage in dialogue to demonstrate the urgency and importance of heritage protection. Our objective here isn't just to demonstrate urgency, but also to explore the synergies between heritage protection and humanitarian aid. We see culture as a basic human need, one that has a critical role in the recovery, resilience and wellbeing of communities following crises. With these goals in mind, at CER we participated in 23 advocacy opportunities throughout 11 different countries in 2023.

What makes you, you?

Is it your grandmother's recipe?

Your favorite museum?

Or the pride you feel when someone asks where you come from?

Cultural heritage is the result of a community and a life being led.

Who would we be without it?

When our culture is under threat, our identity is at risk.

To save culture means to save who you are.

We make the case for cultural heritage protection in crisis situations



4

Making the Case



4

Making the Case

Notable events included collaboration with The European Fine Art Foundation (TEFAF) New York, where a panel discussion between Sanne Letschert, director of CER, and Oleksandra Kovalchuk, director of the Odessa Museum of Fine Arts and founder of the Museum for Change initiative, took place. The conversation revolved around the exceptional stories of cultural first aiders on the frontline to protect their collections and sites, and the absolute urgency to save Ukraine's history, collective memory, and identity. During the event, Oleksandra Kovalchuk said, "we are making sure that our cultural heritage is here for a long time. It's not so much about the objects, it's about people and access to their own cultural heritage." - [Watch the full panel talk here.](#)

As part of our commitment to preserve intangible cultural heritage, we ran our first Pilot Project in 2021 focusing on Protection of Intangible Heritage of the Occupied Regions in Georgia. Led by our partner Tamar Sopromadze, a local team conducted 40 interviews of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in IDP settlements to create films for raising awareness about the region and making cultural practices accessible. The films covered various Georgian traditions and living experiences. The team also developed a database, field research methodology, and an evaluation report for further dissemination of learnings. In 2023, we showcased the film series at The Hague Humanity Hub as part of a panel talk on 'Observing Heritage Protection as a Humanitarian Issue,' highlighting CER's dedication to innovative methods for heritage protection and finding solutions to its challenges. - [Watch the full panel talk here.](#)

The event marked the beginning of a long-term commitment to exploring these crucial questions and advocating for the urgency of cultural heritage protection in crises. Central to the event was exploring how cultural heritage impacts the well-being of individuals and communities.



4

“This is the start of a bigger conversation because we understand that there is a lot to explore and learn about, but also how we can work better together. We ask ourselves these questions all intending to improve our support to partners on the ground and people of affected communities,” said Sanne Letschert, Director of CER during the event.

In addition, CER was selected by the European Commission to join an expert sub-group dedicated to advising on EU legislation, funding, and policies for safeguarding cultural heritage under threat in Ukraine. The sub-group, part of the EU Workplan for Culture 2023-2026, aims to identify good practices and provide recommendations for potential EU-funded actions to reconstruct cultural heritage in Ukraine.

Looking forward, we allocated funding for a new Pilot Project in Myanmar in 2023, focusing on creating shareable methodologies for measuring the impact of intangible heritage protection work, with implementation set for 2024. We continue to actively engage in advocacy, innovative projects, and collaborative efforts to underscore the significance of cultural heritage protection in the face of diverse challenges, from conflicts and disasters to environmental hazards and political unrest.





Emergency Response Action: Reopening the doors of one of the last theatres in Lebanon

Grant
€ 27,729

Location
Lebanon

Type of emergency
Disaster

Theme
Cultural continuity

Project name
Sunflower Theatre Fire Recovery

Project coordinator
Abdo Michel Nawar, Cultural Cooperative Association for Youth in Theatre and Cinema (SHAMS Association)



Founded in 2005, the Sunflower Theatre, is a cultural venue in Beirut that facilitates artistic productions, festivals, workshops, and exchanges. Managed by the Cultural Cooperative Association for Youth in Theatre and Cinema (SHAMS Association), under the leadership of director Abdo Michel Nawar, the space has been a pillar of society and culture in Beirut: it is a gathering place for diverse local communities and a welcoming hub for cultural practitioners from Lebanon, the region, and abroad; representing the full diversity and colourfulness of Lebanon's myriad religious, social, economic, national and ethnic identities. The Sunflower Theatre is preserving vital intangible cultural heritage and contemporary culture against all odds.

