HERITAGE FOR PEACE

Heritage for Peace

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Safeguarding Cultural Heritage in Conflict and Post-Conflict Contexts

PROTECTING HERITAGE
Preserving our shared history and identity

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES
Building local capacities and creating opportunities

PROMOTING PEACE
Fostering dialogue, resilience and hope

WORKING TOGETHER
Strengthening partnerships for a sustainable future

Heritage.
People.
Peace.
Future.

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2025 was an important year for Heritage for Peace—not simply because our work expanded, but because we saw more clearly than ever what can be achieved when **local commitment, professional knowledge and international solidarity come together**.

Across the places where we work, cultural heritage continues to face enormous pressures from conflict, displacement, looting, environmental change and economic hardship. Yet alongside these challenges, we continue to encounter something much stronger: people who refuse to allow their heritage and collective memory to disappear.

This is what motivates us.

During **2025**, Heritage for Peace expanded its work across several countries, strengthened its engagement with civil society organisations, increased its training and community activities, and continued major protection and restoration initiatives in Syria and Yemen. From the restoration of Al-Qahira Citadel in Taiz to heritage protection in Manbij and Tell al-Bay'a, and from strengthening the ANSCH network to advancing research and international dialogue, our work increasingly connected the protection of heritage with communities, livelihoods, education, resilience and peacebuilding.

These experiences have reinforced something we have believed since the beginning: **sustainable heritage protection cannot be imposed from outside**. It must be built with the people who live with that heritage, understand its meaning and will ultimately carry responsibility for its future.

For this reason, our ambition is not simply to implement more projects. It is to strengthen local professionals and civil society, connect people across borders, create opportunities for knowledge exchange, and help communities develop the capacity to protect their own heritage over the long term.

There is still much to do. The crises affecting cultural heritage are becoming more complex, and our responsibility is growing with them. But the work documented in these pages gives us both motivation and hope to continue.

On a personal level, I remain profoundly grateful to everyone who has walked this path with us: our team, partners, donors and colleagues, and especially the local professionals and communities working every day under circumstances that are often extremely difficult.

Heritage for Peace will continue to stand with them. We will continue to listen, learn, build partnerships and act wherever our experience can make a meaningful difference.

Because protecting heritage is ultimately about protecting memory, identity and the possibility of a shared future.

Dr. Isber Sabrine

President
Heritage for Peace

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Progress 2025

Year-on-Year

comparison of the key metric

HEERITAGE FOR PEACE MISSION STATEMENT

“Our mission is to support heritage workers CSOs, indifferent of citizenship or religion, as they work towards the protection of cultural heritage for future generation.”

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Implemented multi-country heritage protection and restoration projects, including major interventions in Yemen and Syria, contributing to the safeguarding of culturally significant sites.

Strengthened the ANSCH network by expanding collaboration with civil society organizations across the region and convening the third international conference, bringing together 41 CSOs, experts, and international institutions.

Advanced knowledge production through the publication of "The Crises–Cultural Heritage Nexus", promoting the integration of cultural heritage into crisis response, recovery, and peacebuilding frameworks.

Delivered capacity-building programmes and technical support to heritage professionals, students, and local actors, enhancing skills in conservation, documentation, and risk preparedness.

