

Cultural Heritage for Inclusive
Growth Collection

Cultural heritage, self determination and community development

Conclusion to the Cultural Heritage for
Inclusive Growth Collection

Chris Dalglish
with contributions by
the authors of the collection

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The Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth Collection

Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth (CH4IG) is a British Council action research programme which, since 2018, has been exploring how local culture can improve the lives of individuals around the world. The essays in this collection were originally commissioned by the British Council as independent thematic studies during the pilot phase of the programme. They have since been updated by their authors and edited for the British Council by Inherit.

The essays are published as part of the British Council's What Works Cultural Heritage Protection programme, which is designed to support better outcomes for heritage protection and local communities by bringing the best available

evidence to practitioners and other decision-makers across the international heritage protection sector.

Together, the essays explore the role of cultural heritage in bringing about the change which is needed to secure a sustainable future for people and the planet. The collection explores the relationship between heritage and sustainable development from different geographical, topical and philosophical perspectives. The diverse essays are bound by common themes, namely that cultural heritage is at the heart of human development; that cultural relations create conditions in which human development can occur, and; that human development is enabled by people-centred approaches and transparent, accountable and participatory governance.

The author and contributors

This essay was written by Dr Chris Dalglish with input from the other authors who have contributed to the collection.

Dr Dalglish is a director of Inherit, the York Archaeological Trust's Institute for Heritage & Sustainable Human Development. With over 20 years experience in the heritage sector, he is an expert in cultural heritage and sustainable development. He has a particular interest in the role of heritage in social justice and in how communities can use their heritage to come together and take action which improves their lives.

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This essay presents general conclusions and recommendations arising from the collection and it has benefitted from contributions by the collection's authors. Material from the other essays has been used in forming the conclusions, and the contributing authors were invited to review an earlier draft of the text. In particular, Dr Dalglish would like to thank James Doerer for his direct input, and all of the authors for conversations which helped to shape the thinking behind the essay.

The conclusions and recommendations presented in this essay do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the collection's contributing authors or the British Council.

The editors

The collection was edited by Dr Chris Dalglish (series editor) and Skye McAlpine Walker (copy editor and proofreader) of Inherit.

Inherit – the York Archaeological Trust's Institute for Heritage & Sustainable Human Development – supports community development through cultural heritage (<https://www.inherit-institute.org>). We help people to safeguard, sustain and transmit their heritage. We provide practical support to communities so that they can fulfil their cultural rights and use their heritage for the collective good. We carry out purposeful research and advocate evidence-based policy change which enables people to care for their heritage and achieve their development goals. We help other organisations to improve their programmes and services for the benefit of the communities they work with. We collaborate with communities, non-profit organisations, public institutions and experts around the world.

The York Archaeological Trust (<https://www.yorkarchaeologicaltrust.co.uk>) has been safeguarding heritage and making a difference to people's lives since 1972. The Trust is a self-funded

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Bedouin mother and child, Mount Lebanon.

Front cover photograph © Stamos Abatis for the *Cultural Corridors of Peace* programme (<https://culturalcorridors.net>), funded by the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund in partnership with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Introduction

The essays in the Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth collection approach the topic of cultural heritage and sustainable development from diverse perspectives and each author presents conclusions and recommendations for their area of focus. There are also some common threads that run through the essays and which bind the collection together and distinguish it as a contribution to the literature on the subject. In this general conclusion, we pick out these common threads and present overall conclusions and recommendations, primarily that:

- Cultural heritage is at the heart of human development;
- Cultural relations create conditions for human development;
- Alongside the evidence for what works, analysis of how it works is critical to the spread of good practice.

These conclusions and the associated recommendations have been developed collaboratively by the contributors to the collection, bringing together key points from their individual essays, and through direct input to the text of this general conclusion. However, these points do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the individual authors, or of the British Council.

