Enhancing Value

Developing the impact and sustainability of the Cultural Protection Fund

Report by Robert Palmer

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN REPORT

ALIPH: International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas

BC: British Council

CH4IC: Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth

CHP: Cultural Heritage Protection

CPF: Cultural Protection Fund, or referred to as “the Fund”

CSSC: Conflict, Stability and Security Fund

COP: Conference of the Parties (referring to assessing progress in dealing with climate change)

DCMS: Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

DFID: Department for International Development

FCDO: Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

FCO: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

ICHPRWWC: International Cultural Heritage Protection Responses What Works Centre

MENA: Middle East & North Africa

ODA: Official Development Assistance

OPT: Occupied Palestinian Territories

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WWC: What Works Centre

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) is a £30m Fund managed in partnership by the British Council and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), which has operated 2016-2020. The Fund's purpose is to help create sustainable opportunities for social and economic development through building capacity to foster, safeguard, and promote cultural heritage at risk due to conflict overseas. The British Council asked Robert Palmer to undertake an independent review of CPF, to comment on the current approach to and the operation of the Fund, reflect on the value of creating a regional "hub" or "centre" for CPF in the Levant region, and make a series of recommendations for the Fund's future improvement and enhancement. The study was asked to take into account a draft proposal to develop a pilot for an *International Cultural Heritage Protection Responses What Works Centre (ICHPRWWC),* although this was not the main aim of the research. The study was confined to the operation and impact of the Fund across 5 of the 12 countries eligible for CPF funding: Iraq, Jordan Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territories. (OPT), and Syria. The research methodology included a structured programme of 42 interviews with grantees whose projects took place in the Levant, staff of the British Council, advisors and specialists, key stakeholders, and others who had been involved directly or indirectly in CPF. Those interviewed were selected by the British Council. The study also encompassed desk research and the examination of project files, documentation, and internal and external reports about CPF.

The report outlines the manner in which CPF understands the notion of "cultural heritage protection," whose work is framed by several UNESCO Conventions in the field of heritage and underpinned by key principles summarised as *holistic, integrated, evidence-based,* and *multi-stakeholder*. Heritage at risk caused by the consequences of climate change is highlighted as an increasingly urgent issue of concern.

CPF is an instrument, in part, to help achieve the British Council's core *cultural relations* mission. The approach of the Fund has been characterized by the term *bottom-up,* includes the preservation of both *tangible* and *intangible* forms of heritage, and is significantly linked to the delivery of social and economic impacts as drivers of change in communities that are served by CPF projects. CPF has been based on a *theory of change* model as a framework where inputs lead to outputs, and outputs lead to outcomes. However, in a region like the Levant with major challenges arising from unrest, conflict and poverty, and dominated by power relations between different interests, the application of the "linear logic" of the model may not always be workable, unless it supports critical reflection at every stage of the process.

The speed with which CPF had to be established in 2016, with uncertainly about the Fund's longer-term future, created conditions where it needed rapidly to establish a robust and accountable grants management system, as well as "fit in" at relatively short notice to the organisational culture and operational structures of the British Council. This has resulted in several weaknesses and ambiguities that were highlighted by those who were interviewed. The report outlines the different constituents of the CPF grants system and structure, commenting on missing elements (for example, communications and marketing), as well as the need to address important issues such as improving connections and information flow between different components.

The report summarises views expressed by those interviewed of the strengths and weaknesses of CPF, by which means the Fund might better achieve sustainable impacts and longer-term legacies, and how the Fund might enhance its value, including the proposal to create a CPF "pilot hub" in the Levant. Interviewees referred to CPF "as a model of the cultural relations and mutuality approach of the British Council," demonstrating how the Fund's support was making a significant contribution to cultural heritage protection, and valuing its distinctive qualities such as its wide interpretation of

cultural heritage, *bottom-up* approach, efficiency, and high standards. In several interviews, the Fund was described as a "model system of grant-giving," commending the dedication and responsiveness of CPF staff, and the Fund's adaptability and flexibility. Less experienced grantees commented on the Fund's rigid and centralised systems, suggesting the need for simplification. Most found that the imposition of end of financial year deadlines created major problems for project delivery, and advocated that the Fund should find ways of encouraging a longer-term and multi-annual approach to the design of projects and grant-making. A range of views was expressed about which projects the Fund should and should not be prioritising, although all praised the diversity and multi-disciplinarity of the approach. Comments by grantees in the region reflected the need for the Fund to identify and support more project leaders in the region itself, with UK partners offering advice, and helping to build local capacity. Many interviewees suggested the CPF should have increased flexibility to respond to emergencies quickly, citing the response to the explosion in Beirut as an example.

The lack of clarity and the ambiguous role of CPF in the British Council structure was frequently raised, with the need to connect the Fund to other areas of the Council's work, especially in arts and heritage, the creative economy, and social enterprise. Views of the involvement of the British Council's country offices were mixed; some offered invaluable support, while others were unhelpful or indifferent. However, all recognised the potential value of involving the local offices more directly in the grant-making, monitoring and evaluation processes of the Fund, and their important role in coordinating projects, promoting networking, and communicating about the Fund's availability and achievements. There were frequent comments about the need for CPF to work more closely with relevant UK government departments, and with UK Ambassadors, Embassies and Consulates in the region. Suggestions were made by interviewees about how the internal processes of CPF might be strengthened including, for example, information flow, and the role of the Advisory Group.

The weaknesses of CPF communications were mentioned in all interviews, and the need to develop a coherent communications strategy was considered a priority. The role of the Fund has not been communicated clearly, and strong views were expressed about the importance of conveying the Fund's achievements through the stories of projects. Grantees considered that CPF was better evaluated than most funds, but believed that too much emphasis was being given to quantifiable measures used to justify the value of the Fund, with insufficient attention paid to the stories of projects and what had been learned. More independent evaluation of projects was encouraged. CPF needed to consider how the experience gained might better be shared.

The proposal for creating a CPF "hub" in the Levant elicited varied reactions. While a minority believed that a physical base for CPF coordination located in Beirut or Amman would be valuable, most believed that a decentralised structure would be preferable, embedding CPF more firmly into the British Council's country offices in the region. A CPF Levant "cluster" would offer contact points for the Fund, provide information, assist potential grantees, monitor projects, develop project networks, and coordinate the Fund's regional communications. Proposals for extending the Fund's UK, regional and international partners were offered. CPF was encouraged to consider the implications of Covid-19, which might cause delays or postponements of certain projects.

In conclusion, the report highlights evidence that cultural heritage programmes make a significant contribution to inclusive growth, including social and economic development, especially when local communities themselves are actively engaged. The strategic interventions of the Fund should be selected carefully to ensure that the outcomes and impacts are sustainable. The need to clarify the Fund's importance, relevance, and connection to the British Council is stressed, integrating the Fund into the Council's overall, regional and local strategies, where appropriate. The Fund should develop a clear and powerful narrative when communicating its objectives and achievements. The case for

creating a pilot cluster for CPF work in the Levant appears strong, and this should be achieved through developing a coordinated and networked approach across BC country offices, with CPF responsibilities shared between local offices and the UK.

Indicative shifts in the Fund's priorities are proposed and summarised as moving: *from* centralised management of CPF projects *to* decentralised, networked, and coordinated management of CPF projects; *from* a focus on project outcomes *to* project impacts; *from* building capacity *to* achieving sustained delivery capability; *from* the implementation of projects *to* the sustainability of projects; *from* processes of evaluation *to* learning *to* managing and sharing knowledge; *from* supporting individual CPF projects *to* establishing CPF project networks; and *from* embedding CPF project networks *to* developing communities of practice in cultural heritage protection. Such shifts should be piloted in the Levant.