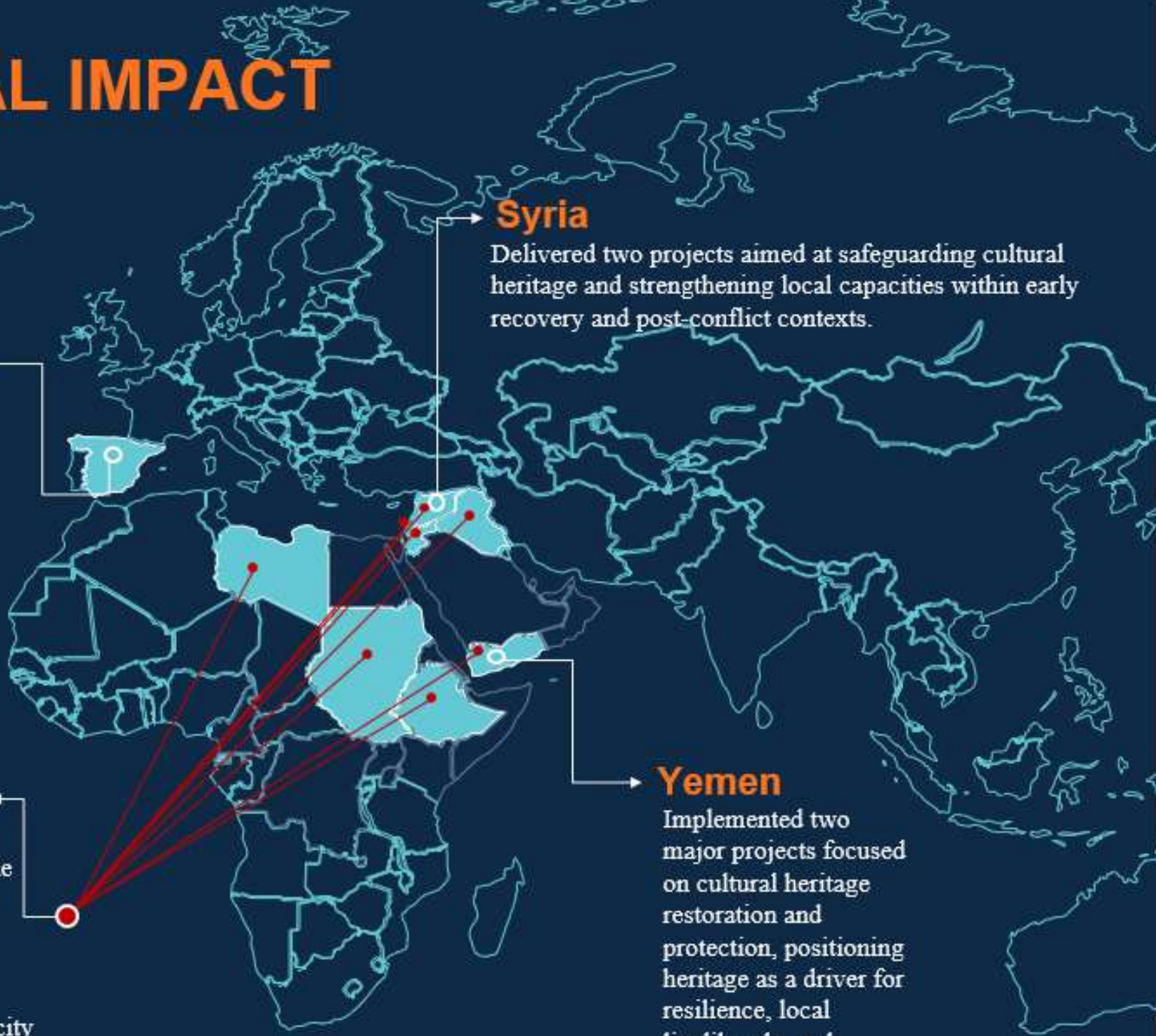
Promoted community engagement through awareness campaigns, educational activities, and cultural initiatives, reaching diverse audiences and reinforcing cultural identity.

Supported social cohesion and resilience by linking heritage protection with local livelihoods, youth engagement, and community participation in crisis-affected contexts.

OUR TOOLS – 2025

Dialogue	**Convened regional platforms and the 3rd ANSCH conference, engaging 40+ civil society actors and international stakeholders.**
Advocacy	**Elevated cultural heritage within humanitarian and peacebuilding agendas through coordinated messaging and partnerships.**
Training	**Delivered capacity-building programmes for heritage professionals, students, and local actors across multiple contexts.**
Awareness Raising	**Reached thousands through community events, educational activities, and media coverage linked to heritage initiatives.**
Research	**Published The Crises–Cultural Heritage Nexus, advancing evidence-based approaches to heritage in crisis contexts.**
Community Engagement	**Actively involved local communities in restoration projects, strengthening ownership, livelihoods, and social cohesion.**
Protection	**Implemented on-the-ground restoration and safeguarding interventions, including major work on Al-Qahira Citadel in Yemen.**

GLOBAL IMPACT 2025



Syria

Delivered two projects aimed at safeguarding cultural heritage and strengthening local capacities within early recovery and post-conflict contexts.

Barcelona

Implemented the **Abuab** project to support the inclusion and integration of migrant communities through cultural dialogue and heritage-based activities.

ANSCH

Supporting conflict-affected areas across the Arab region through a network of 14+ local organizations in 8 countries, fostering collaboration and capacity building.

