



## Theme 1 Contribution of Arts, Culture and Heritage to Peace

Concept Note  
Draft 20 April 2021

### Introduction

The theme 'Contribution of Arts, Culture and Heritage to Peace' echoes, celebrates and accompanies the African Union Year 2021: 'Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want'. It resonates with Aspiration 5 of Agenda 2063 and with 2021 International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development. It explores recent understandings on how the arts culture and heritage interplays with conflict, reconciliation and efforts to build more peaceful societies in Africa. It also highlights ways in which artists, creatives and heritage practitioners are contributing to prevent, mitigate and support the recovery from the effects of conflict, inequality and the COVID-19 pandemic.

**The arts and culture** sector and the **creative industries** in Africa are among those hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic, a crisis that is cutting off revenues of individuals, businesses and organizations particularly in the live/performing arts, audio-visual, cinema and visual arts. It is creating new challenges for monetizing the "forced" digital transition and impacting women in the arts and culture. Despite recent progress in gender equality, the pandemic is restricting the ability of women to access decent employment, fair remuneration, and leadership positions. Opportunities for women to participate fully in the cultural sectors and benefit from the creative economy, require increased attention.

**African heritage** in its diverse forms is playing an important role in fostering resilience as it constitutes a source of identity and cohesion for communities disrupted by bewildering change and economic instability. While at the heart of some of the contemporary conflicts in the continent, shared heritage is also proving a useful tool for peacebuilding during armed conflict and peace-making process. The **passing on of this heritage through formal al informal education systems** constitutes an opportunity for the construction of a new narrative for Africa from Africa. A pressing challenge today is the steady flow of African heritage objects that are illicitly leaving the African soil, or the return of objects long lost. The turmoil of conflicts and COVID-19 shutdown is making illicit trafficking of archaeological and ethnographic objects from the Sahel, Central Africa and many other parts of the continent thrive. A top-level commitment to stop the loss of African heritage is urgent along with the discussions on the return and restitution of cultural property.

**Natural heritage** conservation, protection and promotion is a critical contributor to peace. African Natural heritage includes some of the most iconic wildlife habitats and landscapes on the planet. Yet due to the pandemic many of these national parks, biosphere reserves and World Heritage sites are closed, income for park management reduced, local communities and businesses negatively affected. Moreover, armed conflicts are impacting protected areas and many rangers have lost their lives on duty while protecting Africa's natural treasures. Reduced funding, restrictions on the operations of conservation agencies, and elevated human threats to nature are new challenges in Africa's conservation efforts. Furthermore, and to reduce the risk of future and various pandemics it is urgent to give a new thrust in the regulation of unsafe wildlife trade practices, the development more resilient conservation models and wide-spread approaches that balance the needs of human and natural habitats.

Ultimately, this Theme 1 aims at voicing the concerns of the diverse actors and institutions that make up the African arts, culture and heritage sector and their urgent plea to integrate into COVID-19 relief and stimulus packages while recognising the specific nature of cultural and artistic work and the uniqueness of cultural and natural heritage. It will showcase innovative practices and move ahead in shared policies that integrate culture into peace-building strategies, programmes and policies.

## **Sub-themes and review of current activities and programs**

The theme aims to explore and showcase contribution through four sub-themes in line with the key areas highlighted by the AU Year.

### **Sub-theme 1: Supporting African artists, cultural and creative Industries for an inclusive and sustainable economic recovery**

The *AU Year 2021: 'Arts, Culture and Heritage'* concept note recognises the role of cultural and creative industries in the socio-economic development of the African continent, notably through job creation and social inclusion, and highlights that the context shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic provides an opportunity to revise the continent's priorities and contribute to building resilient and inclusive societies inspired by the Ubuntu Philosophy: 'I am because you are; you are because I am'. The contribution of artists and creatives in curbing the pandemic has been acknowledged throughout Africa. At the same time, paradoxically, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the weakness and structural shortcoming of the culture and creative sectors and highlighted the precarious and vulnerable working conditions of artists and other culture actors. Culture should be part of the response in Africa and thus the culture sector should not be left-out in the recovery plans, as it is a full-fledged economic sector requiring attention, as well as a sector that contributes with meaning and purpose to face the crisis. Activities and programs related to this sub-theme are:

#### **1.1 Supporting diversity and equality the Arts and Culture sectors in Africa**

Countries: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Jordan, Mali, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia  
Promoting diversity and gender equality are at the core of a series of projects implemented by UNESCO Offices in North and West Africa. Their objectives range from giving voice to women artists in times of COVID 19 (*La voix des Resilients*), to enhance parity in decision making and full participation in major cultural festivals and markets (FESPACO 50<sup>th</sup> edition, The Bamako Biennale), to support digital artists under 40 (*Digitelles*), enhancing the image of women in the women in the film sector (*Enhancing a gender responsive film sector in the Maghreb-Mashreq region*), creative production (*UNESCO/Nara residency programme with Naomi Kawase*) or in the professionalization and certification through technical diplomas (*BTS 100% feminine, Senegal Talent Campus*). Rolled out between 2018 and 2021 these projects have been funded by a broad range of partners including the European Union, the Governments of Germany, Japan, or Sweden, private sponsors like Sabrina Ho or yet with UNESCO core funding.

This sub-theme will showcase these different approaches and cross examine the results obtained through the analysis of the just launched UNESCO report *Gender & Creativity: Progress on the Precipice* <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/publications/gender-creativity-progress-precipice> and the implications for building a culture of peace.

**Partners:** TBD

**Organisers:** UNESCO Dakar / Rabat

#### **1.2. ArtistsKontraCovid-19: engaging artists in a common cultural response to Covid-19, measuring the impacts of the pandemic on CCIs and engaging in recovery**

Countries: 15 ECOWAS countries (#ArtistsKontraCovid) and African ResiliArt countries

UNESCO ResiliArt debates are UNESCO's global movement to support artists and ensure access to culture for all after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has not spared the creative sector. Since its launch in April 2020, ResiliArt has been joined by cultural professionals worldwide seeking to ensure the continuity of conversations on the impact of the pandemic on culture and the search for short and long-term potential solutions and advocacy efforts. Up to date there have been 240 ResiliArt debate sessions in 110 countries around the world, including 90 in Africa. A highlight in the Africa conversation was the “ResiliArt|Africa: Status of the Artist in the Africa Region” in July 2020 where the urgency to include culture in the recovery plans. African artists have actively contributed to their countries riposte to Covid-19 through the #ArtistsKontraCovid campaigns. Using original and artistic mediums - dance, video, poetry, photography, plastic arts, music, several local artists are being supported to produce key messages to counter the spread of the virus: recalling barrier gestures, maintaining social cohesion and eliminating stigmatization and fake news on vaccination campaigns. These innovative and original campaigns are disseminated through traditional media (TV, radio, news outlets) and social media to reach the biggest audience possible. Recent campaigns have been successful in Cabo Verde (7 artists reaching more than 75,000 people), Burkina Faso (3 artists and over 30,000 people) and Ghana. Upcoming campaigns are set to take place in Q2 and Q3 of 2021.

**Partners:** The #ArtistsKontraCovid campaigns are funded as part of the joint ECOWAS-UNESCO cultural response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Key partners include participating local artists, artistic CSOs, countries’ National Commissions for UNESCO as well as the Ministries of Culture and Health. ResiliArt debates are supported by UNESCO and led by different actors within the cultural and creative industries, including artists, CSOs, cultural administrators and policy makers.