Emerging from the aftermath of the Lebanese Civil War, the Sunflower Theatre serves as a vital space for dialogue, exchange, and healing. It is among the last theatres in Beirut with a significant focus on youth programming, operating at a pivotal crossroads of communities. Beyond arts, it incubates grassroots civil society organisations.

Unfortunately, a fire on July 6th, 2023, damaged the main entrance and iconic theatre, rendering the venue inaccessible and impacting Beirut's cultural fabric. CER swiftly supported the SHAMS Association with €27,729 to reopen the venue. The extensive repairs included addressing damage to the entrance, such as: removing destroyed items, repairing doors, floor tiles, ceiling, and stairs, painting walls, as well as restoring the elevator and updating the electrical and lighting systems, alongside buying and installing fire prevention measures. The support from CER exemplifies the success of rapid and adaptable responses in safeguarding cultural heritage.

The theatre, symbolising diverse identities and offering critical thought and engagement, particularly for children and youth, resumed its inspirational role as a CER partner, continuing to unite, entertain, and inspire its dedicated patrons.

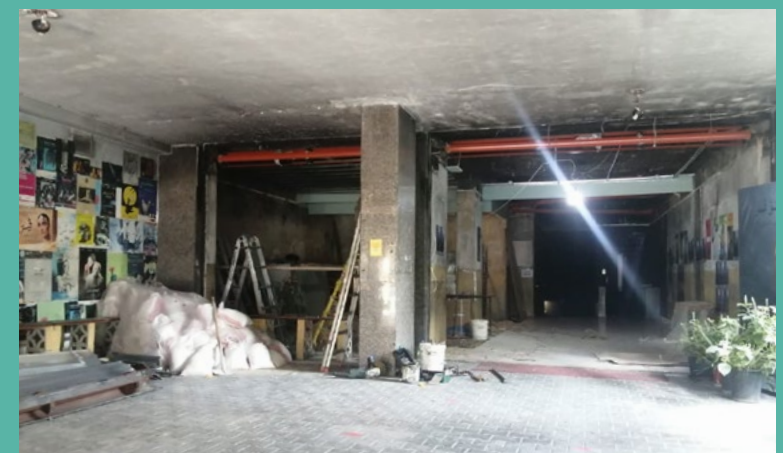


Image credit

Severe fire damage to the Sunflower Theatre before intervention by local heritage stewards, Lebanon, 2023, photos provided by SHAMS Association, CER



Emergency Response Action: Salvaging an essential piece of Amazonian history in Brazil

