



Concept Note

Climate.Culture.Peace is a knowledge building initiative, aimed at exploring the interconnections between culture, climate change, peace and disaster resilience. It includes a virtual conference, to be held in **January 2022**, with a focus on heritage places and institutions, which are threatened by weather related disasters and/or conflicts driven by environmental stresses. It will bring together diverse partners, knowledge holders, policy advisors, practitioners, community and youth leaders.

This initiative is generously supported by the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and seeks the participation from all CPF target countries¹.

➤ Our purpose is to build a globally applicable foundation for engaging culture and heritage in climate action, and to advance the goal of **Net Zero** emissions.

Why this conference?

An existential threat to life on Earth, the climate crisis is widespread and intensifying. A 2021 **UN report**² warns that time is running out as our combined efforts to reduce emissions and limit global warming are falling short of the goals and targets set through the **Paris Agreement**³. The gap between aspirations and actions is widening, which if unchecked, could result in a global temperature rise of **2.7 °C** by the end of this century.

To limit the global warming to **1.5 °C** and to cut emissions drastically, a multi-sector and coordinated effort is required ... and culture has a role to play.

Climate change is the defining crisis of our time and it is happening even more quickly than we feared.

- October 2021, United Nations

What would a hotter world look like?

Scientists project that climate change impacts could make large parts of our planet unliveable – wet areas are likely to become wetter and those that are dry would become hotter and drier. Unprecedented rise in sea levels would threaten most coastal settlements, some more than the others. Ancient cities like Alexandria and Venice could disappear forever, while deserts would expand, resulting in the destruction of habitats, widespread food insecurity and extreme scarcity of freshwater resources. Combined together, such environmental stresses could irrevocably deplete the biodiversity of our planet, leading to the extinction of many plant and animal species.

¹ The British Council's Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) target countries are: Afghanistan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Occupied Palestinian territory, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda and Yemen.

² UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/08/1097362>

³ The Paris Agreement, 2015: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

Climate change - a disaster risk driver

We do not have to wait long into the future to experience some of the worst impacts of human-induced global warming. Today, the world is **1.1 °C warmer** than it was 160 years ago. This seemingly small increase is already altering weather patterns, as well as increasing the intensity and frequency of weather-related hazards.

There has been a significant rise in heatwaves, droughts, wildfires, floods and cyclones, indicating our increasing vulnerability and exposure to disaster risk. Climate and water hazards account for **50%**⁴ of all disasters recorded in the past 50 years, causing reversal of development gains in the affected countries.

*In 2020 there were **26% more storms, 23% more floods and 18% more flood deaths.***

- May 2021, EMDAT

Climate change - a conflict threat multiplier

*From illegal forestry in post conflict **Colombia** to the scenes of wanton agricultural destruction in **Iraq**, the conflict induced governance gaps leave not only civilians but the environment directly in harm's way.*

-November 2021, Environmental emergencies centre

14 out of **25 countries** that are most vulnerable to climate change, are also suffering from long drawn-out conflicts. These include Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Somalia and Yemen.

Connections between conflicts and climate change are complex and not yet clearly defined. But armed conflicts can cause significant environmental degradation. Explosives used in warfare can contaminate soil and water sources, as well as release pollutants into the air. Large-scale destruction of forests and infrastructure, as witnessed in recent conflicts, contributes to the release of greenhouse gases.

Environmental degradation erodes community resilience and ability to adapt to climate change. This ability is further eroded in the face of insecurity and violence. Direct examples are the humanitarian crises caused by droughts, storms, and floods in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Haiti and Somalia⁵.

Moreover, environmental stresses caused by climate change, contribute to food insecurity, displacement and unemployment, thereby feeding into the root causes of an existing conflict or giving rise to new tensions.

➤ Climate variability is one of the key contributing factors in conflicts over the management and control of natural resources and ecosystems.

