



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Foundation Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB)

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-We Restore and build relations

Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB) is an independent non-governmental organisation supported by Sida, other bilateral funds, the EU, private foundations and grants. We see cultural heritage as an indispensable element of human rights and democracy and a common resource belonging to all of mankind regardless of nationality or religion. Our mission is to promote cultural heritage as both a right and as a resource. CHwB works with civil society and institutions at all levels to strengthen peace-building, sustainable socio-economic and democratic development and the realisation of human rights. CHwB is committed to equality, non-discrimination, participation, accountability and transparency.

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Our Vision and Mission

Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHWB) is an independent non-governmental organisation dedicated to rescuing and preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage affected by conflict, neglect or human and natural disasters. We see our work as a vital contribution to building democracy and supporting human rights. CHWB works with cultural heritage as an active force in reconciliation, peace building and social and economic development by creating capacity, awareness and opportunities for preserving and rescuing cultural heritage in societies affected by conflict, neglect or human and natural disasters. CHWB is committed to equality, non-discrimination, participation, accountability and transparency.

Our vision is that everyone has the right to enjoy, have access to and participate in cultural heritage.

Our mission is to promote cultural heritage as both a right and a resource. CHWB works with civil society and institutions at all levels to strengthen peace building, sustainable socio-economic and democratic development and the realisation of human rights.

Our Working Landscape – Contexts and Trends

The number of natural disasters and protracted conflict situations in the world is growing and becoming more complex. So are the humanitarian demands. A global glance shows us a landscape where conflict and post-conflict countries face challenges such as war and conflict that cause damage to cultural heritage. All too often, different ethnic groups are deprived of their cultural identity and heritage. Brazen examples of this have been the desecration and destruction of cultural monuments of ‘the enemy’. This has been seen in many parts of the world and most recently in Iraq, Syria and Mali. Nationalism is too often defined narrowly by socially constructed definitions of identity that expropriate minority rights. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and volcanic eruptions affect cultural heritage sites every year, as do climate and environmental changes such as pollution, the contamination of air, water and soil, deforestation and infrastructure development. Assessments of humanitarian needs can be complemented by assessments of cultural heritage needs, by identifying what can be done and what can be rescued and by integrating this into the reconstruction phase of the affected area.

Humanitarian assistance is founded on the Geneva Conventions and other sources of international humanitarian law and human rights. The Hague Convention requires the protection of cultural property in war. The right to cultural heritage is an integral part of human rights. In many developing countries, cultural policies and strategies have yet to be integrated into wider political, economic and social agendas. Lack of infrastructure and a rapidly changing political arena create instability and prevent institutions from developing the necessary skills and competence. Thus, they tend to be weak in the management,

protection and development of cultural heritage. In these circumstances, looting of cultural artefacts tends to be a severe problem, depriving citizens, humanity and future generations of their culture and history.

Many conflicts have political, cultural and/or ethnic dimensions and reconciliation efforts are urgently needed as ways of mitigating against further hostilities and of preparing for a life where peoples and communities can live and work side by side again. There is considerable evidence that working with reconstruction, conservation and the development of historic environments can help promote peace-building processes, strengthen self-esteem, and contribute towards socio-economic development.

CHWB is an organisation that bridges the gap between more acute and short-term needs and more long-term development-oriented interventions. CHWB is also an organisation that brings civil society organisations and authorities together in post-conflict situations. In acute situations, it is necessary to begin to plan in a more long-term way.

CHWB has in-depth experience of working in situations where tension exists and where government institutions are weak; especially regarding the management, protection and development of cultural heritage. Use and abuse is predictable but the impact is not. During our involvement in the western Balkans there has been an end to armed conflict and an uneven development towards greater stability. A shared vision of the countries in the region is achieving full integration into the EU.

CHWB has undertaken cultural heritage work in the western Balkans and Eastern Europe for more than twenty years. We have participated in cultural heritage projects in Tibet, Turkey, India, Kenya, Southern Africa and Ethiopia. Our experience has given us a wealth of knowledge and competence to be used in other international contexts.

CHWB will continue to work in the western Balkans and eastern Europe. We are now in the process of broadening our scope to include new geographical areas. We regard threats to cultural heritage as threats to the everyday lives, identities and realities of people today and future generations. In our work, we prioritise societies affected by conflict, or those in post-conflict/transition, those affected by natural disasters or neglect, or where specific cultural heritage needs arise. We use cultural heritage as a tool for rebuilding and developing communities and trust between peoples.

Our Objectives

Our overall goal is that conditions and opportunities to enjoy cultural freedom and cultural diversity improve and that cultural heritage is increasingly used as a tool to promote human rights, peace-building and democratic development.

Key objective 1: The vibrancy of civil society and accountability of institutions in the cultural heritage sector is strengthened.

To ensure peace, stability, prosperity and justice for all, it is important for all humanity to build democratic societies that respect, protect and fulfil human rights. With regard to cultural heritage, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that everyone has the right to take part in cultural life and that states shall take steps to ensure the conservation of culture. Through its rights-based approach, CHWB works to strengthen duty-bearers in fulfilling their obligations and supporting civil society organisations in holding the national institutions accountable to relevant human rights and cultural heritage conventions.