The report makes both strategic and operational recommendations to enhance the value and impact of CPF during the next phase of its operation. It proposes that the Fund's role within the British Council be strengthened through integrating CPF into the primary cultural relations mission and operational structure of the organisation as a whole, and that more coherent connections be made to relevant programmes of the Council, for example, its work in arts, education, social enterprise and heritage for inclusive growth. It further proposes that CPF be more clearly integrated into British Council regional and country strategies in areas where the Fund operates. As an example of a successful government partnership, the work of CPF needs to be drawn to the attention of relevant UK missions abroad and related economic development and security initiatives. The report recommends the development of a CPF pilot cluster in the Levant where certain of the Fund's grant-making and communications functions could be shared with BC country offices.

Concerning the Fund itself, the report suggests the need for CPF to conceive a strong and well-defined narrative with a unified core message, and the development of a comprehensive strategic plan for communicating the Fund's work both in the UK and relevant regions abroad.

Other recommendations of the report focus on the Fund becoming a more effective and resourceful mechanism for achieving sustainable longer-term impacts of projects, the need for a coordinated approach to capacity building and training in essential skills, enhancing the current CPF evaluation methodology and knowledge management systems, and extending partnerships. Proposals to improve current processes and procedures for CPF grant-making, the creation of an Emergency Response Mechanism, and adapting the Fund to take into account the impact of Covid-19 are also included.

All recommendations in the report are based on evidence gathered during the review, through interviews and documentation.

1. STUDY BRIEF AND METHODOLOGY

To strengthen the 'cultural relations approach' to cultural heritage protection, the British Council (BC) requested a brief examination of opportunities to encourage an enhanced approach to the management of the Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) to better achieve the following:

- *extend the limits of isolated time-limited projects that purely look to deliver according to pre-determined outcomes*
- *develop a baseline of knowledge and understanding of existing related provision and access to collated research and awareness of existing networks and infrastructure*
- *strengthen the contribution of individual projects to the wider cultural eco-system work in collaboration with other initiatives and programmes*
- *enhance understanding of best practice and what has proved effective in that context in the past.*
- *offer consistency and coherence to the collection and collation of data and monitoring and evaluation*

The study is intended to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Fund as it currently operates by gathering the views from a sample of those connected to or supported by the Fund, and reflect on the value of creating a regional "hub" or "centre" for CPF in the Levant. The study was asked to take into account a draft proposal to develop a pilot for an *International Cultural Heritage Protection What Works Centre (ICHPWWC),* although this was not the main aim of the research.
The study was confined to the operation and impact of the Fund across 5 of the 12 countries eligible for CPF funding: Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), and Syria; for this study, the region is referred to as the Levant.[1]

The research methodology included a structured programme of 42 interviews with grantees whose projects took place in the Levant, staff of the British Council, advisors and specialists, key stakeholders, and others who had been involved directly or indirectly in CPF. The choice of interviewees was made by the British Council. The timescale, format and schedule of questions for the interviews were agreed upon in advance of undertaking the interviews, which were organised by the British Council. The list of those interviewed appears as Appendix 1 and the questions in Appendix 2.The study also encompassed desk research and the examination of project files, documentation, and internal and external reports about CPF.

This review was asked to comment on the current approach to and the operation of the Fund, and make a series of recommendations for the Fund's future improvement and enhancement.
The review is being undertaken in the absence of a confirmed future funding commitment for CPF by the UK government, although the spending proposal (2021-2024) has been submitted by the Department of Digital, Media and Sport (DCMS). The review was conducted on the assumption that CPF funding will continue, offering an opportunity to develop the Fund's work.

2. THE CULTURAL PROTECTION FUND (CPF)

The Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) is a £30m Fund managed in partnership by the British Council and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), which has operated 2016-2020. It is

[1] The Levant is an approximate historical geographical term referring to a large area in the Eastern Mediterranean region of Western Asia. Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, and parts of Turkey are sometimes also considered Levant countries. However, in this report, the term Levant will refer only to Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), and Syria.

financed from the UK Government's Official Development Assistance (ODA) Fund. CPF's purpose is to help create sustainable opportunities for social and economic development through building capacity to foster, safeguard, and promote cultural heritage at risk due to conflict overseas. The Fund supports efforts to keep cultural heritage sites and objects safe, as well as the recording, conservation, and restoration of cultural heritage. It also aims to support opportunities for training and education in local communities, enabling and empowering them to value, care for, and benefit from their cultural heritage. The Fund's target countries are Afghanistan, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Iraq, the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yemen. To date over 50 projects have received support from the Fund. CPF is viewed as part of the government's programme that helps to leverage the UK's soft power, and reinforces the position of the UK as a trusted global leader.

Following the inception of CPF in 2016, and after a two-year highly successful initial period of operation, the Fund has been plagued with uncertainty about its financial future. Since 2018, there has been no guarantee of funding, which has meant that effective longer-term planning could not take place.

As an associated programme to CPF, which is also managed by the British Council, is "Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth" (CH4IC). The combined value of CPF and CH4IC is evidenced by British Council research that demonstrates that such soft power programmes using cultural heritage can support sustainable social and economic goals. DCMS, the government champion of CPF and CH4IC, has argued that these programmes are in line with the UK AID strategic objectives, climate change/COP commitments, and security objectives relating to international development funding. There is an additional proposal to enhance the exchange of best practice and knowledge, using a "What Works" approach to harness the British Council's global learning within CPF and other partners in the cultural heritage field. The bid by DCMS for enhanced funding for the *International Cultural at Risk Programme (2021-2024*) from the Official Development Assistance (ODA) fund has been submitted as part of the current government spending round (2020) and is awaiting a decision.

Defined traditionally, *heritage* is a property that is inherited and passed down from previous generations. The term *cultural heritage* implies both property in a physical sense, such as historical sites, buildings and monuments, but also *immaterial inheritance* such as cultural identity, collective memory, and collective practices. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) describes cultural heritage in several categories. *Tangible cultural heritage* can be either *movable* (paintings, sculptures, coins, manuscripts), or *immovable* (monuments, archaeological sites, including underwater heritage). Cultural heritage might also be natural sites with cultural aspects that include landscapes, or physical, biological, or geological formations. *Intangible cultural heritage* is a category that comprises cultural practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills, and cultural spaces used by communities.

The *UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* incorporates a range of categories that are worthy of protection such as oral traditions and expressions, languages, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, and traditional craftsmanship" (UNESCO 2003). The *UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression* is a global agreement that recognises the dual cultural and economic importance of cultural expressions, of the access to cultural goods and services, and the creative economy. This Convention offers a framework for informed, transparent, and participatory systems of governance for culture, and integrates culture as a strategic dimension of promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms (UNESCO, 2005). In addition to the previous two UNESCO heritage Conventions, the UK adheres to the *UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (UNESCO, 1972).

UNESCO also has a category that protects heritage in the event of armed conflict, the *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflic*t (adopted in the Hague in 1954 with an additional Protocol 1999) that covers both movable and unmovable cultural heritage in the case of war, and which the UK ratified in 2017.

The terms and conditions of the above Conventions offer a strong legal basis that underpins the work of CPF.

Cultural heritage has become transdisciplinary; its preoccupation with traditional approaches to conservation and archaeology has been replaced by a profound focus on the processes of economy, the enrichment of social and cultural life, and building cohesive societies. Cultural heritage protection is not only about the past; it is vitally about the present and the future. A heritage that is disjointed from ongoing life has limited value; it involves continual creation and transformation, adding new ideas to old ideas. Protecting objects, places and traditions are not in themselves what is important. They are important because of the meanings that people attach to them and the values they represent, and are understood as part of the wider context of the cultural ecologies of communities.