⁴ The Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate and Water Extremes: https://library.wmo.int/index.php?lvl=notice_display&id=21930#.YS9CMNMzZBx

⁵ Overlapping Vulnerabilities -The impacts of climate change on humanitarian needs: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/rk_overlapping-vulnerabilities_digital_singles.pdf

Displaced lives, livelihoods and cultures

Climate change has already displaced millions. Scarcity of natural resources such as drinking water, combined with struggles to grow crops or rear livestock in hot and dry conditions, increase tensions that eventually lead to forced migrations to other areas. Too often, those who are displaced find shelter in climate change “hotspots”⁶, where they are exposed to the risk of secondary displacements.

Such forced migrations are deeply traumatic, as they break the ties that people have with their land and heritage, which are central to their identity. And their cultures in turn lose them.

At the end of 2020, a record 55 million people had been forced to move within their countries due to extreme weather events and conflicts.

- May 2021, Global Report on Internal Displacement

Among science, solidarity and solutions— where do we place culture?

Ahead of COP 26, the UN Climate Action report called for solidarity, collective climate action and funding for nature based clean energy solutions that are backed by science and technology⁷. The deadline given is short – by 2050 we must decarbonise and reach the goal of Net Zero emissions. Net zero refers to a state in which the greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere are balanced by removal out of the atmosphere⁸.

➤ The challenge of limiting global warming to 1.5 °C, is not purely technical. It is a moral and cultural imperative.

The most crucial aspect of a successful global effort to achieve the Net Zero emissions goal would be to break the vicious cycle of social inequality. It involves enhancing the resilience of those who are most vulnerable to climate change impacts, but cannot be held responsible for causing global warming. Therefore, the transformation to Net Zero must be inclusive.

The poor and the marginalised are being hit the hardest by climate change impacts. All communities are connected to their environments. But artisans, crafts persons and indigenous communities who retain strong and immediate connections with their habitats and rely on natural resources and ecosystems for their subsistence and livelihoods feel climate effects first. Their extreme vulnerability to climate change induced stresses makes their post-disaster recovery harder.

Africa's 54 countries have contributed almost nothing to climate change. Today, they account for about 2-3% of global carbon emissions and 1% of cumulative emissions.

- August 2021, Financial Times

➤ Climate change must be seen as a complex problem that has intertwined social, cultural, environmental, and economic underpinnings.

⁶ Climate 'hotspots': <https://theconversation.com/climate-change-hotspots-why-they-matter-and-why-we-should-invest-in-them-68770>

⁷ UN Climate Action:

https://www.un.org/climatechange?gclid=Cj0KCQjww4OMBhCUARIsAILndv7apUCtysirvut0ALb0pv1xrfRJo79fhdsRovPsXknpsVpaPhC58QkaAq2EEALw_wcB

⁸ Net Zero: <https://netzeroclimate.org/what-is-net-zero/>

Culture, as presented here, is the full range of human experiences: from the ones lived through knowledge and practices of indigenous and local communities, to tangible remains of earlier societies, who also faced environmental shocks along with historical trajectories that have created the places and climatic situations within which we live now. Cultural knowledge supplements the existing scientific data and is the missing link in effective management of climate change. Examples such as the traditional storm shelters in Vanuatu and the sustainable resource use practices of the forest dwellers living in India and Brazil, emphasise its significance.

Culture fuels creativity and connection. It binds people to a place and to each other. In certain places, it may also be a source of conflict and contention. Therefore, in many places, it will not be possible to build peaceful solutions for mitigating and adapting to climate change, without the strong and clear engagement of culture.

The climate-culture nexus has been closely examined in the draft policy document – [Climate Action for World Heritage](#)⁹, released in 2021 by UNESCO – the UN organization with a mandate for promoting both science and culture. The document highlights that World Heritage Sites include some of the most resilient ecosystems, sustained through time because of community-held knowledge and management practices, developed through human-earth interactions. Such knowledge and practices are therefore a great resource for developing context-specific mitigation and adaptation strategies.

From water harvesting and renewal of forests, to passive climate control, cultural knowledge is being used in different sectors. However, such efforts are scattered and are often lost in sector specific silos.

The climate emergency also threatens humanity in its entirety and all human cultures and cannot be comprehended purely in sectoral terms. The response therefore needs to manifest both globally and locally, displaying both universality, in the form of a concerted global response, but also diversity, in terms of addressing specific impacts, actors and opportunities.

