

Withstanding Change:

Heritage amongst climate uncertainty

Summary Report 2022 to 2026

'Withstanding Change' was a six-country programme exploring how cultural heritage can respond to climate uncertainty. Funded by the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund and led by the International National Trusts Organisation, the programme combined capital restoration, climate adaptation, community engagement and international partnership.

Across diverse political and environmental contexts, partners safeguarded heritage sites affected by rising sea levels, flooding, humidity, erosion and extreme weather.

SIX COUNTRIES - SIX SITES - ONE SHARED CHALLENGE



EGYPT



ETHIOPIA



JORDAN



SYRIA



UGANDA



ZANZIBAR

What we achieved

Climate-adaptive restoration completed across SIX historic sites.



1500+

People trained in conservation, climate awareness and heritage skills



15000+

Visitors engaged



400

Permanent and temporary jobs supported



Safeguarding heritage under climate pressure

Across the partnership, capital works addressed site-specific environmental threats including rising sea levels, flooding, erosion, humidity and extreme weather.

Interventions included rainwater management in Jordan, removing salt from building walls in Zanzibar, flood protective planting in Uganda, solar power installation and rainwater harvesting in Syria, drought-resilient garden restoration in Ethiopia and structural rebuilding in Egypt.

These responses were deeply contextual, responding not only to environmental pressures but also to governance realities, ownership structures and local material traditions.

**A SHARED LEARNING
JOURNEY ACROSS
SIX COUNTRIES**



Community impact

The programme transformed vulnerable sites into places of learning, gathering and pride. Across the partnership, communities reported stronger identity, increased youth engagement, revitalised traditional skills and greater awareness of climate risks.

More than 1,500 people participated in training across the programme, including artisans, woodworkers, youth leaders, teachers, gardeners, women craft producers and building professionals.

Training models included training-of-trainers approaches, integration into technical curricula and expanded professional networks. At several sites, women entered traditionally male-dominated craft roles and youth developed climate advocacy initiatives.

SEEING THE BUILDING

RESTORED CHANGED HOW

WE SEE OURSELVES

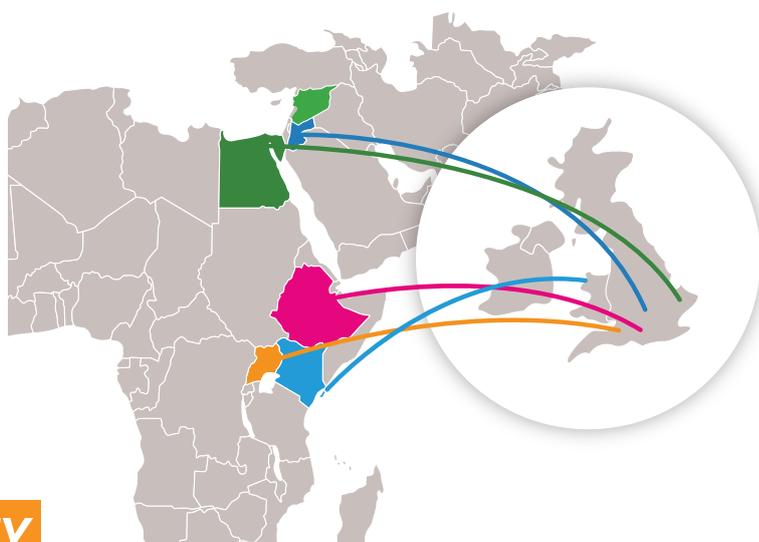


UK partnerships and twinning

A defining feature of the programme was its commitment to long-term peer exchange. Each international partner was twinned with a National Trust (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) site, creating structured relationships grounded in mutual learning rather than one-off technical support.

The twinning partnerships connected:

- **Blickling Estate with Bayt al-Razzaz, Egypt**
- **Mottisfont and Hinton Ampner with the Tsegereda Gardens, Ethiopia**
- **Buscot and Coleshill Estates with Bayt al-Jaghbeer, Jordan**
- **Stourhead with the Semei Kakungulu Museum, Uganda**
- **Penrhyn Castle and Llŷn with Old Customs House, Zanzibar**



INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY THROUGH SHARED PRACTICE



Through reciprocal visits and virtual exchanges partners shared practical approaches to water management, landscape adaptation, traditional building conservation, community engagement and interpretation of complex histories.

These relationships strengthened technical confidence, broadened institutional perspective

and built enduring professional networks across borders.

They also reinforced a model of collaboration based on solidarity and shared problem-solving, demonstrating that climate adaptation in heritage is most powerful when knowledge flows in multiple directions.

Global visibility and climate advocacy

The programme achieved significant international visibility. It was launched at COP27 in Egypt (2022) during a joint event with INTO, the National Trust and the British Council, signalling growing recognition of heritage's role in climate adaptation. Since then, INTO and partners have used successive COPs to highlight learning on nature-based solutions, community-led adaptation, skills development and international solidarity, expanding engagement across practitioners, policymakers and funders.

Beyond COP, partners shared insights at major global platforms, including the UGLC (United Cities and Local Governments Africa) Culture Summit and the African Climate Summit, further positioning heritage within international climate-resilience discussions. In 2024, INTO partnered with the Cultural Protection Fund and Petra National Trust to convene INTO Jordan, bringing together CPF grantees and INTO members to exchange learning from the programme's first phase and strengthen a regional community of practice in climate-resilient heritage management.



What have we learnt?

Across the programme, partners not only delivered technical outcomes but also strengthened their organisational confidence, fundraising capacity, policy engagement and institutional resilience. Despite complex political contexts

and ownership challenges, the network demonstrated flexibility, problem-solving and determination.

'Withstanding Change' has shaped INTO's wider approach to climate and heritage,

informing how we support adaptation, partnership and knowledge exchange across our international network. It reinforces a clear principle: climate action is stronger and more sustainable when culture is part of the conversation.

CULTURAL HERITAGE IS NOT ONLY VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE, IT CAN ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Learn more through our six case studies and our online [resource hub](#).





The programme was made possible through the **British Council's Cultural Protection Fund**, in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The Fund supports projects which protect cultural heritage at risk due to conflict or climate change, mainly in the Middle East and parts of North and East Africa.

Our Partners



Culture in Development

In partnership with



Cultural
Protection
Fund