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## FOSTERING SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH CULTURE IN CITY RECONSTRUCTION AND RECOVERY

### I. Introduction

Culture, encompassing both tangible and intangible heritage, and creative industries, is not just a vulnerable asset when cities are affected by shocks or stresses, but is also a major resource for their resilience and recovery. Culture is indeed a powerful tool for reconciliation and a building block for social inclusion. Culture also plays a fundamental role developing risk mitigation and preparedness strategies by helping to engage and involve local communities. Moreover, culture and cultural industries provide concrete job opportunities and improve livelihoods for entire communities, thereby supporting sustainable economic development.

Whether they are disasters, armed conflicts, or urban distress situations, national and local leaders should consider to place culture at the heart of their own city reconstruction and recovery processes in the face of crises to build inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities and communities for all, which is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and eliminating extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity at the local, regional, and national levels.

Successful policies must be both place-based and people-centered. This strengthens community ownership, and social inclusion, improves livability of the built environment, and accelerates the socioeconomic recovery of cities. This new concept is the essence of the recently launched *CURE Framework*, which integrates place-based and people-centered approaches through culture into sustainable urban development policies, to help cities effectively address the impact of urban crises.



Plastering Mosque Djingareyber in Timbuktu, Mali, February 2017 © UNESCO / Modibo Bagayoko



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## II. Background

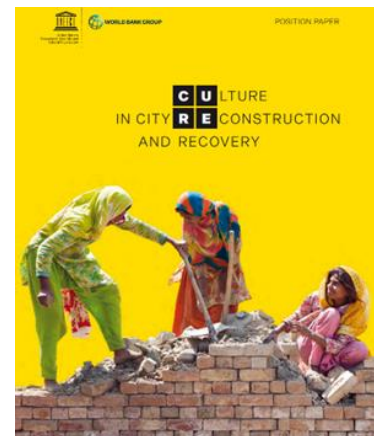
The 2008 Joint Declaration on Post-Crisis Assessments and Recovery Planning between the European Union, the United Nations, and the World Bank—which has been strengthening collaboration and coordination for the assessment and planning of responses to crises during the last decade—is currently being reviewed towards an update to tie the proposed downstream operational work to the new guidance. The Tripartite Partners developed recovery strategies, including the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), Disaster Recovery Framework (DRF), and the Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment (RPBA), and jointly applied these instruments in over 80 crisis situations. In this framework, the partnership between UNESCO and the World Bank reflected in the joint paper aimed to be an opportunity to include culture as a key component in the recovery plans to contribute to the next evolution of cooperation in post-crisis scenarios.

With culture being critical to achieve sustainable urban development and to ensure effective post-crisis reconstruction and recovery processes, the World Bank and UNESCO decided to join forces to help recovery processes to be more inclusive, resilient, and therefore effective, using culture as a cornerstone. As a result, they jointly developed a Position Paper to propose a culture-based framework for city reconstruction and recovery (CURE) that integrates both people-centered and place-based approaches, fostering social inclusion, and resilient recovery.

The paper ***Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery*** provides an initial roadmap for the implementation of the CURE Framework, which is founded on seven guiding principles, derived from a thorough analysis of case studies from different regions of the world and historical periods. The scope extends to the entire urban areas and not just to the historic areas, the latter requiring specific intervention tools and techniques. The implementation of the framework reflects the need to provide rapid responses to emergency situations while at the same time allowing sufficient time for conducting the necessary consultative processes to ensure that people’s priorities are well identified, and respected, and social inclusion is fostered.

The CURE framework addresses policy-makers and practitioners providing operational tools that integrate culture throughout all phases of the reconstruction and recovery process using a project cycle approach. The operationalization of the CURE Framework will involve the four phases described in the paper:

1. ***Damage and Needs Assessment and Scoping:*** including (i) the assessment of damages to tangible cultural heritage, tourism, housing, historic urban areas, services, and infrastructure; (ii) assessments of impacts on intangible cultural heritage, cultural and creative industries, on the tourism sector and on historic housing stock and land resources, as well as the resulting economic losses to the affected population from the interrupted use of assets and services.
2. ***Policy and Strategy:*** including designing the policies, strategies and planning processes that translate the damage and needs assessment and vision into plans and planning regulations, through participatory approaches where stakeholders and communities are fully engaged.
3. ***Financing:*** including the identification of modalities to finance the reconstruction and recovery process combining public and private financing, as well as other funding sources, the management of land resources (one of the most critical assets cities possess), and the development of financing tools and incentives.





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4. *Implementation*: including the setting up of effective institutional and governance structures, risk management strategy, and communication and engagement strategy. This phase is critical to the success and sustainability of a post-crisis reconstruction and recovery effort.

Ultimately, the framework aims to serve as a basis for the elaboration of detailed technical guidelines in consultation with all stakeholders including development agencies working in the field of reconstruction and recovery, international organizations in the field of culture, national and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and local communities.