- July 2019, United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)



The conference and its knowledge portal will break sectorial boundaries to recognise the aspects of culture and heritage that are being used or could be used to mitigate and adapt climate impacts in different fields.

Scope of the event

Climate.Culture.Peace will be a **5-day international virtual conference**, bringing **6 sectors** together, conceived as a follow-up to 26th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26), held in Glasgow in November 2021.

The *Climate.Culture.Peace* conference will be centred around engaging culture in sustainable and resilient human responses to climate change, while safeguarding heritage itself.

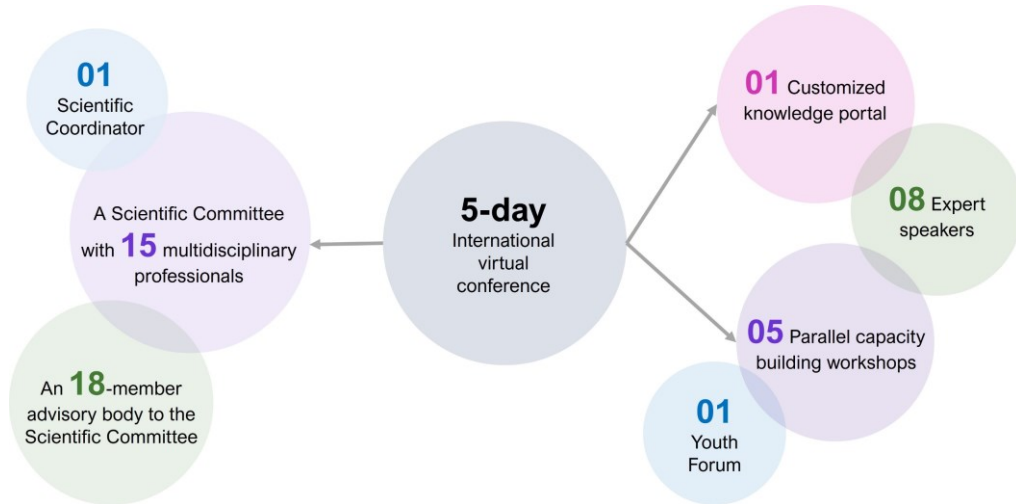
Five parallel workshops will be conducted on topics ranging from first aid to cultural heritage, to community engagement for climate resilience and peacebuilding.

A **youth forum** will be organised to engage young people from CPF target countries, to develop heritage-based climate action and build awareness through existing volunteer networks.

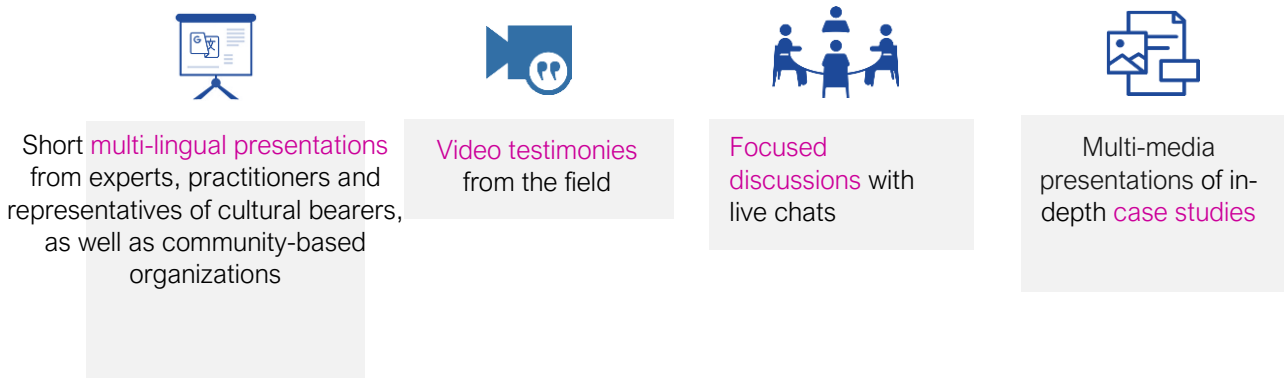
⁹ Climate Action for World Heritage: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/climatechange/>

A **dedicated web portal** will serve as a platform for sharing knowledge and resources, while building collaboration during and after the conference. Conference proceedings, including key recommendations and multi-media case studies, will be published on the web portal.