Yemen

Implemented two major projects focused on cultural heritage restoration and protection, positioning heritage as a driver for resilience, local livelihoods, and peacebuilding.

Barcelona

Abuab Project – Cultural Inclusion through Heritage (Barcelona, 2025)

The Abuab Project, implemented in Barcelona by Heritage for Peace, focuses on promoting social inclusion through cultural heritage by creating spaces for intercultural dialogue between refugee communities and the host society. The project addresses the ongoing need to support the integration and well-being of refugees, particularly those from conflict-affected regions.

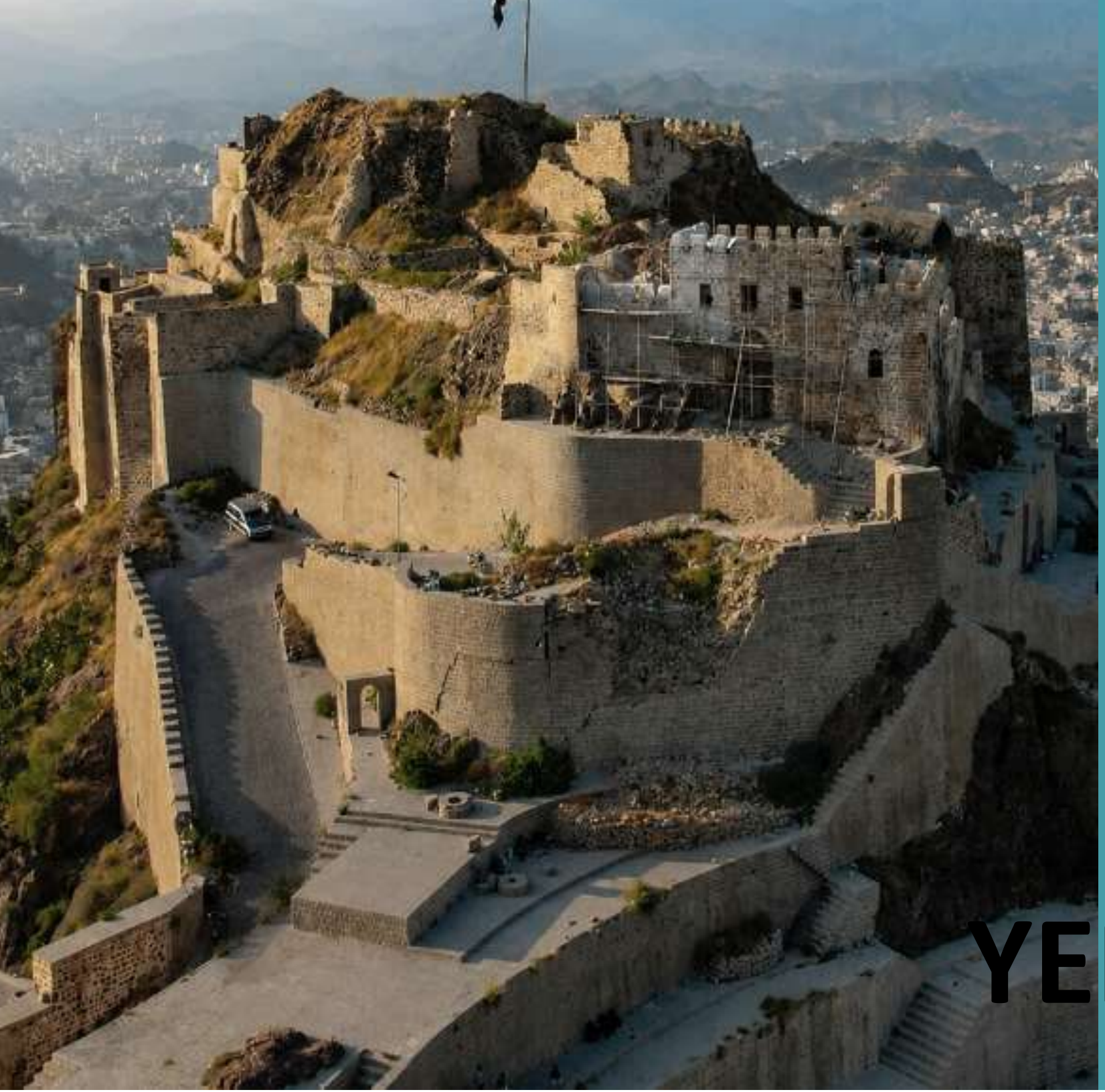
The initiative was carried out between March and December 2025, with a particular emphasis on engaging refugees from the MENA region and Ukraine, alongside local participants. Special attention was given to vulnerable groups, especially refugee women and newly arrived individuals, aiming to enhance their access to cultural life and participation in society.

