

# Heritage Hubs Connect



**27-31 March 2023 - Mombasa, KENYA**

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# Background

The African continent is home to a great diversity of tangible and intangible heritage that shape the life of its people. One peculiar aspect of Africa's rich heritage is that its tangible and intangible expressions are often deeply intertwined and cannot be dissociated. Moreover, there is a strong interconnection between intangible practices and the environment. African culture and heritage are powerful tools of social cohesion and dialogue between communities and nations as well as a driver for sustainable development. The crucial importance of heritage and its high

potential to contribute to social, economic and environmental goals have been acknowledged in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015 by all United Nations Member States. This critical Agenda aims for an economic and societal transformation, integrating all three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. It was the very first time that several key references to natural resource management and cultural heritage were included in a sustainable development global framework.

African cultural heritage constitutes one of the main focuses of ICCROM's Strategic Directions and Objectives 2018-2025. In fact, its first Direction 2018 -2025 is "Focusing on world concern for cultural heritage" whose objective 2 specifically refers to Africa: "Support Africa's Cultural Heritage: Develop training, capacity building and partnerships in keeping with strengthening Africa's conservation efforts". ICCROM's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals is embedded in its projects and activities. For instance, ICCROM aligns its work with, amongst others, SDG 11 "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" and in particular Target 11.4 "calls for strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage".



ICCROM contributes to achieving this SDG through all its programmes. ICCROM's advisory role in the World Heritage Committee, its work

on linking cultural and natural heritage, and its focus on disaster risk management are oriented towards this SDG.





In line with objective 2 of its first strategic direction, ICCROM has developed the flagship Programme Youth.Heritage.Africa (YHA). It was born from the belief that heritage is a source of social and economic opportunity for the African Youth. In the effort to make this vision possible, YHA seeks to empower young heritage leaders and connect them through innovative strategies and initiatives aimed at making their heritage a source of economic and social opportunity for them.

There are strong reasons to focus on youth. Africa has the world's youngest and fastest-growing population; with 40%1 of its population between the ages of 14 and 35 years . By 2030 this number is estimated to increas to 42% or 750 million young people on the continent. In a list compiled by the UN of the 20 youngest populations in the world, 19 were in Africa.The figure 1 shows the top 10 youngest populations. According to the African Development Bank ( AfDB) , Africa's youth population is rapidly

growing and from 420 millions of people aged between 15-35 in 2015, the Africa's youth population is expected to double to over 830 million by 2050.

According to the World Bank, young people (between 15 and 24 years of age) are the most affected by unemployment, constituting 60% of all unemployed Africans. Yet, they are critical agents of change and sustainability who should be involved in the process.



Source: United Nations

ICCROM has a unique experience in the African context with both professionals and institutions, built through the implementation of two long-term programmes (PREMA – Prevention in the museums of Africa- 1990-2000, and AFRICA 2009, for improved management of immovable heritage). Those programmes created a professional network among which many members now hold leadership positions in African cultural institutions. Engaging in this new Africa Programme with partners is a timely and exciting challenge for ICCROM, one that will bring new perspectives for heritage conservation throughout the world.

**Youth. Africa. Heritage** is a heritage programme that aims at creating economic value, investing in social and human capital, fostering creativity within the heritage sector, and strengthening cultural identity, all in accordance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063.



## THE GOALS ARE TO:

1

- ❖ build human capital for the future of Africa and the conservation and management of its heritage

2

- ❖ promote heritage as an economic asset to address poverty and unemployment among young people in Africa

3

- ❖ mainstream sustainable entrepreneurship opportunities within the heritage sector

4

- ❖ engage and strengthen Africa's heritage institutions to enable the sustainable and innovative use of heritage for education, development, peace and security

These goals are also in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063 The Youth. Heritage.Africa Programme is broken down into 4 major components:

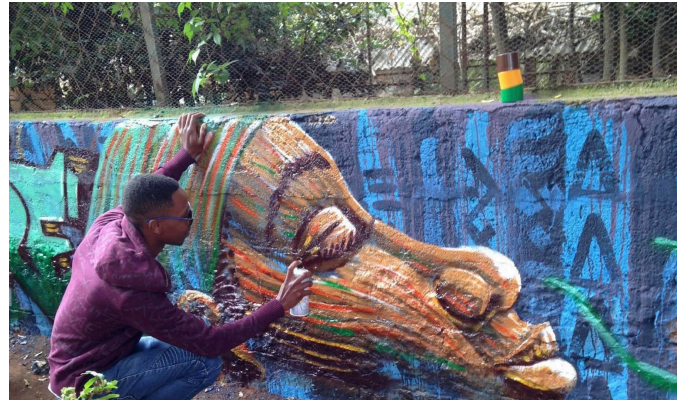
## YOUTH AND MUSEUMS

The Youth and museums component aims to make the museum sector in Africa more vibrant and open to youth., Together with Ecole du Patrimoine Africain we designed projects and activities which include capacity-building, professional placement, curating and exhibition management.

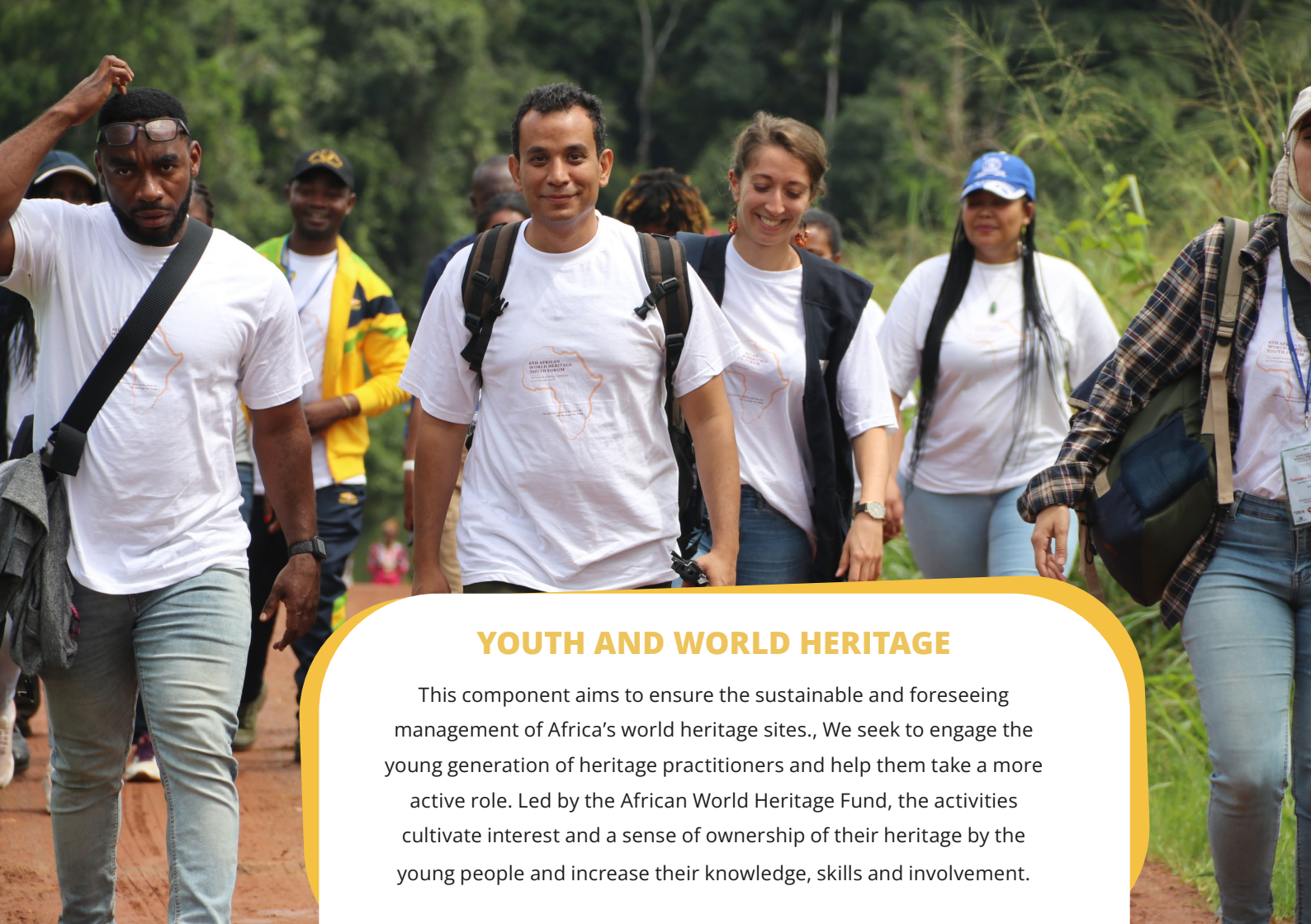


## INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE PROJECTS

Cultural heritage, its conservation and promotion, can be stimulated by vibrant industries such as design, fashion and digital media production and can benefit from the rapidly developing digital technologies. The goal is to inspire young Africans to rethink their heritage through different forms of creative expression to improve its attractiveness