There are key principles that should underpin action in cultural heritage protection. These can be summarised as:
Holistic: combining tangible, intangible, and digital dimensions of cultural heritage, viewing cultural heritage as a resource for the future, to be safeguarded, enhanced, and promoted, and also encouraging synergies with contemporary creation. It promotes access and engagement with a focus on local communities, fostering social inclusion, and integration.
Integrated: cutting across diverse policy areas: regional, urban and rural development, arts and education, and emphasizing cultural heritage as a strategic resource for socio-economic development, the sustainability agenda, climate change adaptation, and external relations.
Evidence-based: developing actions, measuring and evaluating their impact, and then using this evidence to inform future practice and policymaking.
Multi-Stakeholder: working with a range of partners, comprising government and non-governmental actors, public and private institutions and organisations, civil society, professional networks, and research and academic bodies.

CPF appears to embrace the principles above in its approach to cultural heritage protection. The Fund acts as an instrument to help achieve the British Council's core mission of fostering international cultural relations. The BC's cultural relations work is exercised through the development of trusted connections at different levels of engagement and partnerships with state and non-state actors across the world, a practice characterised by the BC as being "mutual, reciprocal and trust-building," and which is a recognised and valued form of UK public diplomacy. BC delivers its cultural relations mission through its activities that achieve greater connectivity, better mutual understanding, and deeper relationships in fields such as arts, science, education and language, and also through its work with societies, with an emphasis on participation, dialogue, human rights, empowerment, and supporting prosperity, security and the influence of the UK. It seems inevitable that within the context of BC operations, there is a strong reciprocal and strategic connection between the ambitions of *cultural protection* and *cultural relations.* However*,* this connection appears somewhat ill-defined, which will be illustrated by the findings of this review.

When speaking about cultural protection, the term *protection* implies that what is being protected is *at risk*, and traditionally is associated with acts of preservation, conservation, safeguarding,

restoration, and preventing, avoiding, and repairing damage or loss. What is not as widely recognised are the powerful connections between cultural protection and identity, community, cohesion, prosperity, security, and social and economic development. For CPF, the processes of protection are combined with those of training and capacity building, advocacy, and education. This does not weaken the case for protection, but rather strengthens and enhances its value. Any assessment of value combines the strict component of the value of the cultural heritage (tangible and intangible) that has been protected for and in itself, with a complex mix of clearly identifiable additional elements, some of which are easily measured by quantifiable and easily recognised indicators (jobs created, skills learned, women empowered, visitors and volunteers attracted, new spaces developed for business or leisure activity, partnerships and networks created, financial stability enhanced, records and archives maintained, objects restored, buildings re-constructed, traditions maintained, stories revived, databases constructed, websites designed, and much more). Other "softer" and less quantifiable measurements are equally important, but more difficult to enumerate, compute and appraise (such as confidence built, relationships strengthened, communities revitalised, memories resurrected, loneliness addressed, hope restored, young people stimulated, older people reawakened, etc). Whichever quantitative or qualitative performance indicators are used, the potential impacts to be achieved in CPF projects have been evaluated over relatively short periods. The importance of the sustainability[2] of impacts achieved will be addressed in later sections in this report.

When considering cultural heritage at risk, the consequences of climate change has become a matter of urgent concern. CPF introduced a new round of grants (June 2020) for projects that explore preparedness measures for heritage at risk due to natural disasters and climate change in East African countries. Climate change is not only restricted to direct impacts on built heritage, but can have very indirect consequences like fragmentations of populations, loss of intangible heritage, declining visitor numbers, and disruption of socio-economic activities. Climate change affects cultural diversity and socio-cultural interactions by forcing communities to change work habits and ways of life, compete for resources, or migrate elsewhere, caused by climate-driven disasters like desertification, flooding or sea-level rise. The impacts of climate change on the loss of social community, traditional knowledge, cultural identity and natural and socio-economic systems are well documented[3]. The theme of climate change is likely to have increasing importance in cultural heritage protection, and needs to continue to be incorporated into CPF programmes.

CPF has become a champion of "newer methods" of heritage protection, rejecting older notions of preserving a few threatened symbolic buildings or icons as identified by experts and historians, a process that has been characterised by the term *top-down*. The Fund has focused on the lived heritage that people themselves value, whether or not those things ever appear on a national or international list for protection. Such a *bottom-up* approach might involve traditional preservation, but the CPF core mission is linked to *social value*, aligned with public perception, sense of place, and identity, which are all intertwined with socio-economic processes that are proactive, sometimes even pre-emptive drivers of change. Taking cultural heritage protection out of its separate box and making it part of wider debates that focus on *people-centred* issues appears to be a central vision of CPF.

[2] The terms "sustainable" and "sustainability" used throughout this report refer to processes that enable all impacts to continue over time, rather than the more restricted meaning as causing little or no damage to the environment, or avoiding the depletion of natural resources.

[3] Example is "Are cultural heritage and resources threatened by climate change?: a systematic literature review" by S. Fatoric & E Seehaap (*Climate Change*, 2017)

The role of cultural heritage protection in conflict and post-conflict contexts has been built into the CPF rationale. There has been considerable study of how recuperating and preserving cultural heritage supports processes of dealing with conflict/post-conflict trauma resulting from abandonment, identity confusion, and contested identity, defeat, memory loss, and hurt pride.[4] Although this analysis may be perceived more in the realm of the need for psychological healing that follows conflict, cultural heritage protection can also respond directly to the more practical needs of a community after a crisis: rehabilitating housing, restoring a familiar cultural environment, revitalising social customs, traditional activities, and landmarks, and processes of reconstruction and regeneration that contribute directly to employment, tourism development, improvement of image, place attractiveness, as well as to well-being and social cohesion.

3. HOW CPF HAS WORKED

The conceptual framework for CPF has been based on a clearly articulated *theory of change*, which is a frequently adopted methodology for programme planning, and evaluation. The *theory of change* defines long-term goals and then maps backward to identify necessary preconditions. It focuses on a process of change by outlining causal linkages through stages of planning, evidence gathering, review, reflection, reporting, and sharing. The model is used regularly in international overseas development programmes, alongside or instead of the more traditional *log frame* models, and is appropriate for an initiative like CPF. In the current model (2016), the main activity categories of CPF are specified as: i) cultural heritage protection; ii) capacity building and training; iii) advocacy and education, each with desired outcomes – both short-term (what will happen in the lifetime of the grant), and legacy (potential longer-term impact), leading to the achievement of the Fund's overall objective " to protect and rebuild opportunities for economic development through building capacity to safeguard and promote cultural heritage overseas".

In the dynamic world of cultural heritage protection (and in the cultural domain generally), and also recognising the particular complex and changeable contexts of the 12 countries where the Fund operates, the "linear logic" of the *theory of change* model, which assumes inputs lead to outputs, and outputs lead to outcomes, may not always prove achievable. In countries of the Levant, which are experiencing challenges arising from unrest, conflict, poverty and, in some cases, tyranny and displacement, the strength of the links between the different elements of the chain suffer from frequent disruption. Power relations in the territories in which the Fund works can limit an ability to change or even challenge existing structures or current practices, and which may not be open and willing to consider alternatives. There is a danger that when focusing on the achievement of measurable and verifiable outcomes, the space for learning is partially squeezed out. It is important to generate knowledge about what works, and what does not, and what affects what, and why – and not only focus on quantifiable results.