Cultural Heritage is at the Heart of Human Development

Cultural heritage is more than just fragments of the past which have persisted into the present as a bounded set of objects, monuments or traditions; it is 'alive' in the here and now. Cultural heritage is everywhere and it takes diverse forms in people's everyday lives. Heritage is not simply a representation of how life was lived in the past, but also about what we value in our present and how we *could* and *should* live in the future. A community's cultural heritage is the collective inheritance which it wishes to carry forward, adapt and use creatively as the basis of its self-determined development.

The development value of cultural heritage is often assessed in terms of its narrow instrumental worth relating to particular objectives, such as economic development through tourism, craft production and the cultural and creative industries; improvements in people's mental and physical health; or action on climate change and biodiversity loss. This is an important consideration and – as noted in the introduction to this collection – there is now widespread recognition of the role of heritage in addressing particular development goals.

However, when cultural heritage – and the communities it belongs to – are seen solely in terms of their instrumental value, they are reduced to 'tools' for development, the goals and targets of which are often set from the outside. Narrowly conceived understandings of the value of cultural heritage are a barrier to the full integration of heritage into sustainable development.

The essays in this collection recognise the instrumental values of heritage but, collectively, they promote another view which centres on the place and role of cultural heritage in *human development*.

The human development approach is embedded in the United Nations' *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, but it has yet to be realised fully in development practice around the world. This approach seeks to advance human wellbeing and dignity and it holds 'that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country'.¹

In relation to this topic, four interlinked themes emerge from the essays: cultural heritage and a rights-based approach to development; cultural heritage and self-determination; cultural heritage and community development and; cultures of inclusion and exclusion.

1. <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI>

Recommendation 1

Cultural life – including cultural heritage – is essential to human development. Development policies and programmes should, in their design and implementation, ensure that everyone’s cultural rights are protected, respected and progressively fulfilled. Integral to this, they should support communities to sustain and dynamically transmit the cultural heritage which they value and to use it creatively for their development.

Cultural Heritage and a Rights-based Approach to Development

Cultural life is essential to human wellbeing and dignity and the culmination of sustainable development therefore lies partly in the inclusive fulfilment of cultural life, in which cultural heritage plays a role. Everyone has the right to take part in cultural life and states have an obligation in international law to protect this right and facilitate its full realisation.²

In 2022, 150 UNESCO Member States called for culture to be integrated as a specific goal in the post-2030 development agenda and they committed to ‘foster an enabling environment conducive to the respect and exercise of all human rights, in particular cultural rights ... [including] cultural heritage ... in order to build a more just and equitable world, and reduce inequalities’.³

The #culture2030goal campaign has recognised cultural rights in its ‘zero draft’ for inclusion in the post-2030 global sustainable development agenda. The proposed goal is to ‘ensure cultural sustainability for the wellbeing of all’ and the suggested targets include:

Realize cultural rights for all, by fostering inclusive access to and participation in cultural life, creativity and diversity of cultural expressions, in particular for women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and vulnerable populations.⁴

And to:

Ensure ... that cultural considerations are taken into account in all international development goals ...

The UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Alexandra Xanthaki, has stated her support for the #culture2030goal campaign and said that:

There is a need to adopt a human-rights-based approach that includes cultural rights throughout the implementation and monitoring of [the Sustainable Development] Goals. The indivisibility, universality and interdependence of all human rights ensure coherence and provide clear red lines to guarantee sustainability and prevent harm; the realization of one human right cannot be isolated from its impacts on other rights ...⁵

She has recommended that sustainable development processes are preceded by human rights impact assessments and that indicators be established for assessing the ‘conditions for the implementation of ... cultural rights.’

These interventions are welcome because they recognise that participation in cultural life is a human right and that a people-centred approach should be taken to culture and heritage in development contexts. Particularly welcome is the emphasis on protecting, respecting and advancing the cultural rights of vulnerable and marginalised groups in society, as part of tackling inequalities more generally. Also welcome is the #culture2030goal campaign’s recognition that cultural life cannot be separated out from other aspects of life and that the right to cultural life should be protected and advanced in all development interventions.

2. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 27; International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights, Article 15; International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights, Article 27

3. UNESCO, 2022a

4. Culture 2030 Goal Campaign, 2022

5. Xanthaki, 2022, pp 23-4



A Bedouin mother and daughter, Bekaa Valley, Lebanon. The photograph was taken in 2022 while documenting how Bedouin women pass knowledge and skills to younger people, helping their communities to survive and thrive by sustaining their distinctive cultural heritage.

Photograph © Stamos Abatis for the Cultural Corridors of Peace programme (<https://culturalcorridors.net>), funded by the British Council’s Cultural Protection Fund in partnership with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Recommendation 2

Cultural heritage is at the root of cultural diversity; it shapes people's values and sense of who they are, their understanding of the present and how it came about, what they believe the future should look like and how they feel change should be achieved. The free pursuit of cultural development is intrinsic to the right of self-determination. As a matter of self-determination, development policies and programmes should support communities to sustain their cultural heritage and pursue culturally diverse visions of the future and of the change which is needed to get there.

Cultural Heritage and Self-determination

In their essay, John Samuel, Abraham George and Pallavi Rachel George conclude that the 'perspectives and practices of excluded and marginalised communities and people are crucial for the effective designing and implementation of inclusive policies' and that:

Usually, there exists a gap between those who design inclusive policies and the perspectives and cultural practices of different excluded communities. Therefore, it is necessary to listen to the voices of the marginalised and the excluded communities and to incorporate their perspectives into the policies meant for their inclusive development and growth. This will ensure better participation of such communities and will give greater effectiveness and legitimacy to the inclusive growth policies in any given national or sub-national context.

'Participation' in this context must extend beyond mere consultation. It is a tenet of international human rights law that 'All peoples have the right of self-determination' and that 'By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development'.⁶

Adding to this, the UN Special Rapporteur on cultural rights has recognised that cultural heritage is central to self-determination and that:

There is a need to decolonize development paradigms to protect and enable culturally diverse sustainable development practices that

acknowledge different world views and consider alternative frameworks that sit outside mainstream approaches... Sustainable development must be self-determined and community led. It is not sufficient for development to be culturally sensitive or culturally appropriate; it should be contextualized to specific cultural environments and seek to fully align itself with the aspirations, customs, traditions, systems and world views of the individuals and groups most likely to be affected ...⁷

Such sentiments run through the essays in this collection, and they are embedded in the principles and ways of working adopted by the British Council, for example, in the Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth programme, which seeks to promote participation, local leadership, a bottom-up approach and 'local ownership, social accountability and shared responsibility'.⁸

Efforts to embed cultural heritage in sustainable development should concentrate on its role with regard to self-determination, with the aim of enabling people – especially vulnerable and marginalised groups – to determine the goals and means of development in ways which are appropriate to their cultures and communities whilst upholding the rights of others.

A Vlach father and son in the northern Pindos Mountains, Greece. Vlach people are distinguished from the majority Greek-speaking population by their Romani language, and many of them still identify with a distinctive way of life based around the seasonal movement of livestock to and from the highlands.

Photograph © Stamos Abatis for the *On the Move* project (<https://med-ina.org/project/mcnc>).

6. International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights, Article 1

7. Xanthaki, 2022, pp 8-9

8. Lewis et al, 2018, p 12

Recommendation 3

People's ability to lead and deliver positive change is, in no small part, shaped by their cultural inheritance, which includes diverse ways of knowing the world, ways of life, social institutions and relationships with nature. Greater support should be given to ensuring inclusive participation in this collective heritage and enabling people to use it creatively as a means of community development.

Cultural Heritage and Community Development

The human development approach is about enhancing people's capabilities and freedoms, or what they can be and what they can do. These capabilities and freedoms lie at the root of people's ability to pursue development on their own terms (self-determination).

As a shared and collective inheritance, cultural heritage has potency in relation to community development, ie in enabling people to come together as communities to take collective action and generate solutions to shared problems.