**Organisers:** UNESCO Abuja / Harare

### **1.3 Technical and Vocational Education and Training in culture**

**Country:** Senegal

Senegal Talents Campus is the first TVET center for arts and culture professionals in Senegal which will be delivering certifications for cultural technicians in sound, light, management and other technical areas. Opening in 2021 it aims to train 100 young professionals at BTS level every year targeting professional integration in the sector of creative cultural industries in Senegal. Certifications will be also delivered for on-the-job youth not having finished high school. Targeted training will be delivered for women technicians. A pool of partners have gathered to support this ground-breaking initiative, that counts with the technical and financial support of the IIEP and UNESCO Dakar along with others.

**Partners:** IIEP, GIZ, AFD, Government of Canada of Sweden

**Organisers:** UNESCO Office Dakar IIEP

### **1.4. Transcultura Project: Integrating Cuba, the Caribbean and the European Union through culture and creativity**

**Countries:** 17 Caribbean countries and the European Union

Implemented by the UNESCO Office in Cuba with the support of the UNESCO Jamaica, Haiti and EU Delegations in the region, this project seeks to deepen integration between Cuba, the Caribbean and the European Union by harnessing diversity and building bridges between people and cultures from different linguistic areas. Funded by European Union (EU) and running from 2020 to 2024, it has two-pronged approach focus: strengthening the skills and capacities of young cultural professionals and enhancing opportunities through knowledge transfer and exchanges. 2 key interventions will be showcased:

- ‘Entrepreneur women in Culture in Cuba and Dominican Republic. Opportunities and challenges in the post-Covid era’, a virtual meeting bringing together artists, activists and entrepreneurs from Cuba and the Dominican Republic to share their experiences.
- ‘Transcultura goes to Womex! Support to Caribbean musicians for participating in International Fair of Music WOMEX’, an initiative seeking to build a cultural bridge between the Caribbean

Cultural and Creative Sectors and WOMEX, to ensure a more integrated presence of the Caribbean in its simultaneous and multiple activities.

**Partners:** TBD

**Organiser:** UNESCO La Habana

**UNESCO events**

- 30/04 International Jazz Day (Yaounde, Harare, Rabat)
- Annual Meeting of Creative Cities (Santos/SP) (Brasilia)
- Second Pan-African Writers' Conference (PAWC2) and launch of the AU Campaign on Promoting Reading (Kinshasa)

**Proposed coordinator for Sub-theme 1: UNESCO Dakar and UNESCO Rabat**

## **Sub-theme 2: Preventing conflict, reducing risks and building peace through African Intangible Cultural Heritage ICH**

Heritage, written history and oral traditions are key to building a strong cultural identity. Shared values and ethic and can act as endogenous mechanisms of conflict prevention and resolution in the continent, notably through intercultural and inter-generational dialogue. Preserving traditional practices enhances a sentiment of common identity within communities, and reinforces the role of individuals as guardians of their cultural and natural heritage, improving their capacity to face disasters linked to climate change as well as direct human action. The key role of women as a preventive diplomacy actor and as catalytic to peacebuilding will be also explored under this sub-theme through the outcome of existing networks of female wisdom keepers for peace preservation; as well as the role of traditional queens and kings for peacebuilding and COVID-19 awareness. Activities and programs related to this sub-theme are:

### **2.1. Promoting the role of women as preventive diplomacy and against violent extremism**

**Countries:** Mauritania, Cameroun, Ecuador

Three national initiatives will be showcased:

- Project on the role of women through culture in preventing violent extremism in Mauritania (Rabat)
- Creating a Network of Women of Wisdom in Peace Preservation (Yaoundé)
- Webinar with afro-descendant women bearers of intangible cultural heritage (date to be confirmed) (Quito)

**Partners:** TBD

**Organiser:** UNESCO Yaoundé Office

### **2.2. Inter-ethnic alliances as an endogenous mechanism for conflict prevention and management:**

**Countries:** Cote d'ivoire

- Presentation of tools and materials: Mobile application and platform of interethnic alliances + awareness spots (TV, radio and social networks) (Abidjan)

**Partners:** TBD

**Organiser:** UNESCO Abidjan Office

### **2.3. Contribution of traditional knowledge systems on biodiversity conservation, climate change and disaster and risk reduction**