In order to achieve the expected outcomes, the conference will appoint a **multidisciplinary Scientific Committee** consisting of renowned professionals, academics, policy advisors and youth leaders.



The five days of *Climate.Culture.Peace* will connect people from all around the world, engaging them in interactive sessions, that foresee:



The conference, and its associated knowledge portal, will address the following **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**¹⁰ and their specific targets:

- [SDG 4](#) – Quality Education
- [SDG 11](#) – Sustainable Cities and Communities
- [SDG 12](#) – Responsible Consumption and Production.
- [SDG 13](#) – Climate Action
- [SDG 16](#) – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- [SDG 17](#) – Revitalize Global Partnerships



¹⁰ United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

This project builds on ten years of collaborative training, research and in-field applications of ICCROM's First Aid and Resilience for Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis (FAR) programme. Supported by the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), it will gather professionals from relevant sectors, such as academics, policy makers, youth leaders, educators, cultural bearers, heritage custodians and practitioners, scientists, and community leaders.

Emphasis will be on the Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) target countries¹¹ and other vulnerable countries in the Middle East, Africa, South and Central America, the Caribbean region and Asia Pacific.

Conference themes

The following four themes will be used to organize the conference programme and materials. These themes will be further developed by the Scientific Committee of the Conference, drawn from partners and the FAR alumni networks.



Theme 1 | Culture – the missing link

Culture shapes our perceptions and response to climate change. Understanding diverse links between culture, environment, peace and resilience would be key to future action. The full nature and scope of these connections and how they interact are not yet well understood. These connections include, but are not limited to:

- Human history of climate change itself.
- The notion of cultural heritage – who defines it? Who owns it and who cares for its continuity?
- Culture and its role in building sustainable peace.
- Resilience, as understood through past examples, stresses and changes experienced in human societies.
- Cultural diversity and practices and knowledge that sustain biodiversity.
- Culture and its role in place making and sustainable development.



Theme 2 | Climate change as a risk driver for culture and people

Climate change has become one of the primary global threats to the tangible and intangible forms of culture. Floods, fires and droughts threaten not only material and natural heritage, but also pose a great risk to intangible heritage, making vital resources in form of practices, sacred sites, plant and animal species, inaccessible or scarce.

Identification of the range of climate change related risks to heritage and their likely impacts is still in its infancy. Areas in need of knowledge exchange and research include:

- Understanding the risk of climate change related extreme hazard events to heritage, such as floods, fires, storms and landslides.
- Slow-onset hazard events such as drought, desertification, ecosystem shifts, sea level rise and their risks to heritage.
- Cascading effects of direct and indirect impacts of climate change on tangible and intangible heritage.
- Methods and tools for assessing climate change related risks to tangible and intangible heritage.
- Strategies for mitigating climate change induced risks to heritage.
- Climate change as a threat multiplier for culture in conflict.

¹¹ The British Council's Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) target countries are: Afghanistan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Occupied Palestinian territory, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda and Yemen.



Theme 3 | Culture based mitigation, adaptation and renewal

Culture and cultural heritage hold knowledge and practices that offer pathways for adaptation and mitigation, as well as connection and communication.

Areas in which further connections and exploration are needed include:

- Indigenous peoples and local knowledge of environments and ecosystems and corresponding management systems.
- Heritage places and institutions as holders of knowledge for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Heritage as a source of psycho-social support and coping mechanisms.
- Social structures that enable reciprocity and avenues for conflict resolution.
- Storytelling and intergenerational connections.
- Traditional and vernacular architecture that buffer local environmental extremes.
- Carbon held in existing buildings and adaptive reuse.