This goes far beyond the narrow instrumental value of heritage for achieving particular objectives (although that value is not to be dismissed). More broadly, the value of cultural heritage lies in the way it can bring – and hold – people together; enable them to identify their shared goals and aspirations; and empower them to take collective action to bring about positive change.

In his essay on the maracatu heritage and the Cambinda Estrela Cultural Center in Recife, Brazil, Pedro Ivo Franco illustrates a case in point. He notes that community activities to sustain and celebrate the maracatu carnival tradition have raised people's self-esteem, built the capacity and confidence of young people and adults, provided a common interest for people to gather around, forged relationships and helped people to develop their organisational skills. Ivo Franco concludes that, in valuing its heritage, the community values itself. It might also be said that through this heritage, the community constitutes and continually reconstitutes itself as a community, which is the foundation for any community

development.

Samuel, George and George also touch on this point about culture and the making of communities, based on their research into examples from Colombia, Kenya, Vietnam and India. They say that:

Culture has a major role in promoting social solidarity that in turn could be harnessed for inclusive growth. Commonality in cultural norms and practises, language, religion, caste, class etc, constitutes a binding factor for different groups. Policy makers and governments, while designing their various programmes and projects, should give due importance to cultural factors in order to strengthen social solidarity among the marginalised and minority groups, to empower them to overcome their exclusion ...



Participants in *Fèis na Tìre* (Festival of the Land) 2022, Trotternish, Isle of Skye, Scotland. The group is visiting a village from which the inhabitants were evicted in the 19th century, telling stories about the people and their lives, and singing songs about the place. The festival is part of *Guthan na Tìre*, a locally-led project which aims to sustain and transmit the unique cultural heritage of Trotternish for the benefit of its communities. The project focuses on the language (Gaelic), stories, place knowledge and land use traditions of local people.

Photograph © Ionad Thròndairnis, taken by Cailean Maclean for the *Guthan na Tìre* project (<https://guthannatire.org>).

Recommendation 4

The character of cultural life is not fixed but constantly evolving. Where cultural heritage is a source of inequalities, exclusion or oppression, change is needed to address this and to ensure that everyone can fulfil their cultural rights and take part in the processes and benefits of development. Development policies and programmes should identify and address cultural barriers to human development, with the full and equitable participation of all those likely to be affected.

Cultures of Inclusion and Exclusion

As quoted above, Samuel, George and George note the enabling role of culture and heritage in generating social solidarity and enabling collective action. In their essay, they also recognise that culture can be a ‘disabler’ of development. They refer to established cultural norms which exclude people from decisions and opportunities on the basis of gender, age, religion, language, race, ethnicity or caste, for example. They discuss the multi-dimensional inequalities which exist within countries and communities, including communities which are themselves marginalised in society, and explore the roots of such inequalities in inherited hierarchies, institutions, attitudes and customs. They highlight, in particular, the need to overcome the exclusion of young people, older people, and women and girls – and to support their empowerment.

Samuel, George and George argue that state and non-state actors should ‘address the causes, culture and consequences of multi-dimensional inequalities’ and seek to bring about ‘positive cultural transformation over time’ as part of their strategies for sustainable development and, particularly, for enhancing people’s capabilities and opportunities.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognises the need to address the fundamental barriers to sustainable development which result from social inequalities. This is seen, for example, in the Sustainable Development Goals on inclusive and equitable education (SDG4); the empowerment of women and girls (SDG5); inclusive economic growth and decent work for all (SDG8); reducing inequalities within and among countries (SDG10); and creating peaceful and inclusive societies

(SDG16). The point made by Samuel, George and George – which is particularly relevant here – is that cultural heritage must be taken into account both as a source of such inequalities and as a path to addressing them over time. Cultural change of this kind is not change that can simply be imposed from outside; it needs to come about with the full and equitable participation of all those likely to be affected and with respect for cultural rights and self-determination – applying the kinds of principles and approaches which are outlined below for cultural relations, governance and people-centred ways of working.