Grant
€ 13,542

Location
Brazil

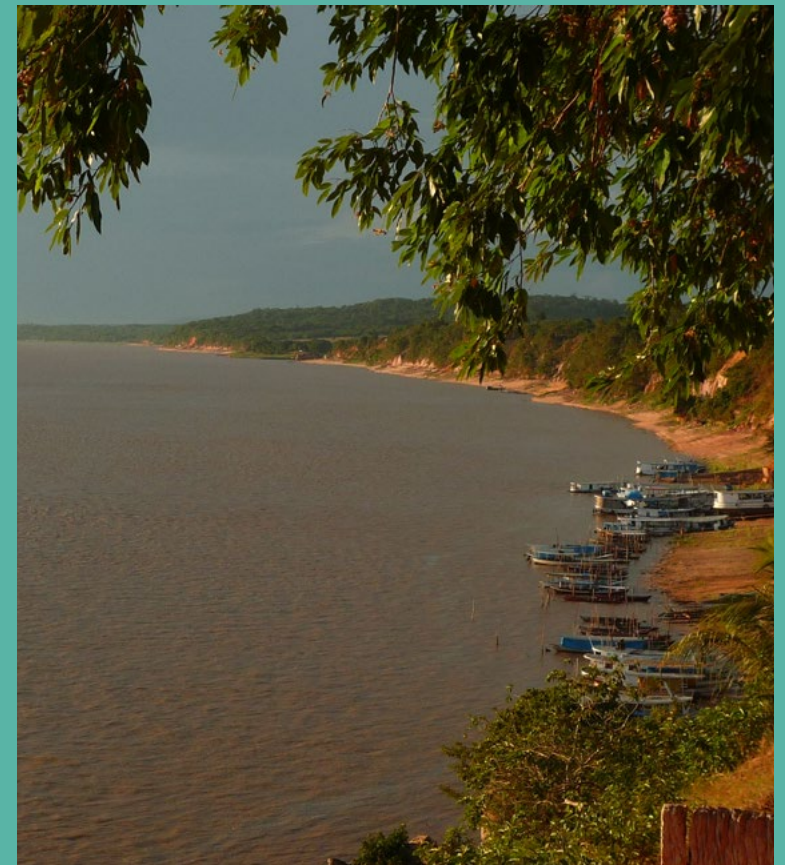
Type of emergency
Climate emergency

Theme
Community resilience

Project name
Safeguarding the documentation of the Diocese of Óbidos

Project coordinator
Antonio Pacheco Neto, Center of Historic Documentation of the Lower Amazon (FIAM) & Gefferson Ramos, Universidade Federal do Oeste do Pará (UFOPA)

Supporting partner
Whiting Foundation



Situated in the heart of the Brazilian Amazon, the Diocese of Óbidos harbours a singular collection of 19th-century registry books, documenting births in this rainforest region. These books, holding records of local families, enslaved individuals, and converted indigenous people, faced severe deterioration due to heavy rainfall and over a century of inadequate storage. Recognising the urgency, the Center of Historic Documentation of the Lower Amazon (FIAM) and the Universidade Federal do Oeste do Pará (UFOPA) collaborated to rescue this crucial piece of Amazonian history.

With €13,542.68 from CER and the Whiting Foundation, the project successfully repaired 11 volumes. Antonio Pacheco Neto, a partner who participated in the Regional Course in Ecuador, Quito, trained local community volunteers in heritage education, risk management, and water-damaged paper collection stabilisation. These skills were directly applied in preserving the collection, which was subsequently digitised in collaboration with UFOPA.

This project highlights the significance of local partnerships and demonstrates a profound understanding of paper conservation challenges in the Amazon's complex climate. Leveraging their familiarity with the region's difficulties and unique resources, coupled with a network of local connections, the partners navigated numerous obstacles. The project's success led to the establishment of the Pauxis Institute, dedicated to training personnel in heritage preservation, addressing local nuances, and developing innovative conservation techniques. Beyond education, the Institute aspires to become a dynamic centre for Amazonian heritage preservation.





“As a cultural professional, I think it’s crucial to conduct a Heritage Education course with local residents, students and public employees. So that they can pass on the knowledge and apply it, above all, in their professional practice, whether in municipal offices, in the classroom or on the streets. Heritage education is an educational tool that can be used to lead people through a process of learning, valuing, and preserving their Amazonian collective heritage.”

Lélia Fernandes
Leadership Course participant

CER in 2024

Reflecting on 2023, the urgency of heritage protection has become increasingly clear. The threats to cultural heritage have increased in number and intensity, and the consequences of inaction are dire. With this growing sense of urgency, our team spent the year working tremendously hard with partners on the ground for the sake of cultural continuity. Despite how disheartening it has been to witness the magnitude and severity of loss, it's been incredibly inspiring to work alongside our partners who we like to refer to as heritage heroes.

The year 2024 is a crucial one for CER as we continue to grow into our year-old organisation with a twenty-year legacy. Our vision is to be the leading organisation in cultural emergency response, delivering timely, flexible, and effective support to those in need. In the new year, we are committed to keeping close to our core mission: the CER emergency mechanism. Our focus and top priority are urgent response actions and optimizing our emergency response mechanism.

To achieve this, we will continue expanding our network, enhancing our CER Regional Hubs programmes, supporting training and mentorship activities, and further decentralizing our cultural ambulance. While doing so, we will continue our team-wide effort to advocate for the importance and urgency of heritage protection as a humanitarian issue.





Thank you to our team,
partners, and donors.

Thank you!

The CER team is extremely grateful for the renewed commitment of partners as our organisation continues to thrive. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all the heritage heroes around the world for their hard work and dedication. Their efforts bear important consequences for current and future generations; we feel honoured to work alongside them in protecting cultural heritage.