The *theory of change,* as it has been applied to CPF, can support but should not replace critical reflection at every stage of the process. Flexibility in applying the model is essential, and as mentioned, especially in dynamic and changing country environments, such as the Levant. An open learning approach should invite adaptation to any originally conceived programme design, implementation, and evaluation of the Fund's approaches and projects. CPF needs to remain an innovative process that is incorporated into the CPF planning concept, described as *PROPER* – a

[4] Examples are UNESCO's project to "Revive the spirit of Mosul" by B. Isakhan (*International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 2009), "Heritage and cultural healing: Iraq in a post-Daesh era" by R. Matthews et al (*International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 2019), "Destruction, mitigation, and reconciliation of cultural heritage" by H. Kalman *(Historic, Environment: Policy & Practice*, 2017), "Cultural heritage that heals: factoring in cultural heritage discourses in the Syrian peace-building process" by M. Lostal et al (*Historic Environment, Policy and Practice*, 2016), "Post-conflict reconstruction and heritage process" by M. Legner (*Journal of Architectural Conservation*, 2018).

process that is **p**lanned, **r**eflective, **o**rganisation-wide, **p**ragmatic, **e**nabling and energising, and **r**esponsive-iterative. *PROPER* now needs to be practiced when embarking on a revision of the design and implementation processes for the next phase of CPF.

CPF required a "lightning speed" approach when established in 2016 to create the necessary delivery mechanisms to distribute funds, under the constraints of end of financial year spending and uncertainty about the Fund's continuation. The Fund was required to "fit in" at relatively short notice to the culture, organisational structure, regulations, and processes of the BC, and at the same time establish reliable and robust management systems that could assess grant applications fairly, take decisions, build relationships with applicants and disburse funds to a range of recipients located either in the UK or in the countries eligible within the Fund's purview. Processes required an imperative of practicing due diligence and the duty of safeguarding "taxpayer's money," ensuring "value" for any funds disbursed, and achieving the Fund's stated outcomes. CPF undoubtedly rose to this challenge. The weaknesses that have been identified during this review in the management of CPF should be seen against the remarkable constraints and obstacles that the Fund has had to circumvent at speed to meet the varied expectations of both stakeholders and applicants.

From its inception in 2016, CPF has created a "system" for grant-making that encompasses varied processes involving strategy development, application submission, assessment, decision-making and approval, disbursement of funds, monitoring of and reporting on the use of funds, and evaluating the results. Many different 'actors' play diverse roles in the CPF grants "system" – some directly involved in assessment and delivery; others in offering advice; and still others who are peripherally involved in different ways but outside the main system of grant-making. Those "at the core" of the system may have understood precisely what was going on, while those outside the core or on the periphery or entirely outside the system sometimes did not.

The CPF grant-making system and structure embrace different components including, for example, a Programme Board, Advisory Group, several Approval Panels, senior executive management, grant managers, operations manager, various assistants, assessors and evaluators, the staff of BC country offices (at different levels), staff in other BC departments (at different levels – arts, education, insight and evaluation, communications, finance, legal, human resources, etc), UK representations overseas, local partners (at different levels, and in each country), as well as all the recipients of grants (project leaders, staff, volunteers, trainees, consultants), and others. Partly due to the haste with which all CPF delivery operations needed to be established, and partly due to the existing operational and decision-making organisational framework of the British Council itself, the CPF "system" is considered weak in systemic terms. There are difficulties with connections, interrelationships and communications between different components of the system, as well as some missing elements of the current system (e.g. dedicated and sufficient marketing and communications support). Information flow within and across the CPF system as a whole and also externally is one of the keys to any effective functional system. Building relationships within and between both internal and external components of the CPF system is of primary importance to the Fund's overall effectiveness.

In the Levant, the understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage protection is inconsistent across the five countries, although there is a body of expertise that has been developing within the region, which includes a number of experienced heritage conservation organisations. Cultural heritage protection requires a multi-disciplinary approach involving archaeologists, architects, geographers, historians, conservators, artists, cultural heritage managers, museum curators and practitioners, educators, legislators, planners, media professionals, folklorists, and others, in addition to the general public. Across the Levant, there are people with knowledge and skills, but they often remain separated from each other, and so the "sector" of cultural heritage protection is

somewhat isolated and fragmented. What is still lacking in the Levant is a thorough investigation into which heritage assets have been and are being protected, who has been doing what, and how these resources might be utilised to harness the significant economic and social potential from which the region can significantly benefit. A systematic "mapping" of cultural heritage protection (past and present), and including a prioritised regional needs analysis, should form part of the next phase of CPF development in the Levant.

4. PROPOSAL FOR A CPF PILOT HUB IN THE LEVANT

Before the start of this review, there was an idea internally in the BC to create a "hub" or "centre" for CPF activity, and possibly related work in cultural heritage protection, as a pilot project, in the Levant. It appears that no detailed plans were developed for such a proposal. The meaning of "hub/centre" was not clearly defined, nor its role clarified. This report will consider the value and means of piloting such an initiative.

5. PROPOSAL FOR A WHAT WORKS CENTRE

As mentioned earlier, a proposal for using a "What Works" methodology[5] and the creation of a coordinated "What Works" platform has been included in the "four-pillar approach", which forms part of the DCMS spending proposal for the UK's International Cultural Heritage at Risk Programme. A proposed *International Cultural Heritage Protection Responses What Works Centre (ICHPRWWC)* would draw on wide multi-disciplinary expertise in the field of international cultural heritage protection, to enable a range of key actors to coordinate their practice, draw together research and evidence, and share knowledge and learning. A *What Works Centre (WWC)* approach is centred on core functions including generating evidence, in this case, related to cultural heritage protection, and then translating and sharing evidence to user-groups in the field, thereby encouraging the adoption and intelligent use of evidence in practice. In practical terms, a WWC usually commissions research, undertakes evidence mapping, creates evidence-based toolkits, undertakes training, and widely communicates its findings to enhance the approach and practice of cultural heritage protection nationally and internationally. The BC internally has undertaken preliminary work, which has examined the potential value, the context, possible operational model, and likely partners for an ICHPRWWC.

4. REVIEW OF CPF AS REFLECTED IN INTERVIEWS

During this review, 42 online interviews took place. Interviewees were selected by the BC as a sample of those representing the components of the CPF "system" as outlined earlier (Appendix 1). The interviews were conducted using "open questions" relating to 3 main topics (Appendix 2): i) experienced or perceived strengths and weaknesses of CPF; ii) how the Fund might better achieve sustainable impacts and longer-term legacies; iii) how the Fund might enhance its value, including the proposal to create a CPF " pilot hub" in the Levant. At the end of each interview, there was a

[5] The Cabinet Office and HM Treasury championed a programme of activity across government to ensure that knowledge about "what works" informed key decisions. The *What Works Network* was launched in 2013 with the aim ensuring that spending and practice in public services is informed by the best available evidence. The network now consists of 10 independent What Works Centres. These centres have pioneered new ways of increasing the supply of evidence in areas such as policing, education, local economic growth, and health and social care, but not as yet in cultural heritage protection.

final open question inviting other comments or suggestions that might strengthen or improve the work of CPF.

As stated earlier, the interviews focused only on CPF work in the 5 countries of the Levant: Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Occupied Territories of Palestine (OPT), and Syria. Grantees and operational staff working in those countries were included in the interviews, as well as those who worked with CPF in the UK and elsewhere, and those managing specific projects who are based in the UK. Several external stakeholders were also interviewed. Certain observations might be applied to CPF operations in all 12 countries supported by the Fund, and not just to work in the Levant.

As a general comment, all interviewees expressed their views with candour, sincerity and openness, for which I am deeply grateful. Interviewees were promised confidentiality and anonymity in my reporting. Remarks below in "quotation marks" are words expressed directly by one or several of the interviewees.