## YOUTH AND WORLD HERITAGE

This component aims to ensure the sustainable and foreseeing management of Africa's world heritage sites., We seek to engage the young generation of heritage practitioners and help them take a more active role. Led by the African World Heritage Fund, the activities cultivate interest and a sense of ownership of their heritage by the young people and increase their knowledge, skills and involvement.



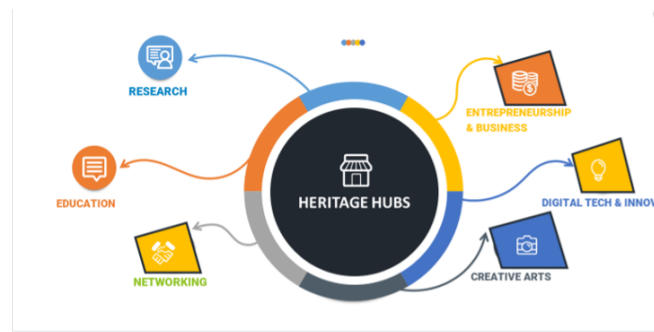
## HERITAGE HUBS

One of the core components of the Youth.Heritage.Africa programme is the development of Heritage Hubs: new types of co-creative and interactive spaces to connect the younger generation and youth organizations with strategies and initiatives that will make Africa's heritage an effective source of economic and social opportunity for their benefit.

Heritage Hubs are knowledge-based innovation centers that foster youth engagement, entrepreneurship, and business development skills through creative arts and partnership within Africa's heritage protection and promotion cycle.

ICCROM has partnered with institutions from Kenya, Rwanda, and South Africa to create and develop Heritage Hubs, each with a specific focus. Future Heritage Hubs are currently being developed in with Benin, Egypt and Zimbabwe.

So far, Rwanda has set the tone by launching its first event in November 2022 – The “Incubation Laboratory” which initiated a long-term project to support forty Rwandan youth's ventures into digital entrepreneurship based on promoting cultural heritage and developing innovative products. These young people are taking part in training on emerging digital technologies, successful business practices, and the basics of Rwandan cultural heritage and cultural heritage management. The heritage-related courses include excursions to heritage sites to gain on-the-ground knowledge. These skills and experiences will benefit the participants economically and their local cultural heritage. The official launch of the hub took place in January 2023. Some other official launches of Heritage Hubs are expected before the end of 2023.





## Heritage Hubs Connect

**F**rom 27 to 31 March 2023, ICCROM will organize the Heritage Hubs Connect Forum at Fort Jesus in Mombasa, Kenya. This event will gather participants from African and European Universities, heritage institutions, cultural and tech hubs to share experiences and opportunities

and to define some avenues for collaboration for a sustainable growth of ICCROM Heritage hubs. Most especially, the event will help to update the strategic master plan 2022-2026 of the Youth.Heritage.Africa programme with a focus on the current and new Heritage Hubs. The [Youth.Heritage.Africa](#) Programme is an ICCROM long-

term regional and flagship programme and aims to create economic value, invest in social and human capital, and foster innovation and creativity within the heritage sector, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063.

The objectives of the Heritage Hubs Connect Forum are to:

- Introduce the Heritage Hubs to all partners by providing updates on plans and activities carried out to date;
- Create a productive platform of exchange between different creative, tech, heritage hubs and research laboratories;
- Define avenues for collaboration between African and European heritage hubs in relation to skills development, job creation, regeneration, and practice-led research within the African heritage sector;
- Develop a strategic master plan 2023-2027 taking into account the specific activities and projects that drive productivity, collaboration and sustainability.
- Establish a committee to develop and coordinate the network of African heritage hubs.







