



# UNESCO

## Activities supported by the Heritage Emergency Fund in NEPAL



### Risk assessment of petroglyphs in Upper Mustang (2019)

Following the earthquake that struck Nepal in 2015, the Department of Archaeology (DoA) of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal undertook a set of rehabilitation efforts aimed at mitigating potential threats and risks to the country's cultural heritage. In this framework, an initial DoA-UNESCO fact-finding mission was organised in February and March 2018 to assess the situation of petroglyphs at Ekleybhatti, Chhusang and Samar in Mustang. The activity supported by the HEF aimed at complementing the existing efforts of the DoA to map and document petroglyphs under threat by employing modern tools and techniques, such as drones, photogrammetry and videography. The information gathered during the field survey resulted in the successful production of 3D models of the three sites, scientific mapping and documentation, as well as a communication video of the petroglyphs with testimonies of key stakeholders. One of the key achievements of the activity was the identification of key areas and components in need of urgent intervention in each of the three sites, with a view to develop a fully-fledged project to raise funds for immediate and long-term recovery actions. The activity raised the awareness among local and national stakeholders on the cultural value and touristic potential of petroglyphic sites.

### 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.

## Support to the recovery of cultural heritage in Nepal (2018)

The 2015 earthquakes in Nepal had a devastating impact on the country's unique cultural heritage. The World Heritage property "Kathmandu Valley" experienced damage to 107 monuments and 33 suffered complete collapse. In 2018, the Heritage Emergency Fund funded the hiring of eleven specialists (7 men and 4 women) to undertake the implementation of key activities in support of the post-earthquake recovery process in Nepal. Part of the assistance included the provision of technical support by two IT specialists to Nepal's Department of Archeology (DoA) to develop and adopt a digital cultural heritage inventory tool using an open-source platform called ARCHES. To date, data related to more than 800 monuments, 40 artefacts, and 80 museum objects have been uploaded onto the tool. The Heritage Emergency Fund also funded the organization of three workshops on the preparation of lime mortar, with the aim of improving the quality of masonry used in the restoration and rebuilding of cultural heritage structures. In addition, technical assistance on a number of ongoing restoration projects in the Kathmandu Valley was provided. In particular, UNESCO's role in the preservation and rehabilitation of the Mangal Bahudwar Chaitya (Tashi Gomang Stupa) was instrumental. Following the 2015 earthquakes, the 19th century *stupa* had collapsed and numerous sculptures and votive objects enshrined therein had been exposed. In close collaboration with the DoA, the Federation of Swayambhu Management and Conservation, the priest communities (*Buddhacharyas*), and volunteer students from Tribhuvan University, UNESCO led the efforts to excavate and rebuild the *stupa* and safeguarded its artefacts. On 23 August 2018, the *JeevNyas Puja* - a ritual to install back the "soul of the god" and thus giving life to the *stupa* - was organized to mark completion of its rehabilitation.