We also would like to express our gratitude to the CER Regional Hub coordinators who have taken the lead in advocating for cultural inclusion in emergency relief mechanisms at a regional level and have carried out effective actions to provide immediate support to damaged cultural heritage in recent crises affecting their regions.

Our support has been flexible, fast, and impactful, thanks to the guidance and unwavering support of the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development, our Board Members (Bijan Rouhani, Mechtild van den Hombergh, Alexander Ribbink), and all the co-funding organisations that have supported our work in multiple ways.

Special appreciation is extended to grant-makers who have co-funded or contributed to pooled funding initiatives to support our emergency work, and to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for direct funding, enabling CER's autonomy. The continuous support ensures the effectiveness of CER's mission to protect cultural heritage, unleashed by a collaborative effort with partners worldwide.



Prince Claus Fund for
Culture and Development



Partners:

Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands | ALIPH Foundation | American Library Association (ALA) | Arcadia | Antiquities Coalition | Blue Shield International | Bain & Company | Blue Shield the Netherlands | Caribbean Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (CARBICA) | Casa K'ojom | Community Jameel | Cultural Heritage Emergency Network (CHEN) | Cultural Heritage Without Borders (CHwB) | Cultural Protection Fund, managed by the British Council in partnership with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) of the United Kingdom | Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab (CHML) at the Virginia Museum of Natural History Foundation | DutchCulture | Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ukraine | Europa Nostra | Europeana | Endangered Archives Programme of the British Library (EAP) | European Commission | European Cultural Foundation | Fundacion Conservartecuator | Fondazione Santagata | Gerda Henkel Stiftung | Getty Foundation | Global Heritage Fund | Han Valk Fundraising Consultancy (HVFC) | Heritage for Peace | Heritage Management Organisation | Honor Frost Foundation | Humanity Hub The Hague | ICCROM | ICOM | ICOM Netherlands | ICOMOS | International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) | International Council of Archives | Metropolitan Museum of Art | Modern Endangered Archives Program (MEAP) UCLA Library | Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Kingdom of the Netherlands | Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands | Museum Vereniging Nederland | Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO | NGO Biladi | Het Cultuurfonds | People Like Us | ProCultHer | Qatar National Library of the Qatar Foundation | Reinwardt Academy | Rijksdienst voor Cultureel Erfgoed | Ribbink Van Den Hoek Familiestichting | Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative of the Smithsonian Institution | Studio Thonik | TEFAF | The J.M. Kaplan Fund | The Whiting Foundation | Turquoise Mountain | UNESCO | **And all other partners who made the work of CER possible...**

“We learned that
in spite of all kinds
of disasters,
people don’t
give up on their
heritage.”

Joanne Farchakh Bajjaly
Project coordinator,
NGO Biladi Regional Hub in the Levant

Annex 1 – Statement of Account

CER Board

According to the articles of association, the board consists of at least three persons.

Board members are appointed for a maximum period of four years. After the first four-year term has expired, they may be re-appointed once for an equal period. The hereunder resignation schedule provides an up-to-date overview of the appointments.

Name	Entry	End period 1	End period 2
Bijan Rouhani Chair	22 June 2022	22 June 2026	22 June 2030
Mechtild van den Hombergh Treasurer	22 June 2022	22 June 2026	22 June 2030
Alexander Ribbink Secretary	22 June 2022	22 June 2026	22 June 2030

In accordance with the articles of association, article 4, paragraph 8, board members receive no remuneration for the work they do for the foundation. In incidental cases, board members do receive compensation for the costs incurred on behalf of the foundation.

Individual board members report their ancillary positions to the board. A brief overview of the most relevant ancillary positions is given below. Additional functions are listed on the [CER website](#).

In 2023 the board met four times for the regular board meetings. In addition, and additional board meeting was held for approval of the budget of 2023 and interim consultations on strategic and financial issues took place with (part of) the board. The board was also active in the approval of emergency projects above € 35,000.

For all five board meetings, the average attendance rate of the board was 93%.

Annex 1 – Statement of Account

Management and staff

As per the 1st of July 2022, Sanne Letschert was appointed as the director of CER. Before the establishment of the foundation, she was Head of the CER programme under the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development.