### III. Issues related to the topic

Disasters and conflicts put additional pressure on cities that are already confronted with rapid and uncontrolled urbanization. By 2030, disasters will cost cities around the world some \$332bn, with the concentration of people and assets in cities making them vulnerable to cascading failures in the wake of a disaster. Conflicts and climate change induced displacement is pushing even more people towards cities. Presently, 66 million people are displaced with roughly one-third of those settling in cities, but numbers are expected to grow significantly in the future, because of climate change. It is estimated that the world will be two-thirds urban by 2050, with informal settlements in unsafe areas, slums and squatters with limited infrastructure and services, exacerbating disaster risks. Fragile states face several challenges in preparing appropriate policies and governance for cities that result in the proliferation of slums and the chaotic expansion of cities with little regard for sustainability issues and potential risks. Poor urban development strategies and economic crises have exacerbated urban decay, excessive building density, substandard housing, dilapidated public facilities, inadequate infrastructure, major social disruption, and urban poverty. In addition, rapid urbanization and the parallel decentralization of functions make the need to strengthen the role and capacities of local governments more pressing.

Historic areas within cities are often subject to a high level of risk. This is due to the inherent vulnerability of their built fabric, especially in developing countries, where historic urban cores are often the location of poor and marginalized groups, who reside and earn their livelihood in often degraded, decaying and congested areas where real-estate values are low, and resources for conservation are insufficient. In conflicts, moreover, cultural landmarks and the historic core of cities are often the victims of collateral damage, during fierce street combats, or even deliberately targeted due to their symbolic meaning. In fact, disasters and conflicts have a broader impact on the ability of the affected populations to enjoy their cultural rights in general, including by limiting access to heritage, but also intangible practices and creativity.

Culture is a vital part of cities, integral to their identity and underpinning their dynamism as hubs of economic development. Conserving and adaptively re-using the historic urban environment contributes to the quality of life of their inhabitants in many ways. In addition to strengthening their sense of belonging, social cohesion and providing a livable environment, it also mitigates excessive urbanization, attracts tourists and visitors as well as investments, while providing for green, locally-based, stable and decent jobs. Cultural industries and creativity are also an essential factor of urban renewal, as they bolster a city's image and contribute to its socio-economic development, thus improving the living standards of the inhabitants. Investments in cultural institutions and activities will support a creative economy and further promote sustainable urban development. A heritage-driven urban development policy also contributes to mitigating and adapting to climate change, since conserving the existing fabric (built with traditional techniques and local materials and skills) is more environmentally friendly than demolishing and reconstructing.

If culture is not placed at the core of urban reconstruction and recover strategies, reconstruction processes can induce further disruption of the physical and social fabric. The emergence of civil society,



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boosted by social media and connectivity, further reinforces the impact of the cultural dimension on reconstruction and recovery processes. Crises generated by acute urban distress need to be addressed by responses that consider the needs of all social groups and provide opportunities for social inclusion and economic development that acknowledge the specific needs, priorities, and identities of communities.

#### IV. Questions/Challenges to be discussed

The session *Fostering Social Inclusion through Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery* will bring high level representatives from the World Bank and UNESCO together with Japanese and client country experts in cultural heritage, to present and discuss the role of Culture as an engine for social inclusion in post-crisis recovery processes.

An initial presentation of the CURE Framework will be followed by a dialogue about the opportunities to include culture in reconstruction and recovery to foster social inclusion in post-crisis situations.

The expected outcomes of this session include:

- Present options for development practitioners, national and local authorities, planners, and international organizations to integrate culture, both as an asset and as a tool, in all phases of recovery projects;
- Showcase good practices in social inclusion for reconstruction and recovery;
- Allow for enhanced understanding of the value of culture in strengthening resilience, ensuring social inclusion, and facilitating recovery.

The session will take the CURE Framework as a base and will deliberate on the following issues:

- Why culture matters for cities, especially under distress, and why this has been recently getting more attention at global level;
- What are the benefits in terms of social inclusion of integrating culture in reconstruction and recovery processes;
- Good practices strengthening social inclusion through culture.



Mobile Mini Circus for Children, Bamiyan, Afghanistan. © Seth Bloom / Mobile Mini Circus For Children





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## V. Conclusions

The CURE Framework reflects the shared commitment of UNESCO and the World Bank to place culture at the forefront of reconstruction and recovery of cities in post-conflict, post-disaster, and urban distress situations. Overall, it should be understood as a flexible, iterative process, (as opposed to a sequential or linear process), which requires detailed knowledge of the intervention context and which should be adapted to the socio-economic specificities of each city. Its implementation should reflect the need to provide rapid responses to emergency situations, while allowing sufficient time for conducting the necessary consultative processes to ensure that people's priorities are well identified and respected.

In post-crisis reconstruction and recovery strategies, place-based approaches address the reconstruction of physical assets as a priority. Integrating culture in place-based strategies allows to improve the sense of belonging of communities and the livability of the built environment. Further, integrating culture can support the reconciliation process through the (re)construction of cultural landmarks, monuments, and other places of significance to communities. People-centered strategies are critical to strengthen community ownership and to accelerate the socio-economic recovery of cities. This requires prioritizing the safeguarding and valuing of norms, traditions, knowledge, crafts and cultural industries in the reconstruction and recovery processes.

By integrating culture into sustainable urban development policies that address the impact of urban crises, the CURE Framework aims to help make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. Social recovery, as well as social inclusion reflected in the community involvement and participation into post-crisis reconstruction scenarios, are pillars of the CURE framework.

## VI. References/Reading material

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