Opportunities In Times Of Crisis: Sustainable Tourism In Jordan

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By Costanza Farina, UNESCO Representative in Jordan

- UNESCO Action to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on culture
- Jordan’s participation in UNESCO Global and National Initiatives
- Build Back Better through Sustainable Tourism
COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the entire global cultural ecosystem

Closures of thousands of World Heritage properties and cultural infrastructure, the cancellation or postponement of events, and the interruption of cultural production and markets

The closure of sites and museums impedes the educational function of cultural institutions and spaces.

The crisis reveals the fragility of the cultural ecosystem, which is largely made up of individual workers and small and medium sized enterprises.

The cessation of tourism weakens the conservation of cultural sites by drastically affecting maintenance budgets, which are directly linked to tourism revenues and raise questions about the economic future of museums and cultural institutions.

The crisis is having severe economic repercussions not only for the sector but also for the country as a whole. The pandemic is having a significant macro-economic impact, is severely impacting all businesses and is exacerbating already high unemployment rates. The loss of the spring and summer seasons causes the loss of over $3 billion in foreign currency.

The present deadlock situation can represent an opportunity to advocate for a sustainable tourism approach and strengthen social public-private dialogue.
UNESCO’s response to the call for global solidarity and coordination

**Mobilisation of international cooperation and high level policy dialogue**

- COVID-19 Global Education Coalition
- Ministerial and high-level online meetings
- Contingency planning for Education
- Ecosystem resilience in world heritage sites

**Provision of policy and technical support to strengthen human and institutional capacities**

**Awareness and Advocacy Campaigns**

- “MyCOVID-19Story” from #YouthOfUNESCO
- #DontGoViral Campaign
- Social Media Campaigns #shareculture #shareourheritage #shareinformation #shareeducation

**Generation of data and analysis aiming to support access to information and inform policy development**

- Museums
- World Heritage Sites

**ResiliArt Global Movement**

- Ministerial and high-level online meetings
- Contingency planning for Education
- Ecosystem resilience in world heritage sites
Ministerial and high-level online meetings for global solidarity and mutual support

• On 22 April 2020, the Minister of Culture participated in an online ministerial meeting (130 Ministers) with regional intergovernmental organizations and development banks.

• Jordan: Interdependence among countries pooling efforts and construct a global discourse inspired by shared cultural values.

We hope that this meeting will result in a global declaration on behalf of the Ministers of Culture of all countries, calling for protecting culture and the arts during a pandemic, strengthening solidarity between people and bringing about a new cultural system, reaffirming the role of fundamental human values.

H. EXC. MR BASSIM TWAISSI
MINISTER OF CULTURE, JORDAN
Awareness and Advocacy Campaigns

- **#YouthOfUNESCO**

- **Social Media Campaigns #shareculture #shareourheritage #shareinformation #shareeducation**

"Here in Amman, I have started my own recycling initiative. Last summer, I took part in a UNESCO training, where I learned how to recycle glass, plastic and clothing. I was so inspired by this that I decided to focus on raising awareness, teaching people in Jordan how they can reuse their old clothes creatively by making art pieces and functional items, like pencil cases made out of discarded jeans”. - Abdallah Yousef - #YouthofUNESCO"
Ecosystem resilience in World Heritage and other sites

UNESCO has been providing support for institutional capacities and World Heritage and cultural sites by:

• Involving youth in conservation intervention in Petra and at minor CH sites;
• Applying employment intensive approaches to cultural heritage safeguarding in Jordan;
• Improving technical education quality (TVET) in the hospitality sector;
• Supporting a detailed and comprehensive hydrologic-hydraulic study of the Wadi Musa watershed to prevent flash flood risk at Petra World Heritage Site
• Preventing natural hazards in the Siq of Petra through the implementation of innovative landslide risk mitigation interventions
• Most countries have taken measures to close cultural sites and cancel cultural events. Heritage properties and museums serve as a barometer in this regard: as of 18 May 2020, 86% of countries have closed or partially closed the 1,121 UNESCO World Heritage sites and 90% of museums were closed.

• During the crisis, all 5 World Heritage sites in Jordan were closed and have recently reopened, and all 46 museums were closed and still remain closed.

• Globally cultural institutions have taken advantage of the digitisation and digital communication work done on existing collections (online collections, 360° tours, virtual museums, online publications, digital exhibitions)
  • museums in Jordan have developed a digital presence during the COVID-19 crisis
  • Other initiatives by MoC like “My Passion” (Shaghafi) to provide free art education online for youth
H.E. Majd Shweikeh, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities introduced “The 4 T’s” during her remarks at the ITIC virtual summit on “The Future of Travel & Tourism - Financial Strategies for Recovery” 10 June 2020

“The nexus between tourism and culture thus offers an immense opportunity to contribute to inclusive economic growth, social development and stability and heritage preservation.”

-Taleb Rifai, former UNWTO Secretary-General at the Special Thematic Debate of the UN General Assembly, 5 May 2014
Sustainable tourism products are available in Jordan tourism landscape only to a limited extent. UNESCO advocates for Sustainable Tourism approaches.

As opposed to mass tourism, there are sustainable tourism opportunities:

• Invest in specific types of tourism conducive to the “new normal”
• Scaling up good practices
• Digital transition and other innovations encourage the creation of new cultural content, VR/AR become part of the experience
• Technological advances such as contactless payments and e-ticketing
• Carrying capacities of World Heritage sites
• Adapting cultural heritage sites and tourist destinations for people with disabilities
• “Greening” tourist experience
UN Framework For The Immediate Socio-economic Response To COVID-19

- Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19
- UNCT Jordan’s is responding to the crisis through a Five Pillar approach to Build Back Better and ensure that no one is left behind

**TARGET 8-9**

8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products
"Tourism can be a platform for overcoming the pandemic. By bringing people together, tourism can promote solidarity and trust. I encourage all those involved in the tourism sector to explore how we can recover better, through steps that advance sustainability and build resilience."