Key activities included organized visits to museums, theatres, and cultural institutions, as well as dialogue sessions and group discussions designed to encourage interaction and mutual understanding. These activities created safe and inclusive spaces where participants could share experiences, build connections, and strengthen their sense of belonging.

Despite budget constraints that led to a reduction in the number and duration of activities, the project successfully maintained its core objectives and prioritized the quality of engagement. It contributed to enhancing participants' emotional well-being, fostering intercultural dialogue, and strengthening community cohesion.

Overall, the Abuab Project demonstrates the potential of cultural heritage as a powerful tool for social inclusion and resilience. By linking cultural participation with community engagement, the project supports more inclusive, connected, and cohesive societies in urban contexts.

Links: Website: abuab.org
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ABUABeurope/
Instagram: @abuab.eu
LinkedIn: Abuab Euro



YEMEN

Al-Qahira Citadel Restoration Project – Taiz, Yemen (2025 Progress)

The restoration of Al-Qahira Citadel in Taiz is a flagship project implemented by Heritage for Peace to safeguard one of Yemen's most significant historic landmarks. This is a two-year project running from October 2024 to September 2026, aimed at rehabilitating and preserving the citadel as a key symbol of Yemen's cultural heritage and identity. As a 12th-century fortress overlooking the city of Taiz, Al-Qahira Citadel holds exceptional historical and architectural value. The project focuses on restoring the structure while maintaining its authenticity through the use of traditional materials and conservation techniques. Supported by the **U.S. Mission to Yemen through the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP)**, and implemented in partnership with **Heritage for Peace** the **General Organization of Antiquities and Museums – Taiz**, the project reflects a collaborative effort to protect and sustain this historic site.

Restoration efforts in 2025 focused primarily on the entrance complex and key façades. Significant progress was achieved on the southern façade, with approximately 90% of works completed, including reconstruction using original stones and traditional materials such as qadad and clay. The western façade reached near completion (95%), while work on the northern façade progressed through structural stabilization, crack treatment, and reconstruction of damaged elements. The eastern façade remains pending for future phases.

Internally, major interventions strengthened the citadel's structural integrity, including rebuilding collapsed walls, replacing deteriorated wooden elements, and reconstructing traditional roofs using local materials and techniques. These efforts enhanced both safety and long-term sustainability of the site.

Overall, approximately 40% of the total restoration plan has been completed, reflecting steady progress despite complex conditions. In addition to its conservation impact, the project has created significant employment opportunities for the local community, contributing to livelihoods and supporting the civil society in Yemen amid challenging economic conditions.Beyond physical restoration, the project contributes to safeguarding cultural identity, strengthening local knowledge, and reinforcing the role of heritage as a driver of resilience and recovery in conflict-affected context

Community Engagement and

Awareness Activities

As part of the Al-Qahira Citadel restoration project, a series of community engagement and awareness activities were implemented to strengthen public involvement and promote cultural heritage values, with particular emphasis on youth engagement and education.

A key activity under this component was the implementation of a **heritage-focused artistic workshop for school students**, held on 28 January 2025 at Al-Jaleel Private Schools in Taiz. The workshop, titled ***"How Do We Preserve Our Heritage?"***, targeted intermediate and secondary school students, aiming to raise awareness among younger generations about the importance of cultural heritage and its protection.

Beyond its direct participants, the workshop generated wider community impact by indirectly engaging families, peers, and the broader social environment of the students. It contributed to embedding heritage values within the educational context and highlighted the importance of integrating cultural awareness into school-based activities.

Overall, this activity represents a significant step toward building long-term community resilience by investing in youth awareness and strengthening the role of education in safeguarding cultural heritage in conflict-affected settings.

Web site: https://www.heritageforpeace.org/second-project-2/

Climate Change, Conflict, and Heritage Preservation in Yemen

The "Climate Change, Conflict, and Heritage Preservation in Yemen" project represents a strategic research and capacity-building initiative led by Heritage for Peace in partnership with the **University of the West of England (UWE)**, supported by the **AHRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA).** The project addresses the intersection of climate change and conflict as dual threats to cultural heritage, focusing on **Al-Qahira Citadel** in Taiz as a key case study.