In determining the remuneration of the director, CER follows the regulation on the remuneration of directors of charitable organisations. The regulation provides a maximum standard for the annual income based on weighing criteria, considering the director's duties, the field in which the organisation operates, and the size and complexity of the organisation. This assessment is weighed with the 'Basis Score voor Directiefuncties' (BSD) or Basic Score for Directorships. The number of BSD points determines which job group a director falls into. In total there are eight job groups, each with its own maximum annual income. The weighing of the situation at CER was executed by the board. This led to a so-called BSD score in function group D of the remuneration regulation with a maximum annual income of € 86,045 for 2023.

The relevant annual income of the director remained within the applicable maximum.

The amount and composition of the remuneration are explained in the financial statements in the notes to the statement of income and expenditure.

In 2023, the **average number of FTEs was 5.64**. In 2022 this average was **2.43 FTEs**.

The number of FTEs increased, as CER expanded its staff in its first full year of operating as an independent organisation. Two new staff members were welcomed at the end of 2022. In 2023, an additional staff member was added to the team to support the operations and financial administration of the organisation. Additionally, the position of the employee focused on communications and fundraising was increased to 1 FTE.

Office of CER in 2023

Sanne Letschert, Director
Vanessa Fraga Prol, Head of Programmes
Vera Santana, Communications & Fundraising Coordinator
Emily Brady, Operations Coordinator
Frederick Thomson, Project Coordinator
Nimalka Passanha, Project Coordinator
Romana Delaporte, Project Coordinator

Internship and volunteer policy

In 2023, CER was supported by one intern for six months, from July until December. CER is grateful to them for their valuable contribution. CER was not supported by volunteers in 2023. Based on this experience, CER is in the process of developing a protocol for interns and volunteers to facilitate a constructive and positive learning experience for them.

All interns work based on a contract in which tasks, responsibilities, and obligations are described. Interns receive an allowance that is in line with the allowance that other cultural organisations provide.

Governance

CER endorses the CBF-Code and the Good Governance Code for Cultural Organisations - the nine principles. CER acts in accordance with the regulations of these codes. The principles of good governance - with the separation of functions, good governance, and accountability at its core - are embedded in the internal regulations.

CER has the aim to meet the criteria of the CBF - the Netherlands Fundraising Regulator - and is in the process of obtaining its hallmark (www.cbf.nl).

The tasks and responsibilities of the board and director are described in the statutes of CER (22 June 2022) and the Management Regulations (9 January 2023). The director and the board members are aware of their own role and

Annex 1 – Statement of Account

the division of tasks, responsibilities and powers between them and act accordingly.

The board is responsible for governing the organisation. The board approves the annual plan, the long-term plan, the annual budget, and the annual statement of accounts as well as major collaborations. The board also approves project allocations exceeding € 35,000.

The director is responsible, within the aims of the organisation, for general policy development and implementation, external representation, public relations policy, managing the office and staff, implementing the general terms of employment, and for preparing and implementing the decisions of the board.

The management and board are independent and act with integrity. They are alert to conflicts of interest, avoid undesirable conflicts of interest and deal with conflicts of interest transparently and carefully. The articles of association set out the procedure to be followed in the event of a conflict of interest (articles 4 and 5).

In 2023 CER formalised its Administrative Organisation (AO) in line with its strategy and independent operations. In the AO authorities, rules and procedures are described, forming the framework for the administrative process. The document reflects financial- and operational workflows and processes and includes the interfaces of finance within a wider context and external organisations. The AO is the guideline for the management and board to steer the organisation transparently in the right direction and aims to harmonise operations and provide adequate information at the right time. Some additional processes are still under development, which will be included in the AO in 2024. CER has a complaints procedure, a whistleblowing procedure, the code of conduct, an ethical fundraising policy, and the terms of employment in place. These protocols and guidelines were all formalised in 2023 in accordance with the operations and values of CER.

The rules for risk management and control have been drafted and decided on by the board early 2023, including the mitigation measures CER will take in case needed. The management and the board will revisit these regulations regularly and will meet with the external auditor annually.

Appointment of a member of the board is based on nomination by the board. The board has a broad composition, considering substantive expertise and diversity aspects such as gender and cultural background. The director of CER takes on an advisory role in this process.