Sleman Museum Kids, Suleymaniyah, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. In this new museum space, children learn about their region's rich history and cultural diversity. They hopefully develop a greater interest in the different cultures, religions and ethnic groups which have been found there in the past, and which exist there today.

Photograph © Stamos Abatis for the *Archaeological Practice & Heritage Protection in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq* project (<https://culturalheritageprotection.org>), funded by the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund in partnership with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Cultural Relations Create Conditions for Human Development

Recommendation 5

Development typically involves – and often requires – the interaction of different communities, organisations and institutions across national, social and cultural boundaries. A deep understanding of and respect for cultural diversity is required for those relationships to flourish and for interactions to be equitable. To achieve this, cultural relations should be embedded in development policies, strategies and programmes and adopted as a starting point for international development.

Cultural relations – activities which bring people, organisations and institutions together within the space of culture and civil society – serve sustainable development by creating trust, mutual understanding and sustained cooperation, and by promoting conditions of peace, justice and tolerance. By building reciprocal and sustained relationships with external parties, people are better able to fulfil their cultural rights and realise community development. By anchoring these networks in a shared understanding of cultural diversity, people are empowered to lead on development which meets their own needs and aspirations, while protecting and advancing the rights of others and contributing to action on global environmental and humanitarian challenges.

As Suzanne Joinson says in her essay, cultural heritage has an important role to play in this context. Her focus is oral history and she notes that this is ‘inherently a sharing and listening practice’ in which the purpose is expressly not ‘to judge or instruct’. Oral history is a means of linking memory and heritage to the present through dialogue, mutual trust-building and the sharing of both personal and collective experience – and it cannot be done without the full engagement of local partners and community members.

Joinson has experience in using oral history for cultural relations, including as a UK-based

practitioner who has contributed to Heritage of Future Past (the name for the Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth programme in Vietnam). In her essay, she concludes that oral history is ‘about connection and has the potential to greatly increase the opportunity to foster cross-national relationship-building, mutual understanding and influence within the context of international relations’. She argues that oral history projects can engage and be led by communities and social groups who feel marginalised and under-valued, strengthen their voices, break down stereotypes, counter stigmatisation, and provide a diplomatic bridge between mutually suspicious or antagonistic groups. In the context of international development, this practice can help to counter potential bias in a post-colonial world and foster cooperation in relation to contested and complex histories and futures.

Joinson’s conclusions with regard to oral history reflect wider understanding of the value of a cultural relations approach for sustainable development, for example, as promoted by the British Council, UNESCO, the EU National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) and others.⁹ A sizeable majority of UNESCO Member States has recently declared the need to:

...ensure the conservation, safeguarding and promotion of the entire cultural sector including



Participants in a gathering in Wadi Rum, Jordan, in 2019. The event brought together Bedouin people and programme partners from Jordan, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the United Kingdom. It allowed Bedouin participants to meet and discuss their cultural connections and differences. It helped the non-Bedouin partners to understand more deeply how the Bedouin see themselves and what their needs and priorities are.

Photograph © Stamos Abatis for the Cultural Corridors of Peace programme (<https://culturalcorridors.net>), funded by the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund in partnership with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

9. see eg Lewis et al, 2018, p 4; Singh, 2022; UNESCO, 2022b, p 3; Lamonic, 2021

cultural heritage ... [and] sustain cultural diversity and pluralism, the respect of which constitutes, today more than ever, a ferment of peace and a force for creativity and innovation to build a more sustainable world.¹⁰

Reflected in the continuing calls for a cultural relations approach to sustainable development is a recognition that this approach is, as yet, insufficiently embedded in development policies, strategies and programmes. While development often involves actors from different countries, it does not always start by building mutual understanding of cultural diversity and

thereby rooting its approach in local circumstances.

As part of their focus on human development, the authors in this collection emphasise the need for development to emerge from the local cultural context. Cultural relations – based around cultural heritage as part of evolving and creative cultural lives – help to create the conditions for human development by building trust, equitable relationships and mutual understanding between communities, organisations and institutions across boundaries of culture, society and nation.