The expected results are:

- 1- The implementation status of Heritage Hubs is known by stakeholders and partners;
- 2- Fact sheets about the uniqueness of each heritage hub are fine-tuned;
- 3- A clear roadmap for the creation, implementation and launch of heritage hubs is developed and agreed upon;
- 4- The strategic master plan 2022-2026 of the Youth.Heritage.Africa, especially the Heritage Hubs component is updated
- 5- Y.H.A Partners and European institutions have discussed avenues of collaboration and a proposed action plan



## Heritage Hubs Connect Programme

The programme structure gives an opportunity for participants to critically engage with different innovative aspects of heritage conservation and promotion involving the youth. It includes topics such as:

- ❖ **Innovative training activities**
- ❖ **Field-school**
- ❖ **Creative arts**
- ❖ **Practice-led research**
- ❖ **Digital technologies**
- ❖ **Collaboration – Knowledge exchange**
- ❖ **Craft and Entrepreneurship**
- ❖ **Outreach and advocacy**
- ❖ **Heritage place lab**
- ❖ **Community space**

# Conclusion

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Establishing those heritage hubs across Africa will create economic value, opportunities to invest in social and human capital, and foster innovation and creativity within the heritage sector in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Establishing the Heritage Hubs across Africa will provide imaginative and interactive spaces intended to connect the younger generation and youth organizations with strategies and initiatives to make Africa's heritage an effective source of economic and social opportunity for their benefit.

The Heritage Hubs Connect Forum will provide an opportunity to consolidate what has already been achieved and further advance the implementation of the Heritage Hubs component of the Youth Heritage Africa programme. It will do so by gathering and encouraging the critical engagement of this programme's main actors and by identifying avenues for collaboration with potential partners.

This unique event that will gather heritage experts, entrepreneurs, creatives, policymakers, Universities and European institutions will impact the development of Heritage Hubs which are called to be impactful, inspiring and active innovation centres for Africa's youth.



# Profile of Organizing Institutions

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## NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA ( NMK)

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National Museums of Kenya (NMK) is a state corporation established by an Act of Parliament, the Museums and Heritage Act 2006. NMK is a multi-disciplinary institution whose role is to collect, preserve, study, document and present Kenya's past and present cultural and natural heritage. This is for the purposes of enhancing knowledge,

appreciation, respect and sustainable utilization of these resources for the benefit of Kenya and the world, for now and posterity. NMK's mutual concern for the welfare of mankind and the conservation of the biological diversity of the East African region and that of the entire planet demands success in such efforts. In addition, NMK manages many Regional Museums, Sites and Monuments of national and international importance alongside priceless collections of Kenya's living cultural and natural heritage. As an institution that must respond to the growing needs of the society, NMK is striving to contribute in a unique way to the task of national development

## SWAHILIPOT

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Founded in 201 by Mahmoud Noor in partnership with National Museums of Kenya, Seacom, ICT Authority and CISCO, Swahilipot is Community space that nurtures youth talent and skills in technology, creatives/arts and heritage. Their mission is to enable the community to develop themselves.

This is achieved through the physical space ( co-working, hosting youth events) and programmes/activities (learning, entertainment and linkage opportunities, awareness).

## ICCROM

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The International Center for (ICCROM) is an intergovernmental organization working in service to its Member States to promote the conservation of all forms of cultural heritage in every region of the world. It operates in the spirit of the 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which states that “Respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding are among the best

guarantees of international peace and security.”

## MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF ITALY ( MAECI)

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
and International Cooperation

The Foreign Ministry is responsible for the State's functions, tasks and duties in matters concerning Italy's political, economic, social

and cultural relations with other countries. Their duty, therefore, is to ensure that the international and European activities of Italy's other ministries and government offices are consistent with the country's international policy objectives. The Ministry operates through a network of offices throughout the world and is the main implementing agency for Italian strategy in Africa. The Republic of Italy as a host country for ICCROM has made a significant contribution to support cultural heritage preservation and restauration efforts in the world and to contribute to the advancement of Sustainable Development Goals in the world. They are the main donor for the the ICCROM Flagship programme Youth.Heritage.Africa.

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## SOURCES

- ➔ <https://www.iccrom.org/about/what-iccrom>
- ➔ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/events/1295/>
- ➔ [www.icomos.org](http://www.icomos.org)