

# EVALUATION OF THE CULTURAL PROTECTION FUND PHASE 1 (2016-2020)

Ruins next to the main road in Kafr Aqab, OPT © RIWAQ



**The Cultural Protection Fund (CPF)**, is a £30m grant programme led by British Council in partnership with DCMS, with grants managed through a UK-based team. Between 2016 & 2020, the CPF awarded 51 grants across the 12 target countries in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) region, as highlighted below.



## Driver

Destruction of heritage in Syria & Iraq due to active conflict



## Rationale for the CPF

Safeguarding cultural heritage can contribute to generation of sustainable & long-term social stability & economic prosperity



## Gap in support

Limited other investment of similar scale with the same remit, objectives, & regional focus.

## PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

The main CPF outcomes are as follows:



- **Outcome 1: Cultural heritage protection** - Cultural heritage under threat is researched, documented, conserved &/or restored to safeguard against permanent loss.



- **Outcome 2: Capacity-building** - Local professionals have sufficient business or specialist skills to be able to manage & promote cultural assets which [will] benefit the local economy & society.



- **Outcome 3: Advocacy / education** - Local people are able to identify & value their cultural heritage & have a good understanding of what can be done to protect their cultural heritage & the role it plays in society & the economy

## EVALUATION OF THE CPF

ERS was commissioned by British Council to undertake an independent evaluation of Phase 1 of the CPF (2016-2020). The evaluation aimed to assess & interrogate the following themes against the CPF objectives.

- effectiveness
- efficiency (including value for money)
- impact
- sustainability

The results of this are summarised on the following pages. The evaluation comprised the following research stages.

**Rapid international literature review on heritage protection**

**E-survey of grantees**



**Synthesis review of CPF project evaluations**

**Telephone interviews with:**

- A sample of stakeholders internal & external to the CPF. (e.g. the Advisory Group, DCMS, BC staff in country)
- A sample of grantees
- A sample of unsuccessful applicants

**Workshop with CPF grant managers**

## OUTCOME 1: CULTURAL HERITAGE PROTECTION

277,644



Actions taken to safeguard artefacts

49



Tools developed e.g. database/ website

20



Management plans or strategies created

4,566



Materials produced (e.g. exhibitions, videos)

121,368



Records created

## OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

- A range of built heritage assets have been restored, some of which are now safer, more secure & being used by communities in a range of ways that they were not previously;
- Physical & digital outputs have increased ability to raise awareness of heritage & reach new audiences;
- Projects have contributed towards countering illicit trade of artefacts; and,
- Intangible cultural heritage has been recorded, in a number of cases prior to stories & traditions being lost as elders pass on.

*“Now the shrine is rebuilt, it was a historic moment & provided a sense of identity back to the city. Sufism is well established & very popular in that part of Yemen.*

*Overlooking the city again, the dome has provided a sense of normality, that things are back to normal.”*

*Grantee*

## ENABLING FACTORS

- **Partnerships & collaborations** have supported sustainability;
- **Translation of resources** enables accessible outputs & greater engagement;
- **Community engagement** has enabled continuation post-project, in turn enabling further recording of heritage.

## OUTCOME 2: CAPACITY BUILDING

15,139



People  
trained

Core to CPF, projects have placed great emphasis on training with an overarching aim of embedding sustainability from the start. In seeking to avoid 'parachuting-in' skills, CPF has sought to focus on in-country institutions, seeking to strengthen capacity & capability, with an emphasis on sharing knowledge & creating globally leading expertise in-country.

### OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

- Increased employability & employment-related outcomes, such as gaining jobs or promotion;
- Safeguarding livelihoods & providing continuity for specific sectors;
- Continued application & development of skills in the same or new roles;
- Greater awareness of career opportunities & progression pathways within the heritage sector;
- Individuals progressing on to further study, for example, master's programmes;
- Trainees organising to continue the work of the project &/or develop their own initiatives.
- Upskilling & employment of **under-represented groups** within particular heritage professions & institutions.

