



COVID-19
RESPONSE



UN EGYPT COVID-19 INSIGHTS SERIES

CULTURE: MUSEUM, INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE, ART AND CREATIVE INDUSTRY

No. 2/2020

1. Overview

Report on the online platform meeting of COVID-19 and museums in Egypt (5 May 2020) summarizing the COVID-19 response by the key museums and presenting a mid-term action plan. Survey form of the ResiliArt debate in Egypt on the COVID-19 impact on art and creative industries (30 August 2020). Questionnaires for the COVID-19 Outbreak Needs Assessment of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Egypt.

2. Key vulnerable groups or sectors in focus

These knowledge products focus on the culture sector, covering museums, ICH, art, and the creative industry, which are also related to other sectors such as Education and Tourism. The culture sector, including numerous historical monuments and archaeological sites, museums, and galleries across Egypt, provides numerous employment opportunities as an important sector of the economy. Freelance artists and artisans of the indigenous community working in the informal economy were the hardest hit by the COVID-19. The COVID-19 made a negative impact not only on the livelihoods of artists but also social cohesion of the community.

3. Key insights from the knowledge product

- UNESCO Report on the Museums around the World in the face of COVID-19 published in May 2020 revealed that only 5 percent of the museums in Africa and Small Island Developing States were able to propose online contents in response to the COVID-19. At the national level, the museums in Egypt were able to launch initiatives encompassing not only risk mitigation measures for the safety of staff and visitors and the museum security, but also a variety of digital tools such as virtual tours, online exhibitions, social media posting, live streaming, and on-demand video to stay engaged with community during the closure. These response measures have accelerated the digitalization process at the museums.
- UNESCO ResiliArt debate was launched in response to the COVID-19 as a global survey to collect information on policy measures and voice of artists and creators in the face of the COVID-19. Two ResiliArt debates were held in Egypt as a contribution to this global movement. The ResiliArt debates have revealed not only the essential nature and resilience of art and the creative industry in times of difficulties but also its weakness in terms of the social protection of artists and the support to the new skill development that is necessary for the present and future artists to adjust their practices to the evolving culture value chain.

- Egypt has a rich ICH or living heritage which is the foundation of identity and sense of belongings for individuals, groups and communities. UNESCO facilitated the participation of Egypt in the global survey on the COVID-19 impact on living heritage. The story on the Bedouin women in Sinai was among the stories featured under this survey. UNESCO in Cairo has developed a questionnaire for the COVID-19 pandemic impact assessment of ICH for implementation by the Egyptian authorities.

4. Policy Implications

- The Museum Sector of MoTA has been active in supporting the national museums in redoubling their efforts in enhancing their online presence and digital solutions. The National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC) has started the new website development with UNESCO assistance. In partnership with the Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology (E-JUST), UNESCO has initiated a free webinar series in June 2020. The next session of this webinar series will address issues on ICTs and the digital transformation of museums. The digital transformation process of the museum sector needs to be supported through enhanced investment in ICT infrastructure development, and capacity building for online content management.
- As a party to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the Government of Egypt is committed to developing a long-term strategy that will support the resilient art and the creative industry in Egypt. Capacity building on digital skills including the online IPR system need to be strengthened to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions. Public-Private-Partnership plays an important role in relaunching the creative economy after the COVID-19.
- The Questionnaire for the COVID-19 outbreak needs assessment of the ICH designed by UNESCO will be formally presented to the High Commission for ICH being established by the MoC soon. The Questionnaire could be tested for the inventorying of traditional craftsmanship being maintained and practiced in the core area of Historic Cairo. This activity will be implemented in cooperation with the Egyptian Society for Folk and Traditions (ESFT), UNESCO accredited NGO for the ICH safeguarding and the Cairo Governorate with the funding under the ICH Fund established by the UNESCO ICH Convention.

5. Programmatic relevance

The report of the online platform meeting on the COVID-19 and museums will be used as a reference for the monitoring and evaluation of the museums' actions to enhance their risk preparedness and resilience under New Normal. The outcomes of the ResiliArt debate in Egypt will feed into the global ResiliArt event at UNESCO HQs in Paris in October 2020 as well as the intergovernmental committee meeting of the UNESCO Cultural Diversity Convention in February 2021. The COVID-19 impact assessment of the ICH could be used in the future to guide post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) of the culture sector.

6. Partners and Donors



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The online platform meeting on the COVID-19 and museums was organised by UNESCO in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA). The ResiliArt debate on 30 August and 5 September was organised with the support of the Ministry of Higher Education and in partnership with Art D’Egypte and E-JUST respectively.

7. Link to the full knowledge product

Report of the online platform meeting of COVID-19 and museums in Egypt (5 May 2020)

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374197>

Museums around the World in the Face of COVID-19

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373530>

ResiliArt debate in Egypt

<https://www.facebook.com/ArtDEgypte/videos/314698033194673>

ResiliArt debate portal

<https://en.unesco.org/news/resiliart-artists-and-creativity-beyond-crisis>

ICH and COVID-19

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/living-heritage-experience-and-covid-19-pandemic-01124?id=00240>

8. Name and email address of a focal point for the knowledge product

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