The director reports to the board at least four times a year on the progress and realisation of the established annual plans and budget. The annual plan, budget, report, and accounts are prepared by the director and adopted by the board.

The board convenes a self-evaluation meeting at least once a year and conducts an annual assessment interview with the director.

CER performs evaluation of its activities and their impact on a regular basis. The organisation is in the process of developing its own monitoring, evaluation and learning protocol and aims to become more result and impact driven in the coming year.

Annex 1 – Statement of Account

Quality of Organisation and activities

CER strives to maintain optimum quality in all its activities. It achieves this by continuous research, network building and involving good and independent advisors in its judgements and implementation, and by specially training staff members for these tasks. Quality and care are at the core of CERs work, and staff members, partners and donors are aware of this not only in terms of implementing projects and processing applications, but also in correspondence and communication.

Risk management

The risk policy is related to:

- Financial and reputational risks with respect to the allocation of grants, selection, and expenditure on projects. The consequences of risk in this field are great; however, the chance of actual occurrence has been assessed as small. Measures taken are reflected by the governance structure and the internal control within the organisation. Additional mitigation is embedded in the contracting of partners and the heavy emphasis on research, monitoring and evaluation in the assessment and implementation of individual projects. Sufficient mitigation measures have been taken.
- Risk related to financial management and administration of funds. The consequences of risk in this field are limited; the chance of occurrence has been assessed as small. Measures taken are reflected by the governance structure and the internal control within the organisation. This includes the practice of the four eyes principle for all decisions on grant allocations and payments, with an additional check on board level for allocations above € 35,000. These procedures are to be formalised in the AO. The organisation works with an independent financial administration organisation, and engages an external auditor for review and closing of the

books. Sufficient mitigation measures have been taken.

- Risks related to IT, digital services and data protection. The consequences of risks in this field are great; the chance of occurrence has been assessed as average. Measures taken are reflected using a Service Level Agreement applicable to the services delivered by an external IT supplier, with a special emphasis on data security. CER has an ongoing secured back-up licence to safely store its data. All devices and applications are password protected, and require multi-step verification for access. Personal data is stored according to EU legislation for data protection. Sufficient mitigation measures have been taken.
- Risks related to fundraising targets. The consequences of risks in this field are great; the chance of occurrence has been assessed as average. Measures taken are related to the permanent monitoring of the fundraising policy and the achieved results, combined with an incorporated flexibility within the budget in case of setbacks, based on detailed fundraising scenarios. Sufficient mitigation measures have been taken.
- Risks related to over expenditure on budgets. The consequences of risks in this field are limited; the chance of occurrence has been assessed as small. Measures taken are related to the execution of a systematic budget control and the monitoring of the monthly planning and control cycle. Regular budget reviews are integrated on board, as well as staff level. Sufficient mitigation measures have been taken.

To mitigate risks in terms of funding allocations, CER has a strict policy in place to research potential projects and partners before approval. Besides in-depth desk research, applicants are interviewed by CER staff on the activities and feasibility of their projects. Additionally, applications are submitted to at least three to five external experts to give their opinion on the project

Annex 1 – Statement of Account

activities, the reliability of the partner, the feasibility of the project and the requested amount. Negatively recommended projects are not recommended for support. In this process, the CER team also aims to develop a relationship of trust with the project partners to ensure quick support and transparent implementation of the project. Projects are being evaluated at least twice - once through a mid-term report, and once through a final report. Larger projects are monitored more frequently, with a monthly check-in for the most complex cases. Funding tranches are only released to partners on the ground when the assessment of these reports is positive. Through these procedures, which have been developed and tested over the past twenty years, CER feels it strongly minimises the risk of misuse of funds and inadequate implementation of grants.

This risk assessment was conducted and approved by the Board in March 2023. It agreed to reassess the risks of CER and expand on the mitigation strategies in the first quarter of 2024, based on the information of its first full year of independent operations and in light of the end of the subsidy period in a changing political climate and future prospects.

Policy and function reserves and funds

Continuity reserve

In the case of no or insufficient follow-up financing after the subsidy period, CER formed a continuity reserve. For a specific period (approximately four to six months) CER can deal with current affairs and fulfill the contractual obligations.