Theme 4 | State of knowledge and action

To date, culture and cultural heritage are not well represented in global or regional climate change science, policy, or strategies. Areas in which attention to both barriers and potential action are needed include:

- State of representation in climate knowledge assessments (ex. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services).
- Integrating culture and cultural heritage into international, national and local disaster risk reduction.
- Culture in sustainable development – policy, strategy and programmes.
- Status of international and civil society voices for culture and heritage in relation to climate.
- Nature of connections between local, regional, national climate planning and policy.
- Equity and capacity building for culture-based climate action and heritage safeguard

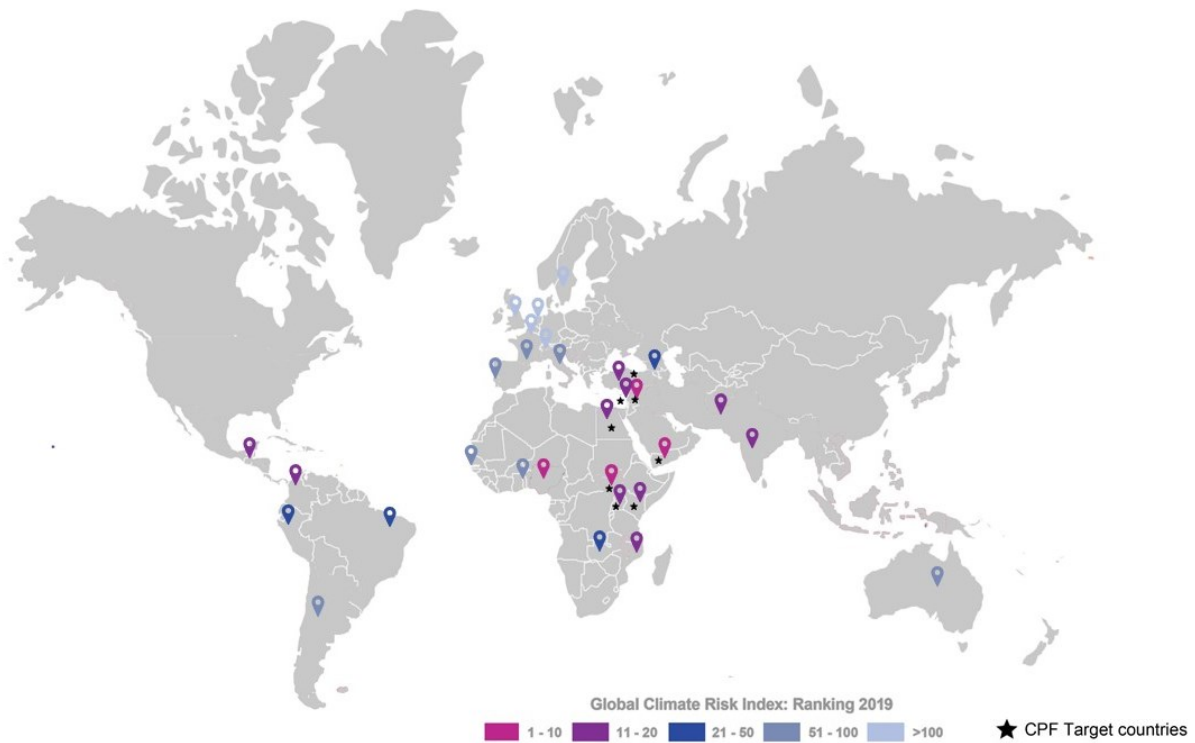
Project partners and organization

Distribution of partners around the world

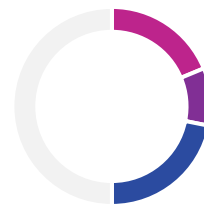
Institutions and organizations engaged to date have been identified through their interest and ongoing work with heritage protection during conflicts and disasters. Outreach was directed to countries experiencing strong impacts of climate change and/or with known contributions to make to climate resilience, particularly CPF target countries. Additional partners will be added as new connections are made.

By bringing together people across sectors and geographical boundaries, the conference will help to increase awareness of the ways in which cultural knowledge and practices can contribute to sustainable development, as well as develop context-sensitive recommendations for effecting change on the ground.