6.1 Value of CPF

Most of those interviewed remarked positively on the value of the Fund's overall work in cultural heritage protection, especially its role in "helping to build heritage protection capacity in the region". Some commented that although the Fund was a "new kid on the block in supporting heritage at scale, the CPF approach was pioneering, and supported many projects that other funders were unable or unwilling to consider". Of the 42 people interviewed, only one questioned the ability to the Fund "to make any longer-term significant impact," and negatively referred to CPF as a "sticking plaster". The interviews revealed different criteria by which people judged the Fund as a whole. This issue is addressed later in the report.

A few of the BC staff referred to CPF as "a model of the cultural relations and mutuality approach of the British Council," and praised the Fund for "reaching parts that the BC is not usually able to reach". Others spoke of the Fund as "an important component of the UK's soft power relations," and as "a valuable peace-building initiative". A few referred to the Fund's role "making a contribution to the achievement of the SDGs," and "helping to build communities". A number of those interviewed expressed a degree of cynicism about the Fund's ability to achieve its stated aim of "creating sustainable opportunities for social and economic development," observing the Fund's relatively small size in relation to the needs of the region ("CPF has tens of millions to spend, not the hundreds of millions needed to make a difference"), and also the apparent lack of a strong long-term financial commitment from the UK government ("Why does CPF have to go cap in hand every 3 years not knowing whether it will be supported again?"). When speaking to those working on the ground in the region, their stories revealed how the Fund "was making a difference to people". "Participants are learning new skills," and communities were helped to " restore historic buildings and use them as workplaces and youth clubs". Projects were "adding to a community's pride and confidence". Stories revealed how certain projects were "giving young people a sense of belonging," how "vital artifacts were being preserved that would otherwise be lost", and how " a museum was made operational and open to the public for the first time." This list goes on.

The question of what makes CPF "unique" in cultural heritage protection was posed to interviewees. Responses revealed that the uniqueness of the Fund was linked profoundly to "its connection to the British Council as the parent body," and the Fund's "access to the Council's know-how and relationships that had been successfully built over decades". "The BC is a trusted organisation in the region." As far as the approach of CPF itself is concerned, the uniqueness of the Fund was defined as "a combination of qualities" that gives it distinction in the funding landscape of cultural heritage protection". Such qualities were described: "remarkable efficiency," "high standards,"

"transparency," "wide scope in the interpretation of cultural heritage," "bottom-up in approach," "focus on people and communities," being "trustworthy," "humble" "professional" and "caring".

6.2 CPF Grant-making Process

Without exception, those interviewed praised the "competence", "robustness" and "flexibility" of the Fund's operations. All grantees commented favourably on the relationships developed with CPF grant managers and other CPF staff, describing them as "dedicated", "skilled" "considerate" "intelligent," "patient" "contactable" "responsive," and reflecting a "can-do attitude". In several interviews, the Fund was described as "a model system of grant-giving," in particular by those who had experience with other grant-makers either in cultural heritage or other fields – "a super-easy donor," remarked a few. Most expressed an understanding and acceptance of "the scrupulous attention to detail in financial reporting," although a few of the smaller and less experienced grantees found various procedures and systems "onerous", "rigid", "too formal" and "too centralised". "There is too much paperwork and over-frequent reporting". On the other hand, many applauded the Fund's adaptability in dealing with "unforeseen developments or problems" in ways that ranged from "helping with advances and urgent cash flow requirements" to " being understanding about delays when submitting reports".

Many grantees found the application process and the taking of final decisions about grants "too long," although clearly understood the "need for caution and accountability when disbursing public funds". Several of the grantees found the rapid turnover of grant managers "frustrating," with the need for each new manager to get to understand the project. One reported dealing with 3 different grant managers during the timescale of the project "Once they understood the project, all was fine; they were helpful, but we did lose time". Several grantees conveyed the importance of the "continuity of grant managers".

All grantees found that the imposition of deadlines at the end of financial years "created major problems for delivery," and believed that the Fund would not achieve its objectives, nor function effectively unless there was a "longer-term" "multi-annual approach" to the design of projects and grant-making. There were many stories of negative implications of having to finish projects by 31 March, where "6-month projects were squeezed into 2 or 3 months due to the lateness of final decisions and the imposition of the end of financial year cut-off". "We undertook a rampage of spending in the last 6 weeks to ensure the money was spent in time." "I had to complete a 5-day training module in 2 days". "There was no option but to finish essential outdoor works in the worst-weather season in Iraq". "The design of the project would have been completely different if we had 2 years and not 9 months", "We could achieve a more significant impact on the ground with a longer planning horizon". There were many such comments. Of particular concern was the difficulty that some grantees had to meet reporting deadlines due to obstacles in getting formal approvals or agreements signed by partners or officials in a country". It appears from the interviews that some projects were granted extensions to deal with delays, while others needed to "meet the deadline, come what may".

6.3 CPF Projects

In terms of the type projects being supported by the Fund, comments were generally positive. "A clear link between heritage and conflict" "diverse," "building connections with civil society partners" "operating at scale" "the ability to respond to smaller important initiatives, not just large impressive projects". Some interviewees believed that the balance between tangible and intangible cultural heritage projects was "appropriate", while others felt that "there remains too much of a bias towards built heritage". Many supported the interdisciplinary approach, "joining together interests

in archaeology, anthropology, ecology and other disciplines," although one person expressed a strong view that the Fund "should not be supporting any specific ecological or environmental projects". A few remarked that the definition of cultural heritage used by the Fund was "too wide," while others suggested the boundaries should be extended even further; for example, to encompass the protection of "contemporary forms of heritage, such as audio-visual and film heritage," and " to expand the creative and innovative elements of projects," and when appropriate to "connect traditional projects to contemporary arts practice".

Some clear views were expressed about what the Fund should not be supporting. The most frequently mentioned were "databases," "websites not linked to practical projects on the ground" and "research," noting that "there are other government funds available for research, at least in the UK." "CPF should not be a research fund."

Strong views were conveyed about the spread of lead applicants for projects. "Too many organisations leading projects are from the UK," which seemed to be understood as "a response to an urgent need by the BC to get the Fund up and running and get the money out the door quickly". "Naturally, British Council will first turn to UK partners they already know who are working in the region" and to "UK organisations who have existing experience in the management of heritage projects in particular countries". A common view of grantees from the region was that "UK providers should be offering technical help, advice and know-how, but only with the explicit aim of building capacity on the ground". Some people commented on projects led by UK universities. "The Fund should not be used to support research projects, often dressed up as skills training or impact". "Proposals by UK universities should undergo the utmost scrutiny, especially regarding their charges for overhead and salary costs, which may be be disproportionate". "UK institutions are very experienced at grant writing, and in systems of reporting and evaluation. "The Fund must be careful of not rewarding grant-making and reporting skills at the expense of building that capacity in the countries themselves," and "not favouring those who have the best ability to work the system." Universities felt differently, defending their "long-standing research records", "strong connections in certain countries,", and "robust financial and reporting systems".

6.4 CPF Emergency Response

Several interviewees suggested that the Fund should have increased flexibility "to respond to emergencies quickly," to "broaden its response to protection beyond the consequences of conflict", and "be open to protection issues from domestic turbulence or natural disasters, including climate change". The response of CPF to the explosion in Beirut was cited by many as an "excellent example of emergency response," although some believed that "emergency should never become the major aim of the Fund," and that any urgent response mechanism should "always be in partnership with other funders, and perhaps channelled through them to take action". The collaboration with ALIPH and Prince Claus Fund in response to the Beirut emergency was suggested as a possible future model. However, most expressed the view that "CPF should create a fast-track mechanism for decision-making required in emergencies".