- CHWB supports government institutions that safeguard cultural heritage in adopting best practices and democratic and transparent ways of working.
- CHWB promotes collaboration between civil society organisations and public institutions.
- CHWB supports civil society organisations and their networks in functioning as watchdogs to alert and influence governments when heritage is at risk.
- The right of civil society groups to participate and influence public sector decision-making regarding local heritage is supported.
- Cultural heritage is used as a tool for creating a better understanding of our shared and diverse pasts and as a building block in the effort to promote democratic development.
- Intercultural dialogue is encouraged and strengthened to help build trust and assist in peace building between different groups in societies affected by conflict.
- Activities that include cultural diversity as a creative and strengthening force for peaceful co-existence and respect are promoted. Disabled people, women and children are integrated into activities and policy based on a social model approach.

Key objective 2: Cultural heritage is a valued and utilised social, economic, cultural and environmental resource for civil society and government institutions at the local level.

Cultural heritage is used as a tool for social and economic development, primarily by creating employment opportunities, utilising local resources and techniques and supporting environmental sustainability. The principles of sustainability are also promoted in urban and spatial planning. Museums are supported in becoming democratic meeting places.

- CHWB continues to work with government institutions, civil society and NGOs to strengthen their capacity and collaboration to be a force in democratisation processes.
- Responsible cultural tourism is developed particularly in economically deprived areas with a focus on local ownership.
- Working with local communities makes cultural heritage accessible to more people.
- Local craftsmen develop their skills in preservation that improves their ability to both respond to, and create opportunities for employment.
- Local professional capacities are strengthened by engaging in restoration/conservation projects.
- Restoration/conservation projects rely on locally sourced materials and local business initiatives with a sustainable ethos also benefit.
- Active audience engagement through accessible interpretation practices is developed in museums and heritage organisations through professional capacity development, leading to greater community participation.
- CHWB supports states and local authorities in adopting standard EU or other compatible legislation and policies related to cultural heritage, particularly in relation to local planning processes. CHWB works to increase understanding among the authorities of the role that cultural heritage can play in these processes.

Key objective 3: An expanded corps of quality heritage professionals is prepared to meet preservation challenges responsibly in several countries.

CHwB sees the need for an increased number of well-educated and technically competent cultural heritage professionals in a growing professional sector. For people to enjoy cultural heritage, it must be safeguarded and preserved, which can only be done if there are skilled professionals to maintain and protect it and communicate its value. CHwB's capacity development efforts are underpinned by a commitment to diversity, participatory practices and equality.

- CHwB develops interdisciplinary approaches where restoration/ conservation and cultural heritage activities are used as opportunities for intercultural education and training based on respect and understanding of the strength of diversity.
- Small capacity development grants for NGOs, museum-based projects, publications, public debates, visioning workshops and restoration camps are provided.
- Capacity is developed in the creative and effective management and interpretation of heritage sites, use and maintenance.
- Educational and practical training is given in the techniques of conservation, restoration and museological interpretation, lessening dependency on foreign experts.
- CHwB works in cross-border intercultural settings to strengthen professional partnerships and assist the development of trust and mutual respect.
- New museology and eco-museology are strengthened to foster innovative approaches to tangible and intangible heritage and the points where they meet.
- Inclusive capacity development practices based on strong anti-discrimination are used to strengthen the position of women, disabled people and other groups experiencing marginalisation.
- Regional and international networks and partnerships are strengthened in the area of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Our Working Values

We believe in:

- the universality of cultural heritage and its influential power in positive social development;
- the importance of creative professional partnerships with local, regional, national and international organisations working to strengthen access and rights to cultural heritage across societies;
- strengthening the role of civil society organisations in their role of watchdogs to create awareness about, and safeguard cultural heritage;
- the contribution of cultural heritage to building trust and aiding reconciliation processes;
- the value of internationalism through partners and experts and in the importance of exchange of experiences and engagement between diverse professionals;
- a rich and diverse cultural life with strong public participation;
- relationships based on equality, respect, transparency and dialogue;
- local ownership and local solutions;
- sustainability and respect for the resources of a fragile world;
- accessible and democratic practices;
- a problem-solving and participatory management culture.

We promote:

- participation of rights-holders by respecting and building on partners' and beneficiaries' knowledge, skills and desire to initiate and actively influence project processes, policy and outcome;
- ownership by respecting and strengthening partners' equal commitment and responsibility before, during and after collaboration;
- non-discrimination and gender equality as a fundamental human right that we employ and empower at every level of our work to create lasting and effective change;
- accountability by delivering outcomes in responsible ways and adhering to transparency and the efficient use of resources;
- intercultural dialogue to build trust and understanding;
- environmental sustainability by using local traditional techniques and renewable resources.

Sustainable Methods and Results

CHWB's strengths

- Bringing together people who were previously in conflict to work on creative projects in participatory and democratic ways; concretely contributing to reconciliation processes.
- Operating with a large toolbox and methodologies that promote participation, inclusion and ownership, while strengthening civil society and institutional capacity.
- Working efficiently, applying democratic leadership combined with competent, dedicated, professional and dynamic staff.
- Applying a management culture and approach consistent with rights-based principles, thereby positioning CHWB to adopt a more systematic rights-based approach, with a focus on the right to partake in culture.

Expected results of CHWB's work

- Enhanced awareness of the value of networks for cultural heritage professionals, for institutional development and cooperation.
- Adaption of innovative practices in interpretation and preservation of cultural heritage through working with local communities and government professionals.
- Sustained knowledge, ability and understanding of the value of restoration/conservation, development and interpretation of intangible and tangible cultural heritage among local communities for social, economic and cultural purposes.
- Sustained knowledge and capacity in areas of building conservation and spatial planning of local craftsmen, university students and professionals in government agencies.
- Introduction of international laws and standards facilitating the opening up of institutions and increased adaption of participatory and democratic management styles. Greater levels of accessibility among peoples to different types of cultural heritage.