Young Bedouin people, Lebanon, showing their goats to European staff from the Cultural Corridors of Peace programme.

Photograph © Stamos Abatis 2023 for the Cultural Corridors of Peace programme (<https://culturalcorridors.net>), funded by the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund in partnership with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Alongside the Evidence for What Works, Analysis of How it Works is Critical to the Spread of Good Practice

Recommendation 6

Recommendation 6: Human development is by its nature context-specific and it cannot be assumed that successful examples can simply be scaled up and replicated elsewhere. However, analysis of how positive change has been achieved in particular circumstances can generate learning which is of wider relevance. Rather than rigidly copying particular models for embedding cultural heritage in human development, institutions, organisations and practitioners should clarify the underlying principles and processes and learn how to implement them in context. For many, this will involve reflecting on their purpose and transforming what they do and how they do it.

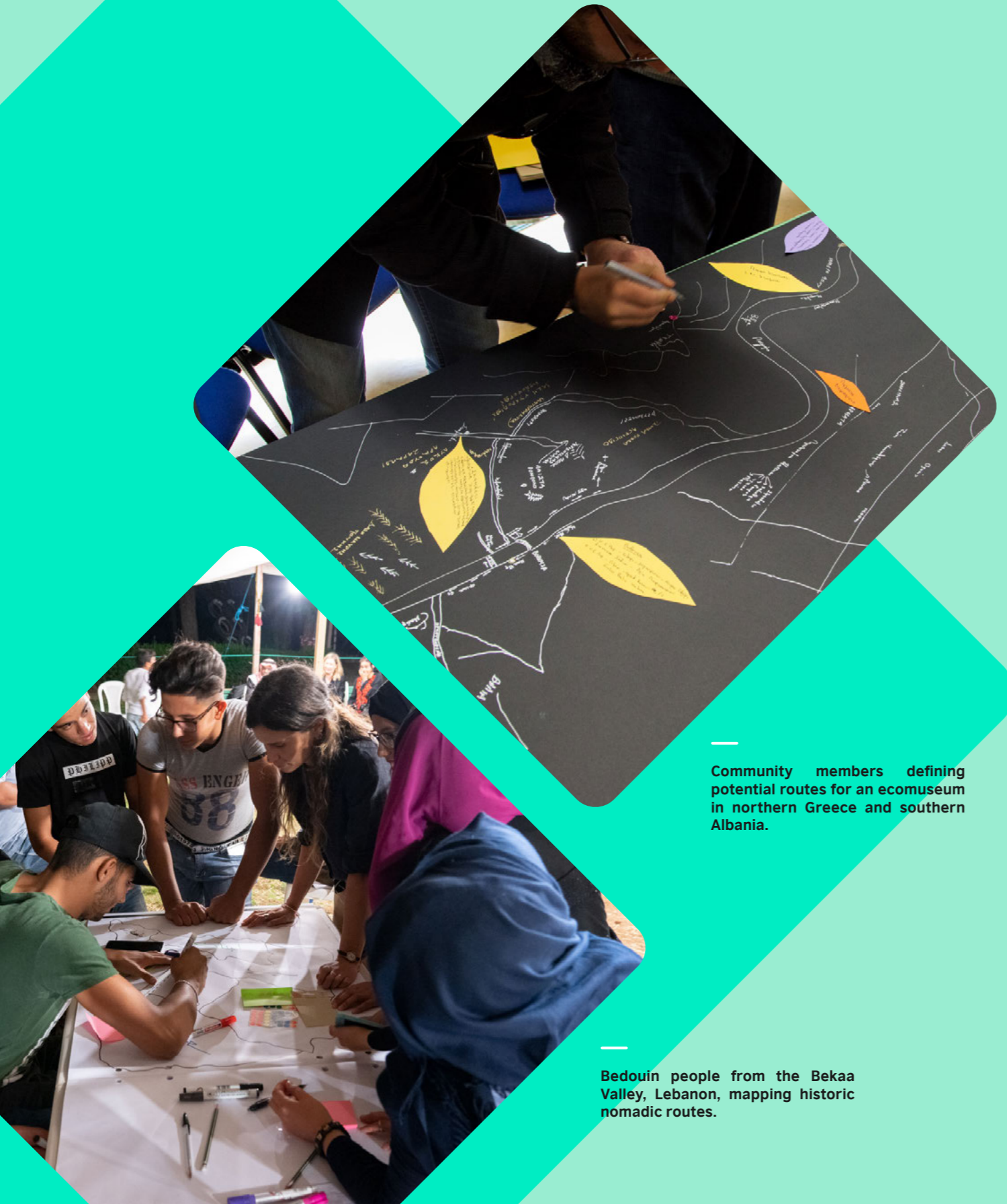
The British Council, UNESCO, EUNIC and others have highlighted the need for the consistent measurement of culture's contributions towards the SDGs and their targets.¹¹ There is a recognised need for the philosophy and rhetoric of culture and development to be underpinned by robust evidence for the impacts and for action to improve the capability to use this evidence in diverse circumstances. This requires not just the identification and demonstration of 'what works' but also analysis of 'how it works' and why.

