



UNESCO

Activities supported by the Heritage Emergency Fund in

MALI



Needs assessment of cultural heritage at the World Heritage property of 'Cliff of Bandiagara (Land of the Dogons)' (2019)

Since 2018, pressure from terrorist groups has increasingly affected the central regions of Mali, with a multitude of attacks against villages and these groups' have used pre-existing tensions between the Dogon and Fulani communities to further enhance divisions within the country. The escalation of violence has claimed countless civilian lives and created huge insecurity in addition to the total or partial destruction of close to 30 villages, half of which are located within the boundaries of the World Heritage property of 'Cliff of Bandiagara'. In this context, not only has traditional built cultural heritage been affected but also, numerous cultural objects have been lost and associated intangible cultural heritage practices and traditions deteriorated. At the request of the Government of Mali and with the support of the HEF, UNESCO deployed a mission to Mopti and the area of Bandiagara to assess the needs related to the built and intangible cultural heritage and associated objects and practices of the region, from 22 to 28 July 2019. The mission visited around 10 villages in the region and met with local and regional authorities, traditional leaders and community members. At the end of the mission, a comprehensive final report was developed, which gave a detailed assessment of the state of intangible and tangible cultural heritage in the areas visited. In addition, a detailed preliminary Action Plan was developed as a result of the mission. The recommendations of the mission and draft Action Plan were then presented to a group of about 200 stakeholders (including communities, authorities and experts).

Training course on “First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis” (2018)

In order to build capacities among cultural heritage experts and emergency response stakeholders alike on when best to intervene and how best to work together, UNESCO and ICCROM, in the context of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2017, partnered on a training on “First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis” for Africa (FAC Africa 2018). From 12 to 30 November 2018, UNESCO implemented this 3-week training course in cooperation with ICCROM, the Ministry of Culture of Mali, the National Museum of Mali (Musée National du Mali), the Alioune Blondin Beye School for Peacekeeping (Ecole de Maintien de la Paix Alioune Blondin Beye), the National Gendarmerie of Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Association for the preservation and valorization of manuscripts for the defense of Islamic culture (Association pour la sauvegarde et la valorisation des manuscrits pour la défense de la culture islamique, SAVAMA-DCI). The training, though based on an established methodology developed by ICCROM, was tailored to the African context and used the humanitarian and cultural response in Mali as a central case study. It benefitted 21 cultural experts and emergency actors from 17 UNESCO Member States (Bhutan, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Comoros, Italy, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, Uganda and Zambia), including 17 participants from Africa and 8 women. The course included multiple practical simulations, such as the emergency structural stabilization of a building and evacuation of objects affected by flooding; the emergency evacuation of a museum collection; and the evacuation of objects from a shrine in coordination with military, police, the National Red Cross society and the ICRC following the detonation of an explosive device by an armed group. The training course “First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis” (FAC Africa) was made possible thanks to support from the Heritage Emergency Fund.

Damage assessment mission to the World Heritage property “Tomb of Askia” (2017)

During the 2017 rain season, heavy precipitation in August caused the collapse of part of the roof of the men’s prayer room at the World Heritage property “Tomb of Askia”(Mali). Responding to a request for international assistance from Mali’s Ministry of Culture, the Heritage Emergency Fund supported the deployment of an urgent diagnostic mission from 6 to 8 September 2017. The aim of the mission was to undertake a detailed assessment of the causes leading to the collapse of part of the roof of the prayer room, an analysis of the urgent restoration measures already implemented by the local community, as well as establishing a costed plan of priority interventions for complementary rehabilitation.