Throughout 2025, the project combined applied research, field-based analysis, and targeted capacity-building activities. This included the delivery of specialized training sessions and workshops for Yemeni heritage professionals and students, engaging local practitioners and stakeholders to strengthen skills in risk assessment, documentation, and adaptive conservation approaches in fragile environments. Notably, the project also **trained seven final-year architecture students from Taiz**, helping to build local expertise and connect academic learning with practical heritage preservation needs.

A key output of the project was the development and publication of a comprehensive research booklet, comprising **five dedicated research papers** examining the impact of climate change and conflict on Al-Qahira Citadel. This publication represents a major knowledge product, offering evidence-based analysis, practical recommendations, and a multidisciplinary perspective on heritage preservation under compound risks.

The project also advanced an integrated approach linking scientific research with on-the-ground conservation practice, improving understanding of long-term environmental threats such as humidity, rainfall variability, and vegetation growth, alongside conflict-related damage.

Beyond its research contributions, the initiative significantly strengthened local capacities and fostered knowledge exchange between international experts and Yemeni practitioners. Overall, the project highlights the importance of evidence-based, cross-sectoral approaches, reinforcing the role of cultural heritage as a driver of resilience, knowledge preservation, and sustainable recovery in conflict-affected contexts.

Web site: https://www.heritageforpeace.org/ahrc-iaa_climate-change-conflict-and-heritage-preservation-in-yemen/

The Seven Final-Year Architecture Students from Taiz @ Heritage for Peace 2025

SYRIA

German Mission House

Rehabilitation Project – Tell al-Bay'a, Raqqa

The **German Mission House Rehabilitation** Project in **Tell al-Bay'a, Raqqa**, represents an integrated heritage and community development initiative. it is led by **RehabiMed** in partnership with **Heritage for peace** and local organizations, with support from **the British Council Cultural Protection Fund.** The project focuses on restoring a historically significant building and transforming it into a sustainable community cultural hub.

Originally part of an archaeological mission site, the German Mission House had fallen into neglect due to years of conflict. Through this project, the building was fully rehabilitated and adapted for new social and cultural functions. A total of 10 rooms and a central courtyard were restored and activated to host training sessions, workshops, and public events, creating a vibrant and functional space for community engagement.

A key output of the project was the implementation of vocational training programs in traditional crafts between May and September 2025. More than **20 participants**—primarily women and youth—were trained in three core crafts: traditional food production (Saj bread and pastries), hand weaving, and papyrus mat weaving. These activities resulted in the production of dozens of handmade products, while also introducing participants to basic marketing skills and income-generation opportunities.

Community engagement formed a central pillar of the initiative. The project delivered a series of outreach activities, including school visits, storytelling sessions, cultural events, and environmental actions such as tree planting. These activities reconnected local communities—especially younger generations—with their heritage, transforming the site into an active space for learning, interaction, and cultural exchange.

Beyond physical rehabilitation, the project demonstrates how heritage can serve as a driver for social cohesion and economic recovery. By revitalizing traditional skills, creating livelihood opportunities, and reactivating a shared cultural space, the initiative contributes to strengthening local identity, fostering resilience, and supporting sustainable post-conflict recovery in Raqqa.

Web site project: https://www.heritageforpeace.org/german-mission-house-in-tell-al-baya-project-raqqa/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064034265312
Web site: https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.rafekatuna.org%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwcGRvZgFleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETFZazJmNGRMY0t3WGpheXFjc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjIyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHkdRteex8Znwzo6iO55jMxKmkJW-hEiddg3tLBw3sAgSUUooThdH9ngVmOjF_aem_M_XbelIVxoySftbLEhKhJg&h=AUBSvJqzQkUYoUgzxueYnAuWCKyMw54pbFJP0P7zcq_D5XIuWReXjgym6vAmoEz4hNS5m5pgHw6j0M6BtTmH5cgFJ1__a2Ypfp8qznCr03E3KXFz6gG1HYud6fYS9jxjiVes

Manbij Heritage Protection Project

The Manbij Heritage Protection Project represents an emergency response and capacity-building initiative led by **Heritage for Peace** and funded by **Cultural protection – British Council fund** to safeguard one of northern Syria's most historically rich cities. Implemented between June and December 2025, the project addresses the urgent threats posed by conflict, looting, and neglect to Manbij's archaeological sites and cultural assets.