The map below shows the distribution of our **55 partners** across **33 countries**.



Institutions from over **40%** of the **CPF target countries** have joined the consortium



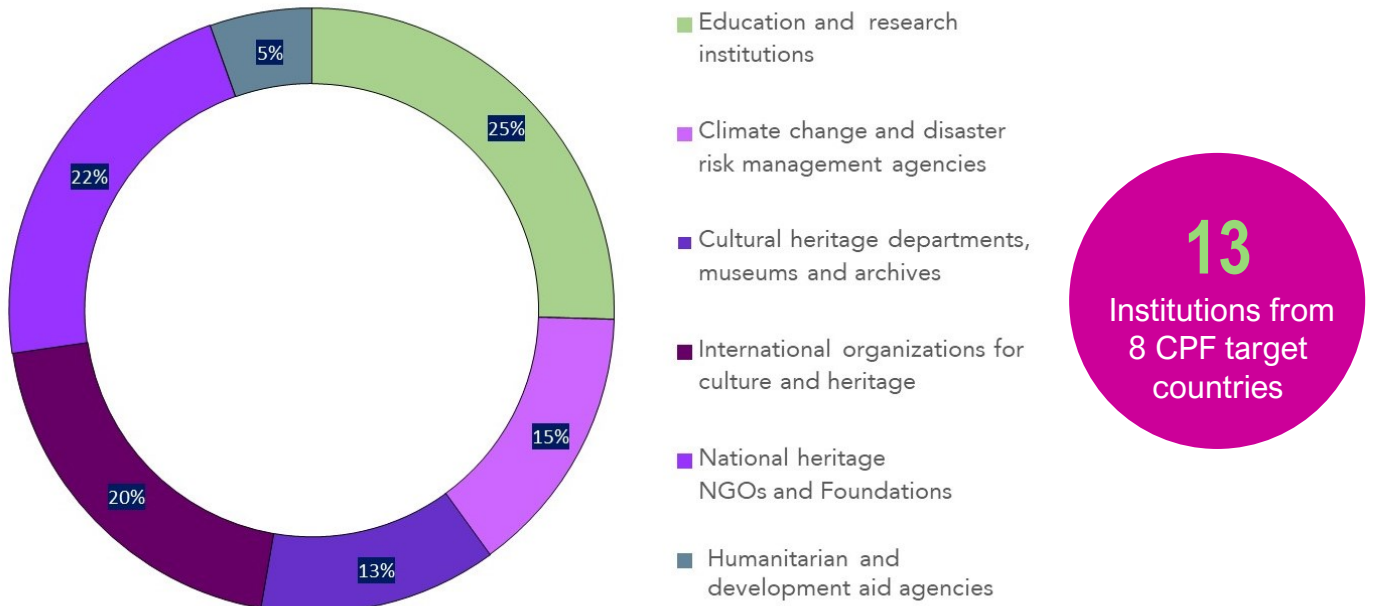
Over **50%** of the represented countries are at a **medium to high risk** and severely impacted by climate change

Description of partners

The Climate.Culture.Peace initiative is endorsed by **55 partners** from **33 countries**. Currently **13 institutions** in this consortium represent 8 of the 18 of the Culture Protection Fund (CPF) target countries, which will help implement the conference and its follow-up activities. At present, efforts are underway to seek participation from other CPF target countries. More details on partner institutions and organizations will be shared on the Climate.Culture.Peace website.

An interdisciplinary exchange for engaging culture in climate action will be facilitated by partner institutions representing education and research, climate sciences, peace and conflict studies, cultural heritage, disaster risk reduction, architecture and engineering, urban planning, as well as humanitarian and development aid.

The figure below shows the type of institutions that the consortium partners represent.