**Countries:** Kenya Zimbabwe

- Regional conference on the contribution of traditional knowledge systems on biodiversity conservation, climate change and disaster and risk reduction

**Partners:** TBD

**Organiser:** UNESCO Nairobi Office

#### **2.4 Contribution of traditional authorities to conflict resolution and crisis management**

Countries: Benin, Cameroun, Cote d'Ivoire and Mali

- Conference on Leadership Roles / Queen and Traditional Kings

**Partners:** TBD

**Organisers:** UNESCO Abuja

#### **UNESCO events**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• World Day of Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development 21/05 (Havana)</li><li>• Celebration of the African culture (San José)</li><li>• Celebration of the international day of people of African descent (San José)</li></ul> |
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**Proposed coordinators for Sub-theme 2: UNESCO Harare and UNESCO Abidjan**

### **Sub-theme 3: Reengaging with history, arts and cultural values in education to promote a new narrative for Africa**

The integration of African cultures and history in school curricula as well as museum education and outreach, as in the UNESCO initiative to adapt the volumes of the General History of Africa, serves this goal through the reconstruction of historical awareness, thus promoting pan-Africanism. This also calls for revisiting African history and changing the narrative when it comes to the role of women in the history of Africa or sharing new evidence on how African History was also written and consigned in thousands of ancient manuscripts written in African languages. Activities and programs related to this sub-theme are:

#### **3.1 Promotion of the General History of Africa and integration on the Educational systems**

Countries: Kenya, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Brazil

African countries are taking bold steps towards the integration of the GHA into different levels of the school curriculum in Africa, a key advancement to reaffirm cultural identities and reinforce the common aspiration to achieve African unity, as called upon by the Charter of African Renaissance and encapsulated in Aspiration 2 of Agenda 2063 of the AU. UNESCO is contributing to national efforts through various initiatives around the continent and in key countries for the Diaspora, such as the integration of the GHA into diploma Teacher Education Curriculum is underway in Kenya, where the integration has been completed at the primary and secondary school levels, or the relaunching of the Portuguese version of the collection on the GHA and development solutions for anti-racism education in schools in Brazil (UNESCO Brasilia). In this line, several key partnerships are being signed with stakeholders such as the Pan African Virtual and E-University (AU-PAVEU) on the General History of Africa and Pan Africanism Online Course (UNESCO Addis Ababa), with Voyelles Éditions for the production and distribution of comics on the GHA (UNESCO Abidjan) or with Gondwana-City Productions for the production of humor video clips on the GHA (UNESCO Harare, Dakar, Abidjan).

**Partners:** TBD

**Organisers:** UNESCO Nairobi, SHS/

#### **3.2 'Ethno-education' for people of African descent in the Andean Region / culturally pertinent education**

Country: Ecuador

UNESCO Quito is honoring the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) with several activities under the theme "People of African Descent: recognition, justice and development", including ethno-education. Ethno-education can contribute to raise awareness, appreciation and respect towards the achievements of the Afro-descendant people and their contribution to the

economic, social, intellectual, cultural and ethical development of humanity. In line with this, the UNESCO Office in Quito provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Education for the strengthening of ethno-education focused on Afro-descendant people, and in tune with the recognition of history and their contributions from within the Ecuadorian Educational System.

**Partners:** Key partners for these actions include academia and experts in the African diaspora in LAC  
**Organisers:** UNESCO Office Ecuador

### **3.3 New African voices from the 3.0 generation: crafting new narratives**

**Country:** Sierra Leona, Cameroun, Senegal, South Africa

UNESCO provides a platform and a sounding voice to U40 writers and thinkers who provide a fresh look on the continent

**Partners:** TDB

**Organisers:** UNESCO Office Dakar

### **3.4. Valorisation of the contents of ancient manuscripts for peace and development in Mali**

**Country:** Mali

The safeguarding of the Timbuktu manuscripts, which faced the threat of extremist groups who occupied the city in 2012 allows for the role of culture and traditional values which have ensured tolerance in the city for several centuries to be restored. In this line, the UNESCO Bamako Office continues to join forces with the Malian authorities, the local communities as well as the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to foster the creation of conditions favorable to peace, dialogue and the empowerment of young people in the country.