It is not enough to share examples of successful heritage-led development and assume that these can simply be scaled up and replicated elsewhere. By definition any example which truly represents the principles of human development will, in no small part, be particular to its local context, including the local cultural context and local social, economic and political circumstances. However, it is possible to look at experience across multiple cases and identify general principles and approaches which can guide action elsewhere. The essays in this collection do exactly this; many of them look at different case studies and examples

and identify principles and approaches of wider relevance. Two areas are explored in particular depth: governance principles and people-centred approaches.

Participatory mapping allows communities to make visible their relationships with the land, to take decisions about their futures, and to communicate their needs and aspirations to others. This method is used around the world but must always be adapted to allow people to document what matters to them, in a way which makes sense to them.

Photographs © Stamos Abatis for the *Vjosa/Aoos Ecomuseum* project (<https://ecomuseum.eu>) and the *Cultural Corridors of Peace* programme (<https://culturalcorridors.net>), the latter funded by the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund in partnership with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.



Community members defining potential routes for an ecomuseum in northern Greece and southern Albania.

Bedouin people from the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, mapping historic nomadic routes.



Bedouin people at an event in Jordan mapping their knowledge and stories relating to the night sky – information which is both of cultural importance and of practical value in navigating the desert.

Governance

The theme of governance is explored by several of the authors, from various perspectives.

Ben Sandbrook argues that, rather than advocating for their own particular interests, cultural stakeholders should see themselves as part of the wider effort for sustainable development, reframing what they do as being about making ‘a social impact on purpose’. They should seek a seat at the development decision-making table with the aim of taking part in the collective production of strategies which seek to address particular challenges or opportunities. Leandro Valiati makes a similar point in his essay, calling for co-created strategies which bring together socio-economic development and culture.

Sandbrook identifies several hurdles which can stand in the way of this happening, amongst which are that many in the cultural sector ‘have a good understanding of the instrumental value of their sector, as well as its intrinsic value, but perhaps less understanding of how it could be harnessed on purpose beyond its primary sphere of activity’. He recommends that cultural organisations reflect upon their capabilities and identities, how they communicate, their connectivity and empathy with people in other sectors, and the utility and plausibility of their current approaches in this context. He also notes that ‘inclusive approaches to culture ... involve some shifting of power (eg decision-making power) from recognised authorities and experts to communities Sometimes this shift is welcomed by those in power, sometimes not ...’

The question of power is discussed at length by Samuel, George and George, who recognise that sustainable development requires the ‘socio-cultural and political empowerment’ of communities which, hitherto, have been excluded or marginalised. Echoing SDG16 and its aim of building ‘effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels’, they call for democratic, accountable and transparent governance of development, and for budget accountability.