The project adopted an integrated approach combining artefact recovery, digital documentation, conservation interventions, and community engagement. A key achievement was the recovery and documentation of **52 cultural artefacts**, which were secured within a unified digital database to ensure long-term preservation and accessibility.

Capacity building formed a central pillar of the initiative, with 10 young heritage professionals trained in documentation techniques and first-aid response for cultural heritage sites. In parallel, broader training and fieldwork engagement supported additional local experts, strengthening the foundation for sustainable, locally led preservation efforts.A major milestone was the revitalization of the historic Ottoman Hammam, which was transformed into a Heritage Protection Center and community cultural hub. This space now serves as a focal point for training, exhibitions, and public engagement, linking conservation practice with community participation.

Public outreach activities played a significant role in reconnecting communities with their heritage. The project delivered at least five educational events, reaching approximately 400 students, while exhibitions and cultural activities attracted over 2,500 visitors from the local community. In addition, tailored educational materials were developed, including a student booklet on the historic bath (hammam) and a guidance manual introducing students to the significance of hammams and mosaic heritage, supporting structured learning and awareness. Overall, the project demonstrates how integrated heritage protection—combining technical intervention, capacity building, and community engagement—can contribute to safeguarding cultural identity and strengthening social cohesion. By empowering local actors and creating accessible cultural spaces, the initiative reinforces the role of heritage as a driver of resilience, peacebuilding, and sustainable recovery in conflict-affected contexts

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Web site project: https://www.heritageforpeace.org/manbij-heritage-protection-project/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/p/Hierapolis-%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AB-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%AC-61553121294384/

ANSCH

https://ansch.heritageforpeace.org/

Arab Network of Civil Society Organizations to Safeguard Cultural Heritage (ANSCH) – 2025 Progress

The Arab Network of Civil Society Organizations to Safeguard Cultural Heritage (ANSCH) represents a flagship regional initiative led by Heritage for Peace to empower civil society actors in protecting cultural heritage across conflict-affected contexts. Established as a collaborative platform connecting NGOs, heritage professionals, and local communities, the network plays a critical role in strengthening locally driven heritage protection efforts across multiple Arab countries.

In 2025, a significant milestone was achieved through the implementation of a comprehensive needs assessment survey targeting civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the heritage sector. The survey aimed to identify key challenges, priorities, and capacity gaps faced by local actors operating in complex and fragile environments. Based on the strong engagement and responses received, the initiative proceeded to formalize partnerships through contractual agreements with CSOs across seven countries in the region.

This expansion marked an important step in strengthening the ANSCH network, enhancing its geographical reach and reinforcing its role as a coordinated platform for action. The network currently includes organizations from Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, and Palestine. The contracted organizations are distributed as follows: **Syria (5 local CSOs), Iraq (5 local CSOs), Yemen (7 local CSOs), Libya (5 local CSOs), Lebanon (3 local CSOs), and Palestine (3 local CSOs)**, with additional participation from Sudan. A link is attached for reference to view the participating organizations https://ansch.heritageforpeace.org/network-of-csos/Throughout 2025, ANSCH continued to support capacity building, coordination, and dialogue among its members, enabling local organizations to play a more active role in heritage documentation, risk response, and community engagement. The initiative emphasizes a bottom-up approach, positioning civil society as a key driver in safeguarding both tangible and intangible cultural heritage.Overall, the 2025 progress of ANSCH highlights the growing importance of structured civil society networks in heritage protection. By expanding partnerships, responding to locally identified needs, and strengthening regional collaboration, the initiative contributes to enhancing resilience, preserving cultural identity, and supporting sustainable recovery across conflict-affected area.

Conferences, Publications, and Strategic Engagement of Heritage for Peace (2025)

Conferences 1

Empowering Civil Society for Heritage Protection in Conflict Contexts

Over the past decade, escalating conflicts across the Arab region have placed cultural heritage under severe and unprecedented threat, including destruction, looting, neglect, and irreversible loss. Countries such as **Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Lebanon, Sudan, and Palestine** have experienced significant damage to cultural sites and practices, undermining community identity and resilience. This evolving context highlights the urgent need to integrate cultural heritage protection into crisis response and peacebuilding frameworks.