**Partners:** The Center for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) based in Germany is one of the key partners of UNESCO and MINUSMA in their safeguarding actions.

**Organisers:** UNESCO Office Bamako

### **3.5. Launching a new generation of African museums and enhancing virtual access**

**Countries:** Egypt, Senegal

The role of culture and museums in our society is going through rapid change, first through the digitalization trend which has forced the cultural and creative industries to reinvent themselves, and secondly and most recently, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions it has imposed. Innovative ways of keeping museums and other cultural institutions afloat and to inspire our communities locally and globally are flourishing, and they include enhancing and facilitating virtual access as well as expanding the traditional, rather static relationships between museums and their audiences. In March 2021 UNESCO brought together 12 museum directors from around the world at the online debate 'Reflections on the Future of Museums', a series of discussions focusing on the impact of the pandemic on museums, ongoing challenges and their potential futures. The discussion was fuelled by data from the 2020 UNESCO Report on Museums around the World in the Face of COVID-19.

**Partners:** In Africa, UNESCO continues to partner with young museums such as the *Musée des civilisations noires* (MCN) in Dakar, and also supports the innovative vision of museums in the making such as the Great African Museum (a Flagship Project of Agenda 2063, planned to open in 2023) or the Grand Egyptian Museum (opening planned for 2021).

**Organiser:** UNESCO Egypt Office

**Proposed coordinator for Sub-theme 3: UNESCO Nairobi and UNESCO Cairo**

## **Sub-theme 4: Protecting and promoting African cultural and natural heritage**

Heritage has a key role for integration, harnessing intercultural engagements and economic prosperity, and protecting communities' identity. Illicit trafficking of cultural property is often present in conflicted areas, and -well beyond economic harm- contributes to destabilizing political and social

dimensions of societies and states. The protection of natural heritage is key for peacekeeping, as it is intertwined with traditional management systems, traditional knowledge systems, ways of life and cultural identities that are threatened when resources become scarce or at the centre of economic greed and thus political conflict, causing not only environmental issues but also impacting demographic imbalances, forcing migration and displacement and affecting cultural identities.

#### **4.1. The protection and promotion of World Heritage in Africa for peace: Partnering with the AWHF**

Countries: Cameroun, Chad, Cote D'ivoire, Egypt, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, RDC Zimbabwe

Showcase of a broad range of projects around WH sites with a strong peace component :

- Online Exhibition on African World Heritage Sites (Addis Ababa)
- The BIOPALT project (BIOSphere and Heritage of Lake Chad) A large scale project funded by the BAD with wide range of activities from setting up an early warning system for droughts and floods to restoring degraded ecosystems such as spawning grounds, spirulina and the Kouri cow (*Bos taurus longifrons*) , to income-generating activities through the promotion of green economy and the valorization of the Lake Chad basin's natural resources. Inscription on the WH lists and Biosphere reserves are being prepared BIOPALT is a good example of a peace building project
- The African Union Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage
- World Heritage and young people: The World Heritage Youth Forum AU Year 2021
- Enhancing community resilience and contributing to sustainable development through the protection of WH natural sites, including through ESD:
- Protecting sacred forests in Cote D'Ivoire to reduce identity and generational conflicts and promote the rapprochement of peoples by creating platforms for intercultural encounters
- CAWFHI project (Central Africa World Heritage Forest Initiative) (Yaoundé)
- Management Schemes for UNESCO Global Geoparks in Latin America, the Caribbean, West – and North Africa (Arab States) - (GEO-Schemas) (Cairo)
- Climate Fund Project: Strengthening the Resilience of the Education System as an Alternative to Climate Change Prevention and Response (Bamako)