6.5 Distribution of Funds

Regarding the distribution of funds across the 5 countries of the Levant, those interviewed understood and accepted the weighting towards projects in OPT and Lebanon, although a number remarked that "there needed to be more engagement with and scouting of local partners in countries like Iraq and Syria", especially in view the small number of local applicants from these countries. "This imbalance should be addressed in the next phase of the Fund".

6.6 Role and Internal Coordination of CPF within the British Council

The role of CPF within the BC structure arose in the majority of interviews. "We don't know where CPF stands in the BC" "Is it a separate programme or an element of BC arts work?" "Is it part of the BC cultural relations strategy, or is the role of the BC simply to be fund managers for DCMS?". Many such questions were asked, both by BC staff and advisors, and also by grantees. " BC seems more focused on creating a system for managing grants than integrating CPF into its structure". "CPF needs stronger corporate support and buy-in." "The International Cultural Heritage at Risk Programme needs to be prioritised by BC as a major international initiative in itself, where models such as CPF and CH4IG are pioneers in the field".

During the interviews, other BC programmes the in arts and the heritage field were mentioned that were believed to complement CPF (work in museums and libraries, the visual and performing arts, crafts, exhibitions, traditional music, architecture, with cities, the creative economy, social enterprise and others). "BC has no common message or an integrated strategy for heritage". Suggestions for "integration" and "coordination" within the BC were made frequently by BC staff, not only concerning arts work, but also the Fund's need for support from a range of BC departments, such as commercial and business development, research and insight, and human resources. Concern was expressed by some over "confusion of where CPF sits in the BC regional and local strategies," a theme that appears in the next section on the role of BC country offices.

6.7 The role of British Council Country Offices

Views of the involvement of BC offices in the region were mixed, depending on the office, the project, and the time period of the project. Consistently, the "significant input" of the BC offices and "helpful staff," particularly in Lebanon and OPT, was cited by grantees, referring to "invaluable support" "strong engagement" "active help" and being "interested and attentive". Comments about the role of BC country offices in Iraq, Jordan, and Syria were occasionally, although not always, expressed negatively as " "indifferent", "not interested" "no support at all" "did not know about and were surprised by our project", and in one case "hostile". At the positive end of comments about these same offices were "valuable help with connections" "accommodating" and "supportive". It seemed apparent that views varied depending on who in the British Council office was involved in the contact. Several grantees were working in the region that had no connections with the local BC office, often because they took no initiative to do so, and the local office did not either.

To most of those interviewed (BC staff, grantees, consultants, others), the local BC offices in the region were referred to as "important" to the successful delivery of CPF projects. " BC is considered as a trustworthy partner". The BC country offices "must be kept better informed" and "be involved at all stages of the Fund's application and decision-making process". Apparently, at the set-up stage of CPF, staff in most of the BC country offices believed that they "were kept in the dark about the Fund," although "communication has now improved", but "still could be better". Suggestions to improve BC internal communications included "online seminars for local teams about CPF" "a regular monthly CPF newsletter" and "routine conversations between grant managers and local staff about projects". Concerning the Fund specifically, several BC staff mentioned that "criteria for selecting projects were not always clear" and "decisions were not explained". Although it was acknowledged that the final approval of grants might be undertaken in the UK at the senior level of the BC with advice from an expert panel and based on independent assessments, there was a consistent view that "BC local offices could play a more important and instrumental role in decision-making about the Fund's priorities". The country offices should be more involved in "scouting for potential projects" "helping grantees to understand the Fund's criteria" "advising on how best to complete applications," and "help to build local capacity in the region". "Our office could offer a

filter before applications went into the decision-making system". Although country teams stated that they had been asked for views about specific project applications, they were often disappointed to be sent "only a 1-page description" "insufficient information," were "not informed later about why projects were accepted or rejected," and "had limited involvement in follow-up".

The important role of the BC in building the capacity of regional operators and other champions and experts in cultural heritage protection was stressed by all those managing CPF projects identifying a need "to develop a "region-wide capacity-building strategy and training programmes". The training needs that were mentioned most frequently included: project management, business planning, alternative sources of income generation, entrepreneurship models, communications, working with refugees, and digital security.

The BC in the region has "strong local convening power, which can be harnessed more". 'We can host meetings and training workshops with partners and with possible project operators". "We have connections with local universities". "The value of integrating local teams into the CPF system" was argued by almost all interviewees. "We have local connections and knowledge," " good relations with the cultural sector," and " staff speak Arabic and other local languages".

On a practical level, if BC country offices are to become more involved, "the human resources available to assist CPF need to be reviewed". Directors already had "many different priorities to juggle," and arts officers stated that they had "too little capacity or time also to focus on CPF". Views were expressed that CPF required "dedicated staff in-country," preferably who were "locally engaged" to "help identify and work with potential projects," "build networks in the cultural heritage field," and "monitor projects once they were operational".

On a more strategic level, in most BC country offices, it appeared that "CPF was not fully integrated into the local strategy (OPT being an apparent exception), nor "a priority in the broader BC strategy for the region".

6.8 Coordination with UK Government Departments and Projects

There were frequent comments about the need to work more closely with UK government departments, especially FCO, DFID and CSSF that had initiatives in countries of the region. "CPF is an important soft power and diplomatic tool" to help "improve the UK footprint in the region". Some complained about an apparent lack of information given about CPF to UK trade missions, aid initiatives, and other UK projects dealing with conflict/post-conflict. "The valuable connection with UK Ambassadors and Consulates" was stressed by some. Others commented that "unfortunately CPF is unknown to Embassy staff, "and the Fund has done little to raise its profile, or find ways "to excite Ambassadors and engage UK diplomats". It was stressed that it "should be the responsibility of the BC to make links and keep other UK departments informed," both within the UK, but also in countries where the Fund was active. Some grantees commented on how helpful it had been when supported by the UK Embassy, which they often directly contacted themselves, rather than through the BC.

6.9 Roles of Advisory Group, Approvals Panels, Assessors, and External Consultants

Interviewees who were advisors, assessors, and evaluators of CPF commented on the "weak connections" between the various processes of the Fund – for example between the Advisory Group, CPF Programme Board, and Approvals Committees making the final decisions. "Information sharing is inconsistent". The remit of the Advisory Group was considered "unclear" "ambiguous". "Is the Advisory Group a think tank or an oversight body?" "Maybe the role is to be a talking shop and

sounding board for CPF staff". At the most negative end, one person interviewed referred to the Advisory Group as a "fig leaf for the British Council," although this was unquestioningly a minority view. At the positive end, the Advisory Group was deemed to have shared "huge experience of the heritage field," and offered "important connections to the heritage sector nationally and internationally".

In addition to identifying the need for a "clear mandate," a few members of the Advisory Board commented on their "uncertainty" over "what advice was being asked for and to whom it was given," and "how such advice would be followed up and acted on". Several remarked that "advice was listened to, but not always followed". "The Advisory Group is not well-used" "its value will depend on its precise function in the governance structure of the Fund". Turning to the future, a view was that "advisors should represent a wider range of expertise reflecting the needs of the Fund" "not only relating to cultural heritage protection, but to socio-economic development, sustainability, climate change, peace-building, security". "Advisors could be more proactive and helpful in advocacy to government, communications, or developing high-level international connections".

Views were expressed about the Advisory Group meetings. "Too much time is spent listening to long presentations." "It would be more useful to send documents in advance rather than presentations". "The absence of communication about the Fund's work between meetings" should be addressed.

Only limited comments were made about the role or functioning of the various Approvals Panels, except the suggestion that "additional expertise in socio-economic issues" would be helpful.