### ENABLING FACTORS

- **Recruiting diverse cohorts**, including beneficiaries from under-represented groups, can support greater knowledge of & access to heritage professions;
- **Forging relationships & networks** supports access to or generation of employment opportunities;
- **A proactive approach** to generating employment outcomes reportedly worked well.

## OUTCOME 3: ADVOCACY / EDUCATION

3,988



Events delivered

1,280



Volunteers engaged

>1 million

People engaged via media /events

£2.9 million



Income generated for local economy

## OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

- Grantees reported increased **understanding & awareness** of heritage amongst communities, particularly the **younger generation**.
- Grantees detailed communities coming to **value & take action** on behalf of their heritage.
- Projects reported engaging & influencing decision-makers & **affecting heritage policy and/or practice**.

*“The key legacy left from this project is that building the capacity of young people from within their own communities to become the gatherers, mediators and disseminators of their own heritage under threat.” –Grantee*

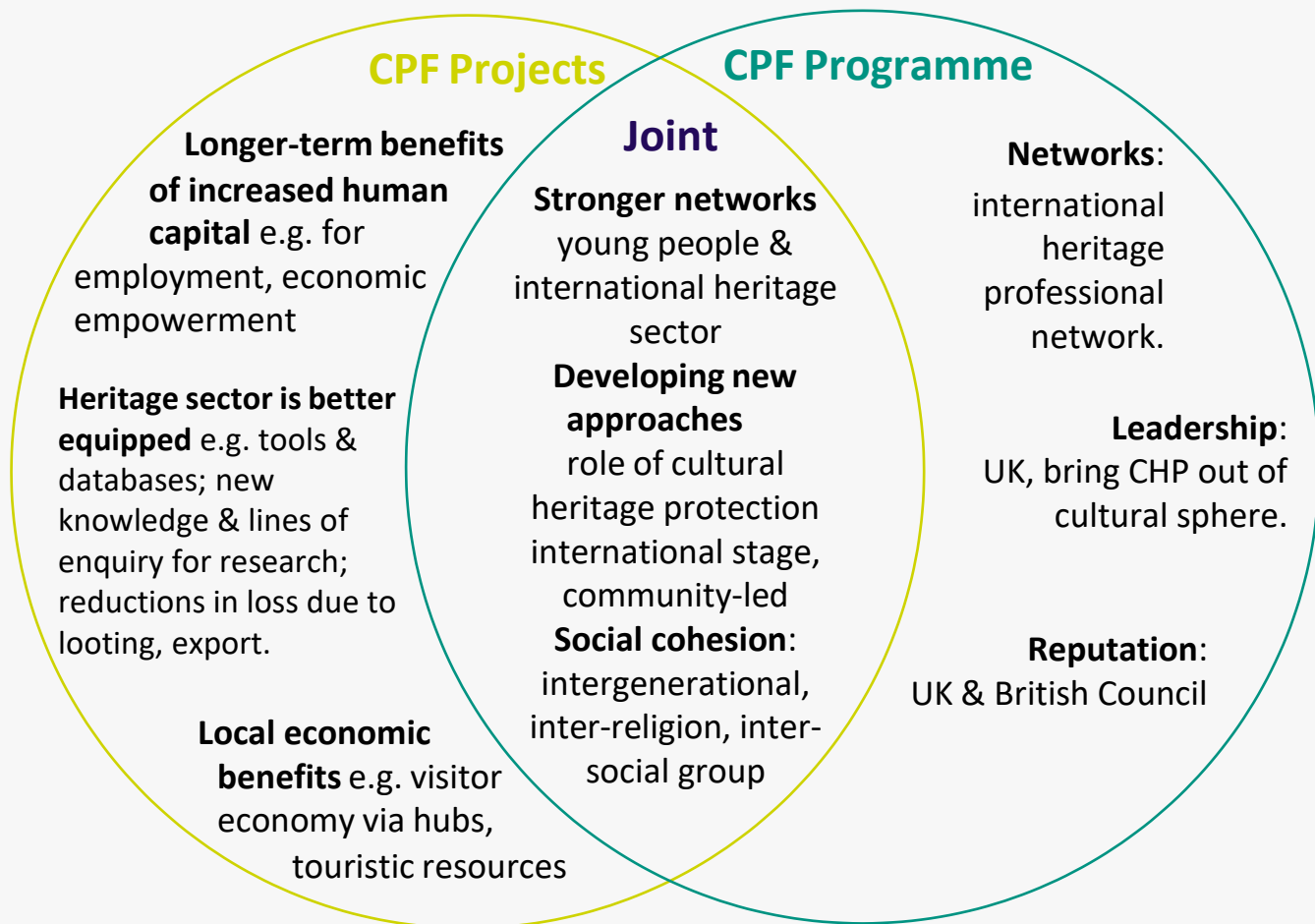
## ENABLING FACTORS

- A range of media activity & events** have supported awareness-raising & engagement, amongst beneficiary communities as well as audiences more widely.
- Face-to-face engagement:** project staff getting out in “the field” complemented by community-to-community engagement & transmission of heritage to access communities project staff (or resource) cannot reach;
- Involvement of younger generations** in safeguarding for the future, supported by intergenerational & peer-to-peer activity;
- A diverse pool of participants** from across different societies, & providing opportunities to interact as part of project activities, &/or around shared heritage;
- Culturally specific solutions:** e.g. developing translated versions of resources in local languages, & ensuring resources & examples are centred on local features.

**IMPACT**

The CPF has had wider-impacts beyond those stated within the 3 core CPF objectives. At a Programme level these tend to be strategic in nature, whereas at the project level they tend to be about securing outcomes into the longer-term. The diagram below illustrates these two levels of wider impact & how they overlap.

**Type of impact**



The **sustainability** of benefits achieved through the CPF was considered dependent on the following factors :