**Partners:** TBD

**Organiser:** UNESCO Yaounde

#### **4.2. Curbing illicit trafficking of African cultural property, protecting community's identities and setting the path for dialogue on restitution**

- Results from West and Central Africa in reinforcing operational networks to combat illicit trafficking in the Sahel region through: capacity building of key actors at regional level (border agents, heritage experts and police forces), institutional and operational capacity building at country level the country level, awareness-raising campaigns and the pursuit of efforts to strengthen legal frameworks for the protection of cultural heritage (Dakar)

#### **4.3. Sustainable Cultural Tourism initiatives**

##### ***UNESCO events***

- African Heritage Day (5/5)
- Earth International Day (22/4)

##### ***Non-UNESCO initiatives***

- Great Green Wall

***Proposed coordinator for Sub-theme 4: UNESCO Yaounde and UNESCO Nairobi***

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The selection of interventions and activities to be showcased and implemented within this theme 1 will be led by the UNESCO Dakar and UNESCO Abuja Offices, with the support of other regional and national offices in Africa, especially sub-theme leads, and under the coordination and guidance of the 2021 Biennale Coordination Team.

## Annex 1 – Sum-up table

Thematic Forums	Thematic Panels	Best practices	Partners	Country(ies)
Contribution of Arts, Culture and Heritage to Peace	Supporting African artists, cultural and creative Industries for an inclusive and sustainable economic recovery	Supporting diversity and equality the Arts and Culture sectors in Africa	TBD	Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Jordan, Mali, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia
		ArtistsKontraCovid-19: engaging artists in a common cultural response to Covid-19, measuring the impacts of the pandemic on CCIs and engaging in recovery	TBD	15 ECOWAS countries (#ArtistsKontraCovid) and African ResiliArt countries
		Technical and Vocational Education and Training in culture	IIEP, GIZ, AFD, Government of Canada of Sweden	UNESCO Office Dakar IIEP
		Transcultura Project: Integrating Cuba, the Caribbean and the European Union through culture and creativity	European Union	Countries: 17 Caribbean countries and the European Union
	Preventing conflict, reducing risks and building peace through African Intangible Cultural Heritage	Promoting the role of women as preventive diplomacy and against violent extremism	TDB	Mauritania, Cameroun, Ecuador
		Inter-ethnic alliances as an endogenous mechanism for conflict prevention and management	TBD	Ivory Coast
		Contribution of traditional knowledge systems on biodiversity conservation, climate change and disaster and risk reduction	TBD	Kenya, Zimbabwe
		Contribution of traditional authorities to conflict resolution and crisis management	TBD	Regional
	Reengaging with history, arts and cultural values in education to promote a new narrative for Africa	Promotion of the General History of Africa and integration on the Educational systems	TBD	Kenya, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Brazil
		'Ethno-education' for people of African descent in the Andean Region / culturally pertinent education	Key partners for these actions include academia and experts in the African diaspora in LAC	Ecuador
		New African voices from the 3.0 generation: crafting new narratives	TBD	Sierra Leona, Cameroun, Senengal, South Africa
		Valorisation of the contents of ancient	The Center for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)	Mali

		manuscripts for peace and development in Mali	based in Germany is one of the key partners of UNESCO and MINUSMA in their safeguarding actions.	
		Launching a new generation of African museums and enhancing virtual access	young museums such as the <i>Musée des civilisations noires</i> (M CN) in Dakar, Great African Museum (a Flagship Project of Agenda 2063, planned to open in 2023) or the Grand Egyptian Museum (opening planned for 2021).	Egypt Senegal
	Protecting and promoting African cultural and natural heritage	The protection and promotion of World Heritage in Africa for peace: Partnering with the AWHF	TBD	Cameroun, Chad, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, RDC, Zimbabwe
		Curbing illicit trafficking of African cultural property, protecting community's identities and setting the path for dialogue on restitution	TBD	Senegal