In 2023, based on the risk analysis, the CER board decided to start building up this continuity reserve of 75% of the operational budget of CER over the coming two years. The board considers it safe, reasonable, and justifiable for the current size, scope, and position of the organisation. The continuity reserve policy will be

reassessed based on the updated and expanded risk analysis to be conducted early 2024.

Investment policy

CER is currently not investing the resources at its disposal, to avoid risks and speculation. CER's revenue is only deposited in current and savings accounts.

Public Benefit Institution (ANBI)

On 15 September 2023 notification was received from the Dutch Tax Authorities that CER has been classified as an ANBI and is registered as cultural institution as per 1 January 2023.

VAT

As of 8 August 2022, CER is registered in the administration of the Tax Authorities as an entrepreneur who only performs services that are exempt from VAT.

Corporate income tax

CER is not regarded as a taxpayer for corporate income tax purposes.

Gift tax

The grants allocated by CER are exempt from gift tax.

Administration

Jac's den Boer & Vink, a business economics consultancy firm for non-profit organisations, was appointed by CER to manage its administration and to draw up the financial statements of 2023. 'With Accountants' was appointed to audit the financial statements.

Annex 2 – Financial Statement

Income aspects

For the years 2022-2024, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has awarded through Prince Claus Fund a subsidy amount of € 600,000 a year, € 1,800,000 in total. This grant is un-earmarked and intended to stably establish CER as an independent organisation from 2022-2024. In a memorandum of understanding between Prince Claus Fund and CER terms and conditions have been agreed upon supporting CERs transition to independence, as well as the relationship between the two organisations after CER has become formally independent. In addition, by letter of 8 December 2022 the Minister of Foreign Affairs changed the grant decision through a budget increase of € 1,000,000 (€ 530,000 for 2022, € 240,000 for 2023 and € 230,000 for 2024) for the growth and strengthening of CER as an independent organisation from 2022 until 2024. Of this, € 218,760 was used in 2023. The unused balance of € 412,240 will be used in 2024.

In addition to the Dutch government's financial support, CER receives funding from several individual donors, organisations, and foundations. The total income of CER in 2023 is € 2,573,977. This is about € 800,000 lower than budgeted. The budget 2023 included a target of funding to be raised, consisting of income from private individuals and other non-profit organisations. Due to 2023 being the first year of independent operations, staff capacity that still had to be built, and the high number of crisis situations CER prioritised responding to, this target was not fully met. Regarding income from private individuals, € 20,000 was included in the budget for 2023 and in fact realised with contributions from TEFAF and ICOM The Netherlands. However, as these are not private individuals this income is now accounted for under 'other non-profit organisations'. Another clarification of the difference between budget and realisation for income, relates to earmarked income that can only be accounted for in the year that the corresponding activities take place. A good example is the income received from the Dutch government. This income is earmarked for specific activities, planned for 2023 and included in the

budget. However, some of the activities that this income is earmarked for were delayed to 2024. Therefore, the realisation of this income will also only be accounted for in 2024 and not in 2023, while this was initially included in the budget. The budget for these activities is reserved for 2024. As expenditure is also below budget (see below), there is still a positive balance of income and expenditure.

Expenditure aspects

The total expenditure in 2023 is € 2,584,511. Expenditure for direct costs of programmes and projects was € 2,086,489, while indirect spending (personnel, housing, office and depreciation) was € 498,022.

Expenditure in 2023 is € 662,116 below budget. This amount consists fully of direct costs of programmes and projects.

This under expenditure is mostly the result of the delay of activities to 2024. Because it was the first full year of operations for CER, some of the programme activities were still in development and the timeline of implementation needed to be adjusted to make them achievable. This is best visible in the CER Regional Hub programme, for which the programme strategy and implementation plan were still in development in 2023. To align with the new plans, it was decided to delay most activities to the following year. Additionally, 2023 was the first full financial year of CER as an independent organisation, we did not have a clear indication of actual expenditure yet for a significant number of budget lines. This is visible in the under expenditure in CER programme expenses. With the information from this financial year, we can make a better assessment of these costs in 2024.