In response, Heritage for Peace, through the **Arab Network of Civil Society Organizations to Safeguard Cultural Heritage (ANSCH)**, continued its efforts in 2025 to support civil society actors and enhance regional cooperation in heritage protection. The initiative focuses on capacity strengthening, knowledge exchange, and fostering collaboration between local organizations and international partners.

A major milestone was the third ANSCH virtual conference, held on 28–29 May 2025, which convened **41 civil society organizations from seven Arab countries (Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Lebanon, Sudan, and Palestine), alongside 10 experts and 6 international institutions**. The conference provided a dynamic platform for dialogue, enabling participants to share field-based experiences and collectively address the realities of working in conflict-affected environments.

The event also presented the findings of a regional needs assessment conducted in **January 2025**, which examined the operational capacities and priorities of participating organizations. The analysis identified key structural challenges, including limited financial resources, infrastructure constraints, and gaps in technical capacity, while also pointing to the need for improved emergency preparedness. At the same time, there was strong demand for training in digital documentation, conservation practices, crisis management, and strategic planning.

Importantly, the conference contributed to shaping a shared roadmap for enhanced regional and international cooperation under complex conditions. It also highlighted the growing emphasis placed by civil society organizations on community engagement, particularly through the inclusion of youth and women in heritage-related activities.Overall, ANSCH's 2025 activities reflect a shift toward more coordinated, evidence-based approaches, strengthening civil society's role in promoting resilience and sustainable recovery in crisis contexts.

https://ansch.heritageforpeace.org/ansch-conference-2025/

Conferences 2

International Conference on Heritage Protection in Crisis Contexts

On October 1, 2025, Heritage for Peace In partnership with IMF of Spanish National Research council organized conference an international conference in Barcelona titled **"From Crisis to Commitment: Rethinking Policies and Partnerships for Heritage Protection in Conflict and Peacebuilding".** The event convened a wide range of **14 participants**, including researchers, heritage professionals, civil society actors, and international stakeholders, creating a multidisciplinary platform for dialogue and collaboration.

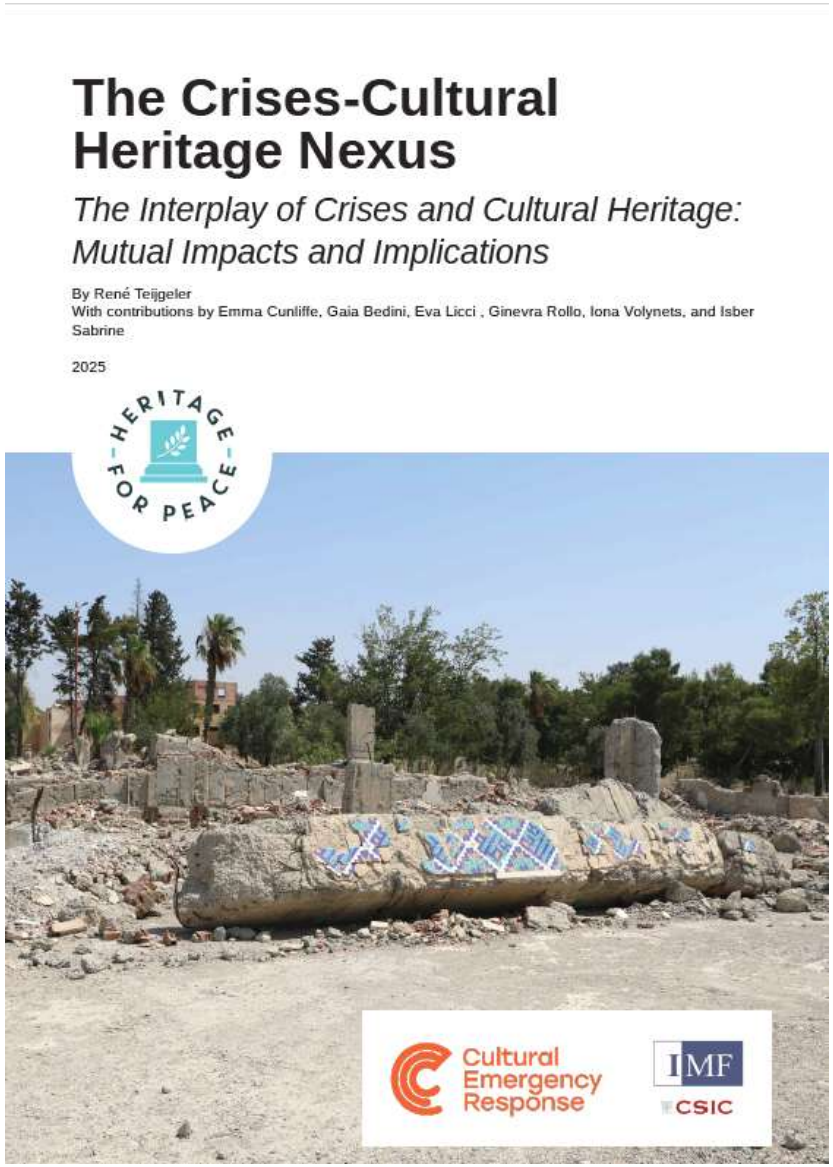
The conference moved beyond a traditional knowledge-sharing format to serve as a strategic space for connecting policy, research, and field-based practice. Discussions highlighted the urgent need to rethink heritage protection approaches in crisis contexts through more inclusive, flexible, and partnership-driven models. Particular emphasis was placed on the growing role of civil society in addressing gaps left by state and institutional frameworks, especially in conflict-affected regions. For more information: https://www.heritageforpeace.org/conference-2025/