Assessors and evaluators of project applications spoke of "sporadic communications," sometimes with "very-short notice to assess a project" and the "lack of feedback on final decisions that were taken". They commented that project assessments would be "aided by an ability to speak directly to a country office or grant manager," rather than "relying entirely on paper documentation". Grantees and others mentioned the importance of "having a pool of experienced local evaluators in countries in which projects are taking place".

6.10 Communications

The weakness of CPF communications was raised in almost every interview that was conducted. The strategy for communications about the Fund was not apparent to anyone, and criticisms were levelled at communications about the Fund internally in the British Council, including BC country offices, and externally to relevant UK government departments, to grantees and potential grantees, and the public, both in the UK and abroad. CPF communications were frequently described in rather harsh terms "sporadic" "vague" "contradictory" "uninspiring" "not at all joined up". Even the more formal reporting about CPF was considered "not sparky or lively enough to convey the significance of the Fund".

Most stressed the importance of addressing this issue as a matter of priority. "Communications, both UK facing and region-facing, should be divided between the BC central communications team, BC country teams, the CPF team and grantees." but all "needed to be part of a strategic plan and carefully coordinated" to ensure "consistent, coherent and clear messaging about the Fund as a whole and the various projects that were being supported".

Some acknowledged sensitivities around communicating the Fund's activity for fear of a backlash from UK media ("taxpayers money misspent"), and also because of the risks for certain projects and people involved in particular countries, like Syria. Nevertheless, there was unanimity in the desire to

find a way "to communicate the Fund's work by different means across many different constituencies" "but with sensitivity, or even not at all, if certain particular circumstances demanded this".

"The top-line narrative of CPF is difficult to understand". Some see CPF as "an arts programme", others as a "development programme", still others as a "grant programme", and the term "cultural heritage protection" remains "ambiguous, except for people in the know." "Public knowledge about heritage protection relates mainly to UNESCO World Heritage". "Understanding CPF as being more than grants to heritage projects is difficult". "All I need is a clear 3-line description of the Fund, not a 30-page report".

Many spoke of the importance "of telling the stories of the Fund". "CPF tells its story the best when it tells the story of projects". "The Fund should communicate more through stories, and less through statistics". "Project stories and legacy stories are important". A range of specific suggestions to improve CPF communications were offered by those interviewed: "a new architecture for the CPF website to serve more than grantees" "ensuring that every BC country office website features CPF projects and has a link to CPF" "active use of social media" "regular series' of podcasts" "organising virtual tours of projects" " more CPF special events" "touring exhibitions", "newsletters and alerts". "All CPF project websites should be connected" "Communications need to be in Arabic in the region". A few interviewees commented favourably on the "exhibition of CPF work in London" and "the BBC feature on one of the projects," but added that "such activities were insufficient and too infrequent". Some of the leaders of projects believed that "their own communication efforts were not strong enough," and welcomed "support and advice on communication when planning projects".

"More investment is needed in CPF communications". A few suggested that "at least 10% of the Fund should be devoted to communications," partly through projects themselves, and partly through BC initiatives, "but all CPF communications need to be coordinated strategically". "A communications plan should be included in each project, and linked to an overall CPF communications strategy".

6.11 Achieving Impact, Sustainability, and Legacy

All those interviewed believed that a key issue for CPF was how to achieve greater and sustainable impact on the ground, and views coalesced around several main ideas: longer-term planning and extended relationships with projects including post-project follow up, the development of a more robust "what constitutes success" framework, the reframing of impact measurement, building capacity to ensure that projects could be more "embedded in the region," fostering strong networks between projects and partners, and when appropriate (and not in all countries) building connections with governments, especially at local levels, and with other funders.

Many believed that the Fund, in the next phase, should "identify trusted and experienced local partners" and "work with several key partners on longer-term (2-3 year) projects". "The implications of this would be fewer but more sustainable projects," although all believed that one of the Fund's strengths that must be retained was "to remain open to new projects" "especially innovative ideas from the region itself that would help build local capacity on a smaller scale, and in a shorter timescale". "The Fund could operate at 2 levels: longer-term sustainable projects; and shorter-term pilot actions". Most projects "should have a clear sustainability plan," as well as "an exit strategy." For longer-term relationships with grantees, a few interviewees cited how the Arts Council worked with what they called "portfolio organisations". However, many stressed that CPF should treat longer-term lead UK and regional partners differently. "The objective for projects should be to shift

the leadership and management of projects to regional partners," "build the capacities of local partners" "UK partners might be retained as technical advisors, but no longer lead projects". "The capacity-building strategy in all projects should be geared towards 'training the trainers' when possible," and "in some skill areas, work closely with regional educational providers such as universities, colleges, and schools that in time would take over the training responsibilities". CPF grant managers should act sometimes as brokers" and "actively work with several partners at a time on joint ventures". "The desired result would be fewer individual and more collective projects".

"The aim of every CPF project should be to transfer know-how to the region in a sustainable way," and "the guidelines should reflect that priority, and projects selected with that priority in mind". The Fund should encourage "models that are replicable" with "clear benchmarks for projects".

A few interviewees stressed "the importance of investing in more community awareness programmes to raise local knowledge about the importance of cultural heritage by the public". It was suggested that "local BC offices should be tasked with coordinating capacity building initiatives alongside local providers," and "take responsibility for encouraging and supporting the various CPF project networks in the country".

6.12 Evaluation and Knowledge Management

Many grantees expressed the view that "CPF was better evaluated than most funds," and recognised the strong expertise that had been applied to the evaluation methodology and the delineation of evaluation criteria. However, a number highlighted the need to ask the question "Who and what is the evaluation for?" distinguishing "evaluation to justify value for money, advocacy and campaigning" and "evaluation for learning". Although overlapping in part, these two different objectives would require different approaches to evaluation and the treatment of results. It was generally felt that "there was too much emphasis on the quantifiable indicators and measures of evaluation" and "insufficient attention paid to the stories and real learning from projects.". "The results of evaluations are insufficiently analysed and shared except through the publication of glossy evaluation reports that celebrate the achievements of projects more than evaluating them". Although everyone understood "the importance of defending the Fund from external criticism" and " providing key facts and figures to stakeholders and funders of the Fund" to "show that taxpayers' money was being spent wisely," there was widespread disappointment that the "evaluations did not independently appraise projects" "reveal what has not worked well and why" " and " only rarely were results shared with others". "We need to build up a strong local knowledge base about the management of cultural heritage protection in the region".

In terms of the evaluation templates used by the Fund, many believed the approach to be "too mechanical" "too bureaucratic" "too heavily weighted to ticking boxes, and providing statistical data". Some grantees felt that "the tables are confusing" "hard to distinguish between one another" "overlapping". One commented that "the metrics were too imprecise," and another suggested "examining the approach used in CH4IG, which focused more on domains". "The real story is lost in the current evaluation process". The evaluation framework "should include more in-depth interviews to deepen the stories," suggesting the need "to devise impact evaluation based on stories". "The case studies are important, but need more depth, and include emotional responses as well as hard data".

The need to consider variations in the evaluation approach was stressed. " The one template for all projects is inappropriate". "Evaluation frameworks might be different for different types of projects, the length of projects and the precise objectives that are set at the beginning of the project". A few grantees felt they were "pushed into adopting objectives of the Fund as a whole, which sometimes

were inappropriate to the project". Others suggested, "greater flexibility, since some objectives many change as the project develops, and therefore so should the expectations and measurements".

Interviewees commented on the "importance of independent evaluation" and "developing a strong regional pool of external evaluators". "Evaluations are often too one-sided". "Sometimes the evaluations by UK lead partners do not fully reflect the realities and feelings on the ground".