Annex 2 – Financial Statement

Balance of income and expenditure 2023, allocation of the balance, ratios

The positive balance of income and expenditure 2023 amounts to € 2,191. A positive balance of € 126,240 was budgeted.

The positive balance of income and expenditure is below budget. This is the result of not having been able to fully meet the fundraising target (see clarification above). The balance will be allocated to the continuity reserve.

CER uses the internal condition that of all spending, preferably 70% must be spent on direct contributions to programmes and projects. In 2023 this condition is being met with the result of 80.7%

In addition, CER uses some ratios derived from Guideline 650 and her own budget. They are stated hereunder.

	Realisation 2023	Budget 2023	Realisation 2022
Internal standard			
1. Ratio of direct costs of programmes and projects divided by total expenditure Preferably at least 70%	80.7%	84.6%	85.0%
General			
2. Costs of fundraising divided by total income	3.0%	2.3%	2.4%
3. Share in expenditure			
• charitable activities	93.8%	95.0%	95.3%
• fundraising costs	2.9%	2.4%	2.8%
• management & administration costs	3.3%	2.6%	1.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The distribution of costs is based on the time that each staff member is expected to spend on the various activities. This estimation is then checked against the actual situation every year.

Annex 2 – Financial Statement

Balance sheet as at 31 December 2023

	31-12-2023	31-12-2022
	€	€
Fixed assets		
• Tangible fixed assets	5.459	0
Total fixed assets	5.459	0
Current assets		
• Receivables	434.240	1.254.281
• Cash and cash equivalents	1.590.113	276.661
Total current assets	2.024.353	1.530.942
Total assets	2.029.812	1.530.942
Reserves and funds		
Reserves		
• Continuity reserve	146.471	144.280
Total reserves	146.471	144.280
Accruals		
• Long term project allotments	0	0
• Short term project allotments	515.366	610.204
• Other short term accruals	1.367.975	776.458
Total accruals	1.883.341	1.386.662
Total liabilities	2.029.812	1.530.942

Annex 2 – Financial Statement

Statement of income and expenditure 2023

	Realisation 2023	Budget 2023	Realisation 2022
	€	€	€
Income			
Tangible fixed assets	2.869	75.000	12.679
Income from other non-profit organisations	<u>2.571.108</u>	<u>3.297.867</u>	<u>1.347.004</u>
Total income	<u>2.573.977</u>	<u>3.372.867</u>	<u>1.359.683</u>
Expenditure			
Program Expenditure			
• Cultural Emergency Response Projects	1.739.911	1.836.582	849.140
• Network of Regional Hubs	333.181	737.222	33.936
• Training & Mentorship	136.866	158.691	88.158
• Making the Case	89.181	147.620	19.672
• CER Programme Expenses	151.880	204.527	125.801
Release	<u>-27.370</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total programme expenditure	2.423.649	3.084.642	1.116.707
Costs of generating funds	76.198	76.730	32.152
Management and administration	<u>84.664</u>	<u>85.255</u>	<u>22.742</u>
Total expenditure	<u>2.584.511</u>	<u>3.246.627</u>	<u>1.171.601</u>
Balance before financial income and expenses	-10.534	126.240	188.082
Financial income and expenses	<u>12.725</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>-43.802</u>
Balance of income and expenditure	<u>2.191</u>	<u>126.240</u>	<u>144.280</u>
Allocation balance of income and expenditure			
• Continuity reserve	<u>2.191</u>	<u>126.240</u>	<u>144.280</u>
Total	<u>2.191</u>	<u>126.240</u>	<u>144.280</u>

Colophon

Concept: Sanne Letschert, Vera Santana, Studio Thonik

Writers/Editors: Chiara Pizzi, Sanne Letschert, Vera Santana, Romana Delaporte, Nimalka Passanha, Vanessa Fraga Prol, Frederick Thomson, Emily Brady

Production supervision: Vera Santana

Design: Studio Thonik

Cover photo provided by Daw'an Architecture Foundation from a project in Yemen, 2023

The CER team would like to thank each and every partner who has worked with us throughout the years. We hope to have provided the right credits for all images used. If this is not the case, please inform us.

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Cultural
Emergency
Response

Impact
Report

2023