

HERITAGE

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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WHY SAFEGUARD HERITAGE?

UNESCO works to safeguard heritage so that future generations can enjoy, benefit and learn from the legacy of the past. In addition to its intrinsic value, heritage can be a driver of sustainable development and local job creation. Conserving the world's natural heritage is also essential for the health of the planet and plays a key role in addressing the risk of natural and human-made disasters. Finally, safeguarding heritage brings countries and communities together, uniting people of different backgrounds around a common belief in the value of our history and environment. This is particularly crucial in times of emergency, when the safeguarding, continuation or rehabilitation of heritage provides an invaluable source of stability and hope for affected communities. Given the immense value of heritage for present and future generations, countering the growing threats it faces has never been more important.

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WHERE DOES UNESCO CONCENTRATE ITS SAFEGUARDING EFFORTS?

- ✓ **World Heritage.** World Heritage includes cultural, natural and mixed heritage sites that have been inscribed on UNESCO's [World Heritage List](#) for their outstanding universal value to humanity. World cultural heritage can include monuments, archaeological or urban sites, or sites that combine the works of man and nature, while natural heritage can include natural features, geographic formations or natural sites.
- ✓ **Intangible Heritage.** UNESCO works to safeguard the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills that are continuously being created and recreated when transmitted from generation to generation. This [intangible](#) or "living" heritage includes oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, traditional craftsmanship, and knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe.
- ✓ **Underwater Cultural Heritage.** Safeguarding [underwater heritage](#) – defined as traces of human existence that have been under water for at least 100 years – also forms an important part of UNESCO's work.
- ✓ **Safeguarding cultural property.** UNESCO works with its partners to halt the [illicit trafficking](#) of cultural property, while also working to protect and promote [museums](#) and their collections.
- ✓ **Protecting heritage in times of conflict and disaster.** UNESCO has adopted a [Strategy](#) that aims to strengthen the ability of Member States to prevent and mitigate the loss of cultural heritage as a result of conflict and natural disasters, and to incorporate the protection of culture into humanitarian action, security strategies and peacebuilding processes.

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HOW DOES UNESCO WORK TO SAFEGUARD HERITAGE?

- i. **Encouraging safeguarding through its normative tools.** Five UNESCO Conventions underlie its efforts to safeguard heritage: the [2003 Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention](#), the [2001 Underwater Heritage Convention](#), the [1972 World Heritage Convention](#), the [1970 Convention on Preventing the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property](#) and the [1954 Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict](#) and its two (1954 and 1999) Protocols.
- ii. **Leading emergency safeguarding efforts.** In [Iraq](#), [Syria](#), [Mali](#), [Peru](#), [Haiti](#), [Vanuatu](#), [Nepal](#), [Afghanistan](#), [Bosnia](#) and elsewhere, UNESCO has consistently led international efforts to safeguard heritage in crisis as a result of conflict or natural disasters. Most recently, UNESCO launched a flagship initiative to "[Revive the Spirit of Mosul](#)", which, thanks to \$50 million in support from the UAE, will seek to restore and reconstruct

Mosul's cultural and educational institutions, notably the Al-Nouri Mosque and its leaning 45-metre Al-Hadba Minaret. With the support of UNESCO's [Heritage Emergency Fund](#), an [expert mission](#) was deployed to assess the state of Iran's heritage sites following the devastating 7.3 magnitude earthquake of November 2017.

- iii. **Raising awareness of threats to heritage.** UNESCO encouraged the adoption of the [first UN Security Council Resolution](#) to focus on the protection of cultural heritage in March 2017, and has since led the elaboration of the UN Secretary General's [report](#) on its implementation by Member States. The [#Unite4Heritage campaign](#) works to empower young people to mobilise for the defence of their shared heritage through social media.
- iv. **Prioritising cities.** In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and UNESCO's 2011 [Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape](#), UNESCO published the Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Urban Development, *Culture: Urban Future*, which aims to promote a culture-based approach to urban planning, regeneration and development. UNESCO and the World Bank have jointly launched a Position Paper on "Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery", and has continued to expand joint country-level operations and emergency responses that support sustainable urban development through culture.
- v. **Forging new partnerships.** UNESCO works with [INTERPOL](#), [UNODC](#), the Italian [Carabinieri](#), auction houses, and customs officials to combat the illicit trafficking of cultural property, and has provided the coordinates of heritage sites to countries for safeguarding ahead of military operations.
- vi. **Building stakeholder capacity.** In February 2018, UNESCO announced the launch of a three-year project co-financed by the African Development Bank to safeguard the [Lake Chad Basin](#). The project will aim to implement pilot projects to rehabilitate Lake Chad's ecosystems and cultural landscapes, as well as develop a road map for the nomination of the Lake Chad Basin to the World Heritage List. The 2003 Convention's [global capacity-building programme](#) works to create positive institutional environments for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, while the [UNESCO Chair Programme on Cultural Heritage and Risk Management](#) supports training courses on disaster risk management.
- vii. **Supporting heritage education.** Through the [World Heritage Education Programme](#), more than 3,500 young volunteers have learned about the value of heritage by taking part in 359 youth camps in 61 countries. In 2018, the 2003 Convention, in cooperation with UNESCO's Education Sector, will launch a series of projects aimed at integrating intangible cultural heritage into both formal and informal education, in line with SDG 4.7, with a particular focus on Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and central Asia.

HERITAGE

KEY MESSAGES

-  **UNESCO works to protect and safeguard heritage so that future generations can enjoy, benefit and learn from the legacy of the past.** For UNESCO, the safeguarding of heritage is a collective responsibility, as well as a powerful means of promoting peace – uniting the world’s peoples around shared values.
-  As recognized by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, **heritage is a driver of development that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.** SDG 11, as well as the New Urban Agenda, particularly highlights the role cultural heritage plays in making cities inclusive, safe, sustainable, and resilient.
-  **Heritage can be an enabler of inclusive economic growth**, attracting investment and creating local, decent jobs. Today, cultural tourism accounts for about 40% of world tourism revenues, while built heritage renovation and maintenance represents 27.5% of the value of European construction industry.
-  **The conservation and safeguarding of natural heritage directly contributes to environmental sustainability** and is essential to addressing the risk of natural and human-made disasters, strengthening the resilience of communities.
-  **Intangible heritage contributes to social cohesion**, strengthening the social fabric of communities and groups in an inclusive way and acting as an enabler for sustainable development.
-  Participation in the identification, conservation, promotion and transmission of heritage creates important spaces for dialogue about gender roles. As a result, **UNESCO believes that culture can be a powerful tool for the achievement of gender equality**, particularly through the expansion of cultural rights – the right to access, participate in, and contribute to all aspects of cultural life – to all.
-  **Ensuring the continuity of cultural heritage can help communities recovering from the trauma of conflict to rebuild their lives**, while also fostering tolerance and a respect for difference, which is a precondition for dialogue and peace.
-  When heritage is attacked or destroyed, we all suffer, regardless of our nationality or background. Heritage is increasingly the target of attacks, looting and illicit trafficking in numerous conflicts around the world, attacks that often go hand-in-hand with attacks on people. **Safeguarding and rehabilitating heritage is more than a cultural issue; it is an issue of international peace and security.**

For more information, visit:

<http://en.unesco.org/themes/protecting-our-heritage-and-fostering-creativity>