- Continuation of funding, be that via the British Council or another funder
- The support of existing institutions to sustain activities, resources & outcomes
- The engagement of young people to continue enthusiasm for cultural heritage protection
- Training & capacity building, providing skills for when funding has finished.
- The development of a legacy of digital outputs e.g. databases.

## CONCLUSIONS

### EFFECTIVENESS & VALUE FOR MONEY (VfM)

- The programme is largely considered to have operated effectively within challenging contexts, having delivered an **impressive array & volume of outputs**.
- **Outcome 1 appears to be a key stepping stone** towards Outcomes 2 and 3, delivering opportunities for **social & community benefits**. There are strong examples of creating enthusiasm & interest from local people, & some projects engaging specific under-represented groups.
- Overall, BC is praised for **efficient management**. A light-touch approach to VfM complements the **bottom-up, trust-based ethos**. The programme is in the early stages of cost benefit analysis; but this study has provided an opportunity to take stock.

### IMPACT & SUSTAINABILITY

- Wider impacts include **community empowerment and leadership and networking benefits** to grantees. Further, there are a range of objectives relating to **soft power and economic impacts** which are less well-defined by the Fund.
- Sustainability was integrated as part of the **programme design**, i.e., a focus on capacity-building. Various actions taken & achievements of projects have **supported this ethos**.
- CPF has also helped project organisations generate a **good reputation** & increased profile, lending credibility when seeking funding for further / similar initiatives.
- Continuation of heritage protection work was ultimately heavily linked to projects' ability to gain **follow-on funding**. Embedding within existing institutions supported sustainability in a number of cases.

The evaluation has demonstrated that there is a 'dire need' for heritage protection within the MENA region. While originally designed to protect heritage at risk of conflict, the Fund has shown that there is wider value to be gained through nurturing & protecting heritage, regardless of the threat. Overall, there is strong support for continuation of the Fund & rationale for using cultural heritage projects to contribute towards sustainable & long-term social stability & economic prosperity & to improve the reputation of the UK overseas.