- Over 14 Universities and research institutions, represented by the Departments of Civil Engineering, Architecture, History, Applied Sciences, Geophysics and Sustainable Heritage from 12 countries;
- 08 Climate change and disaster risk management agencies - which include 02 youth networks, working to develop policies and actions towards a more resilient future by effective management of disaster risk, climate change mitigation and facilitating emergency relief, as well as providing response during and after disasters.
- 07 Cultural heritage departments, museums and archives of various scales, representing different cultures and contexts, showcasing diverse cultural records;
- 11 International organizations for culture and heritage, committed to safeguarding natural and cultural heritage, building networks and developing capacities.
 - International - IIC, CRAterre, 05 ICOMOS National Committees, 02 ICOM National Committees and 02 UNESCO regional offices;
- 12 National heritage NGOs and foundations
 - National/Local - 12 institutions, such as government sectors, public and private foundations, from 08 countries working to protect, preserve and recover cultural heritage and associated communities affected by climate-induced disasters and conflicts;
- 03 Humanitarian and development aid agencies - which include 02 youth networks - providing assistance to people affected by disasters and conflicts, working to improve the social-economic conditions of vulnerable communities and empowering them to reduce disaster risk;

The figure below shows different disciplines that the consortium partners represent.



At the end of the project, partners will have a shared agenda, web-based platform, and new collaborative connections for cultural heritage safeguard, climate action, disaster risk reduction and peacebuilding.

List of the existing consortium partners

- AE&CC - ENSAG - Univ. Grenoble Alpes - France
- Ahmadu Bello University – Nigeria
- Archi.Media Trust - Italy
- Australia ICOMOS - Australia
- Avans University of Applied Sciences - Netherlands
- Casa K'ojom Cultural Rescue Center - Guatemala
- CRATerre – France
- CRRP (Confederation of Risk Reduction Professionals) - India
- Department of Architecture, Hazara University- Pakistan
- Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering of the University of Florence - Italy
- Department of Civil Engineering (DEC) of the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto - Portugal
- Department of History, Representation and Restoration of Architecture – Sapienza University of Rome - Italy
- Directorate General Antiquities and Archaeology - Government of Sindh – Pakistan
- Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa (EAMENA) project, School of Archaeology, the University of Oxford - United Kingdom
- Faculty of Architecture, Omdurman Islamic University - South Sudan
- General Organization for Preservation of Historic Cities (GOPHCY) - Yemen
- Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (GIDM) - India
- Historical Museum of Sarmiento - Argentina
- ICOM-Mozambique
- ICOM Zambia
- ICOMOS Brazil - Climate Change And Heritage Focal Point
- ICOMOS-ICORP Turkey
- ICOMOS Italy
- ICOMOS Perú
- Institute of Materials and Constructions (IMC) and the Institute of Earth Sciences (IST) of the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland
- IEPHA (Instituto Estadual do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico de Minas Gerais) - Brazil
- International Institute for Conservation (IIC - United Kingdom
- LEAD India

- Loughborough University - United Kingdom
- Ministry of Culture Strengthening Museums Program - Colombia

- Moto Moto Museum - Zambia
- Musée Régional du Centre/Sokodé - Togo
- National Archives of Malawi - Malawi
- National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) – Nigeria
- National Centre for Arts and Culture - Gambia
- National Research Institute of Astronomy and Geophysics (NRIAG) - Egypt
- National Museum of Uganda - Uganda
- Sursock Museum - Lebanon
- State Emergency Management Agency - Nigeria
- Sindh community Foundation - Pakistan
- Swedish National Heritage Board - Sweden
- The Egyptian Heritage Rescue Foundation (EHRF) - Egypt
- Turathuna Syria (NGO based in Syria) - Syria
- The Foundation for Peace and Cultural Heritage Development - Nigeria
- The Georgia Red Cross Society - Georgia
- U-INSPIRE Alliance - India
- UNICEF Syria - Syria
- UNESCO Regional Office of Eastern Africa - Kneya
- UNESCO Club South Sudan – South Sudan
- UNESCO Chair on Prevention and sustainable management of geo-hydrological hazards of the University of Florence - Italy
- UNDRR Europe & Central Asia - Belgium
- Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG) / Graduate Program on Built Environment and Sustainable Heritage - Brazil
- University of Lincoln - United Kingdom
- YKRB Foundation - Yemen
- YUYAI-UNI, Grupo De Investigación Sobre Patrimonio de La Universidad Nacional De Ingeniería -Peru