Key themes addressed during the conference included illicit trafficking of cultural property, community-based conservation, climate change impacts on heritage, and the importance of sustainable and cross-sector partnerships. Contributions collectively underscored the importance of evidence-based policies, local capacity-building, and the integration of heritage. protection within broader social, economic, and environmental systems

A central outcome of the conference was the recognition that cultural heritage protection is not only a technical or conservation issue, but a critical component of peacebuilding and community resilience. By bringing together diverse experiences from multiple regions, the event reinforced the value of collaborative approaches that connect international expertise with local knowledge and community engagement.

Ultimately, the conference strengthened Heritage for Peace's role as a facilitator of international dialogue and a promoter of innovative, impact-oriented approaches to heritage protection. It contributed to advancing a shared vision in which cultural heritage is positioned as a driver for sustainable development, social cohesion, and long-term recovery in contexts of crisis.

Conferences 3
In Memory of René Teijgeler – Legacy and Strategic Impact



a white paper, "The Crises-Cultural Heritage Nexus: The Interplay of Crises and Cultural Heritage: Mutual Impacts and Implications." @https://www.heritageforpeace.org/on-the-memory-of-rene-teijgeler-co-founder-of-heritage-for-peace/

On 5 October 2025, Heritage for Peace, in partnership with Cultural Emergency Response (CER), launched a landmark publication in memory of René Teijgeler, co-founder of the organization and a leading advocate for the protection of cultural heritage in times of crisis. This publication marks the first milestone of a four-year strategic collaboration between the two organizations, reflecting a shared commitment to advancing the integration of cultural heritage into humanitarian response, peacebuilding, and disaster risk frameworks.

Titled *"The Crises–Cultural Heritage Nexus: The Interplay of Crises and Cultural Heritage: Mutual Impacts and Implications,"* the publication offers a critical rethinking of the relationship between crises and cultural heritage. It highlights how heritage is not only vulnerable in times of conflict and disaster, but also plays a vital role in strengthening community resilience, supporting recovery processes, and fostering social cohesion. By adopting an evidence-based approach, the initiative contributes to shaping more inclusive and adaptive policies, while expanding global dialogue through dissemination activities and expert engagement.

More than a tribute, this publication represents a forward-looking contribution to the field, continuing René Teijgeler's vision of placing cultural heritage at the center of sustainable recovery and peacebuilding.

Thank you!

Heritage for Peace extends its sincere gratitude to all partners, funding institutions, and collaborators whose support has been essential to advancing our mission.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to our funding partners for their trust and strategic support, which have enabled the development and implementation of initiatives that protect cultural heritage and support communities affected by conflict.

We also extend our thanks to implementing partners, heritage professionals, and community members whose dedication and expertise are at the core of this work.

Finally, we acknowledge all individuals and institutions who have contributed to our efforts. Together, we continue to promote cultural heritage as a driver of peace, resilience, and recovery.

Partners:

UWE Bristol University of the West of England

Cultural Emergency Response

Ajuntament de Barcelona

RehabiMed

BRITISH COUNCIL

In partnership with Department for Culture, Media & Sport

Cultural Protection Fund

U.S. AMBASSADORS FUND for CULTURAL PRESERVATION

UNITED STATES MISSION YEMEN

SYRIA DGAM

IMF

CSIC