
Annex: From Crisis to Commitment: Rethinking Policies and Partnerships for Heritage Protection in Conflict and Peacebuilding on the 1st of October 2025.

Abstract

Title:

Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Cultural Heritage Protection during Crises

Dr. Isber Sabrine

The destruction of cultural heritage in conflict zones has exposed critical gaps in traditional, state-led response frameworks. Civil society organizations (CSOs) have increasingly stepped in to fill these gaps, particularly where governments and international bodies such as UNESCO face limitations.

This presentation examines the role of CSOs in cultural heritage protection and peacebuilding, focusing on Heritage for Peace (H4P) and its interventions in Syria and Yemen. It highlights the logistical, ethical, and operational challenges faced by H4P, alongside the broader limitations of state and international mechanisms.

The discussion emphasizes preparedness strategies—such as local capacity-building and adaptable frameworks—while noting barriers like limited funding and short project cycles. It calls for stronger international cooperation, flexible funding, and local partnerships to safeguard heritage and contribute to sustainable peace.

Title:

Protecting Heritage to Build Peace

Dr. Gala-Alexa Amagat

ALIPH was created in 2017 as public-private partnership to protect cultural heritage in conflict areas. ALIPH finances concrete and sustainable initiatives carried out on the ground, hand-in-hand with local partners, authorities, and communities. To date, ALIPH has supported over 500 projects in 54 countries, combining rapid emergency action with long-term recovery. This presentation will highlight how ALIPH's work not only preserves heritage but also fosters resilience and peacebuilding.

Title:**From Policy to Action: A Civil Society Perspective on Protecting Europe's Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis****Dr. Vanessa Fraga Prol**

My presentation aims to bridge the policy frameworks of the European Union with the practical engagement of civil society in protecting cultural heritage during crises. I will outline the EU's competences, strategic frameworks, and expert structures, before highlighting the Union's structured approaches to three urgent areas: risk management, combating illicit trafficking, and international cooperation. Building on this institutional context, I will emphasise the vital role of NGOs and civil society, presenting Europa Nostra's flagship programmes – such as the **7 Most Endangered initiative** and the **European Heritage Hub** – as concrete examples of how policy can be translated into action. My intention is to demonstrate that civil society does not merely receive policy guidance but actively **advocates, raises awareness, and shapes implementation**, that flexible, inclusive and conflict-sensitive approaches are essential in contexts of war, fragility and displacement, and that stronger partnerships between institutions and grassroots actors are crucial to safeguarding Europe's cultural heritage and the values it embodies in times of crisis.

Title:**Understanding the Looting and Trafficking of Antiquities Inside Syria****Dr. Neil Brodie**

In this talk, I will argue two things. First, that the misuse of the antiquities trade for financing criminality and armed violence is poorly understood. Consequently, laws and other policy interventions aimed at preventing the misuse of the trade for such purposes are sub-optimal and might even be ineffective. To support my argument, I will present some preliminary research into traded ancient coins from Syria. Second, I will argue that research can provide the necessary evidence-base for improved law and policy-making, but also that the research process in itself can be a source of civil empowerment and ultimately heritage protection in countries suffering from conflict and civil disorder.

Title:

Casa Analco. BUAP university project for preservation of cultural heritage at Puebla Historic Center

Dr. Christian Enrique De La Torre Sánchez, Adriana Hernández Sánchez

Casa Analco is a project of Faculty of Architecture of Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. Its objective is to establish a university space for research, projects and practices related to heritage conservation promoting closer engagement with community of Puebla's Historic Center in an ethical, responsible, and non-invasive manner. The internal spaces are used for dissemination of local trades, knowledge, and activities. The aim is to provide the Analco neighborhood with a community gathering space relevant to the area, promoting history, trades, architecture, and everyday activities within an inclusive notion of cultural heritage. This university space is open to the neighborhood community in terms of formal, non-formal, and informal education.

Since 2018, community outreach has continued with the neighbors through the rescue of an old building, implementing various strategies to use the space before its complete renovation, an action not common in BUAP buildings. The space has been promoted for volunteer activities, heritage workshops, and exhibitions. The goal is to establish a Community Museum, a library specializing in heritage topics, and areas for various workshops related to tangible heritage conservation processes (such as masonry, carpentry, stonework, wood carving, earth architecture, among others).

Title:

Panel 2: Partnership Models for Sustainable Heritage Protection in Conflict & Crisis

Dr. Stephen Stenning

Partnerships and in particular partnerships with local organisations and institutions are vital for cultural protection but it is not partnerships alone that ensure sustainability. There is a wider focus that is needed and particularly when working in crisis that is challenging. How is does the act of protection itself, sit within the local economy – is it clear that it is working within the cultural infrastructure and will continue to do so in to the future how is it positioned with the educational and environmental work. Cross sectoral collaboration is important as is a holistic approach to planning and policy

The act of protecting heritage may well be about maintaining a connection with the past but it is crucially about wanting to shape the future it is a hopeful act and should be seen as being about sustainability; ensuring not just that the piece of heritage survives and can be seen in the future, but that it is a vibrant part of the present and is an investment in the future. That requires heritage to be relevant and a source of inspiration to the younger generation who will be an important part of the living heritage link.

Title:**Heritage Protection: The Threat of Climate Change; the Opportunity of Green Transformation****Dr. Andrew Potts**

The escalating threats posed by the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss are delivering systemic harm to people and planet, including irreversible loss and damage to their cultures and heritage. Slow onset hazards, widening climate variability, new climate extremes, combined impacts, and surprise impacts are just some of the types of climate induced risks that heritage managers must now plan for. As the world appears poised to overshoot the 1.5°C warming threshold, these risks are only growing. Conflict exacerbates the impacts of climate change while climate hazards can indirectly multiply the risks of conflict. At the same time, a just and green transformation to a post-carbon world can strengthen peacebuilding and reduce risk to communities and their heritage. This talk will explore some of the current initiatives of the Climate Heritage Network and its members with an emphasis on heritage protection and risk reduction for cultural heritage.

Title:**The Blue Shield: Worldwide perspectives on heritage protection in crisis****Dr. Emma Cunliffe**

This presentation offers reflections from the work of the Blue Shield, a worldwide NGO dedicated to the protection of heritage in conflict, disaster and crisis. It highlights the challenges encountered by the 34 national and regional committees, and the international office work programme, and explores gaps in national and international policies that must be addressed to enable heritage protection in conflict and disaster.