In presenting case studies from Brazil and Germany, Pedro Ivo Franco explores participatory governance from the two different perspectives of community-led change and institution-led change. In the case of the Cambinda Estrela Cultural Center

in Brazil, the community has taken the lead, built local capacity to run the centre and care for maracatu heritage, and established partnerships with technical institutes, schools and universities to enable this. In the case of the Trafo programme in Germany, Kulturstiftung des Bundes (the Federal Cultural Foundation) aimed to support cultural organisations in four German regions to take on responsibility for cultural life in their areas, transform the local cultural offer and develop participatory practices and governance models.

Drawing on lessons from a range of different contexts, James Doeser proposes eight governance principles to guide efforts to embed cultural heritage in sustainable development. These are to:

1. Undertake work at the invitation of a local partner;
2. Promote cultural rights;
3. Develop goals and processes that are built from informed and deliberate participation;
4. Maintain an agnostic definition of cultural heritage;
5. Establish and maintain transparent lines of accountability, both individually and institutionally;
6. Ensure power and resources are held as locally as possible;
7. Collect, analyse and publish data that is relevant to the agreed goals;
8. Leave no one and no place behind.

Doeser notes that the adoption of these principles will mean that some practitioners and institutions will need to make radical changes to how they conduct their business, including by reorientating their narrative and advocacy functions away from justifying their own activities and impacts and towards responding to communities, their goals and modes of communication.

People-centred Approaches

In the realm of governance and across all aspects of sustainable development as a process, there is a need for people-centred approaches to be taken, for self-determined human development to be the outcome.

Anne Torreggiani and Sophia Woodley explore this topic in some depth in their essay. They argue that ‘the authentic and well-executed application of people-centred principles and process’ is required if everyone is to have the opportunity ‘to participate fully in deciding for themselves what their cultural heritage is, how it should be advanced and promoted, and to what ends and with what benefits’.

From their review of the status quo, Torreggiani and Woodley conclude that the underpinning concepts of people-centred approaches are well established, that these concepts have been rigorously interrogated and that they are recognised by practitioners across the cultural heritage and international development sectors. They note a high degree of consensus about the core principles and processes, but also conclude that ‘people-centred approaches’ is a loose phrase which is understood to encompass a range of practices and activism.

Torreggiani and Woodley plot different behaviours and philosophies on a simplified ‘people-centred scale’ with the three categories of ‘expert-led’, ‘consultative/participatory’ and ‘citizen-led’. On the latter, they say that ‘citizen-led’ people-centredness is ‘by its nature radical, as it challenges existing norms and power structures. It is ...

instigated from within a community who find means to self-organise and determine their own purpose and process’.

In summarising their assessment of the current extent of citizen-led practice, they say:

We came across few cultural heritage programmes which were purely citizen-led. As noted, an initiative or organisation may have an intention to become citizen-led but be starting from an expert-led mode with the intention of moving – often iteratively and supportively – towards a more participatory and/or citizen-led future.

If ‘citizen-led’ is the gold-standard of application, we have to accept that the role of institutions (however well-intentioned), organisations (however grassroots and connected), facilitators (however sensitive and politically aligned) is to ‘let go’, expertly, before that point – and/or to reimagine their role as one of supporting existing citizen movements.

[for best professional, people-centred practice you need] ... skills, principles, experience but most of all empathy. This suggests you cannot be taught people-centred approaches – but you can learn them. It is not surprising then that this is easier for individuals and harder for institutions. Any institution that genuinely aims to become people-centred needs first to become a learning organisation with all the attendant challenges.

The six recommendations which are presented above highlight areas which we believe deserve greater attention in order to advance cultural rights, community development and action on global environmental, social and humanitarian challenges. We have framed these recommendations broadly – rather than recommending changes to particular institutions, policies, processes or practices – because we believe that they need to be recognised and addressed across a wide range of geographical contexts and sectors. We hope that these recommendations and the essays which underpin them, prove to be a useful contribution to learning, discussion and action which realises more fully the value of cultural heritage for human development.

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