A common concern was that "there should be a longer-term view taken to evaluation". Most advocated "the importance of post-project evaluation and follow up". "If the Fund is serious about measuring impact and sustainability, you can't really measure impacts or speak about sustainable outcomes at the end of a 6-month project".

There were several comments on the importance of knowledge management within CPF. "The Fund seems to be data-rich, but knowledge-poor. "The Fund should pay attention to how to retain knowledge and intellectual capital". "There needs to be a curated programme of knowledge-sharing across the region." "Thematic learning may be the approach, focusing on themes such as oral history, traditional music, museum curation, crafts development, tourism, etc". "The development of clear and replicable models for projects should be one of the outcomes of the evaluation process". "More in-depth approaches to evaluation with a focus on capturing knowledge should lead to enhanced capacity building in the region". "The findings need to be turned into resources for widespread training to help build capacity".

There were suggestions of the need for "stronger connections with universities, not as leaders of projects, but to assist in analysing and organising the data," referring to the desired involvement of universities both in the UK and in the region, and offering specific proposals of which universities should be involved.

Although the proposal for the development of a *What Works Centre for Cultural Heritage Protection* was raised with interviewees, only a very few had an understanding of the "What Works" approach. Those that did generally supported the idea of creating "a neutral and independent body to harvest learning in cultural heritage, commission research, take in research, and influence policy". "Academic input is essential, but there needs to be a balance between academic research and practice on the ground". "What Works Centres now focus on STEM areas, so one for Cultural Heritage would certainly help raise its profile". "These Centres have a high profile with the UK government that takes them seriously". "We need to learn from other 'centres of excellent models' in the UK and elsewhere". "DFID Centres work like What Works Centres in certain areas; these should be studied". "Such an initiative must be a partnership between different bodies, and ensure that the experience of UK bodies such as Historic England, Historic Scotland, the World Monuments Fund, BlueShield and others are firmly built into the model, in addition to CPF"

6.13 Establishing a Pilot Hub for Cultural Heritage Protection in the Levant Region.

The proposal to consider creating a pilot "hub" or "centre" for CPF in the Levant Region elicited extremely varied reactions from interviewees ranging from "great idea, and it should be based in …." to "bad idea; don't even consider it". Several interviewees admitted, "being torn, and uncertain what they believed best". The views expressed depended on very different responses to the questions "What would a regional "hub" do; what is it for?". For the majority (but not all), the main issue was not what a CPF "centre" might look like, or where it should be sited, but what its role and function should be. Many reacted negatively to the idea of a "centre" and preferred the notion of a "decentralised hub" spread across the 5 countries of the region. The view that was most favoured

(although not by all) was one of "embedding CPF in the BC country office structure", with the "hub" being "the network of expertise offered by staff in the BC offices" along with "other relevant services that might be provided by regional partners". Distinctions were drawn between "a virtual hub" and a "physical hub," with the vast majority of those interviewed favouring the former ("virtual hub"), remarking that "physical presence is also important" but "this need not be located in one place" .

Those who favoured the idea of a "base" of some kind for a CPF "hub" suggested Beirut or Amman, giving arguments for their preference. Beirut: "already a cultural centre" "many local and international cultural organisations based there" "liberal space for expression" "the BC local office needs a new space anyway and could be combined with CPF" "relatively cheap property prices" "an important symbolic and practical contribution after the destruction caused by the explosion". Those that favoured Amman cited "the ability of citizens of the other countries to travel to Jordan without too many complications" "impressive cultural heritage initiatives underway" "the support that might be given by the well-recognised Jordanian Department of Antiquities" and others. Counterarguments were given for why both Beirut and Amman were not desirable: "travel restrictions prevent Palestinians from getting into Lebanon" "Beirut is near collapse, and it's not the right time for such an initiative" "there are significant security and political risks". For the suggestion of Amman, interviewees argued that "travel is often difficult, especially for Syrians" "how the situation might change for the worse with more visa restrictions imposed" " too unpredictable". Several believed that in the Levant, the selection of a base anywhere would lead to possible claims "of actual or perceived bias towards projects in that country because of easy access to the centre by those living there" "symbolism of the choice would be interpreted in the wrong way" "indirect influence (actual or perceived) might be exerted by authorities in the chosen country". As was stated, there was only minor support from those interviewed for establishing a physical base for a "hub" with the vast majority endorsing the proposal for "a light touch hub" "a virtual learning hub", " a hub that does not duplicate but enhances the work of BC country offices" "a hub that is not a new organisation or institution" "an open hub that encourages partners to join in" " a hub with no hidden agenda or an additional layer of bureaucracy" " a hub not commanded by a high powered Director, but functioning based on peer-to-peer collaboration". There was an acknowledgment that such a "hub" perhaps including all BC country offices "would need coordination by a regional lead CPF manager, who might be based in one of the BC offices". Rather than a "hub or centre", the term "regional cluster" appeared to capture the spirit of what many interviewees were advocating.

In any decentralised structure, strong digital connections will be essential. Some of the grantees remarked that " the digital infrastructure in parts of the region remains weak" "This must be addressed in the planning". All interviewees stressed "the importance of face-to-face meetings with CPF staff, and direct encounters with peers and other projects". "Physical meetings could be organised anywhere with problem-free travel for participants". "The meeting place could change". "Organising meetings in Cairo or London is easier than in the region itself". "Eliminate the hassle of negotiating for travel visas and last-minute cancellations of flights". A consistent shared view was "With the right people, any hub idea will work well".

Working on the theme of a "regional cluster", this seemed consistent with the " various clusters that comprise the MENA region" "The Levant has its own territorial and historic coherence" "The pilot CPF Levant cluster might later be extended to the other regional clusters, and eventually joining them all together to share expertise and knowledge".

Returning to the functions or responsibilities of a "coordinated cluster" of pooled expertise across the 5 countries of the Levant, references were most often made to the need "to provide information and to communicate about the Fund" "to identify and assist potential grantees making applications

to the Fund" "to build relations with partners, including new regional partners" " to be a part of the grant-making, project monitoring and evaluation process" "foster networking between projects and other actors in cultural heritage locally and regionally" "coordinate capacity building and training initiatives, extending their reach and potential sustainability".

The term "embedding CPF in the region" was frequently used by interviewees from the region. There were differing views concerning precisely which CPF functions should be transferred to the region, and which should be retained in the UK. Some believed that "most of the grant management should take place in the region" "preferably by mangers with language skills in English and Arabic"; others thought that "the technical unit responsible for checking applications, budgets, etc could be left in the UK," but "relational and networking responsibilities should be devolved to the local BC offices". Most supported the idea that "all regional communications to do with the Fund should be handled in the region" with "a communications lead who was based in a local BC office coordinating CPF communications activity".

Several interviewees believed that the ' CPF central headquarters" should remain in the UK, having oversight of operations in all 12 countries of the Fund, and final approvals of grants", and also "being the main contact point for UK partners" "maintaining strong relationships with DCMS, other government departments, donors and other key stakeholders in the Fund's work". Regardless of which function was based where, all remarked that "duplication of any kind needed to be avoided". "Information flow and coordination between all parts of the CPF structure, and especially between the UK and local BC offices, is essential".

6.14 Partners

During the interviews, many suggestions were given concerning partnerships that CPF should encourage. The list of proposals, which includes both current partners and new ones, appears as Appendix 3 to this report. There were some differences of view expressed about the value of particular partnerships – some more of practical and operational importance for the Fund, including sharing experience and know-how; others having more 'symbolic' or 'strategic' importance. Several interviewees suggested, "that there should now be a comprehensive mapping of potential partners from the region, in the UK, and internationally".

6.15 Covid-19

The impact of Covid-19 was raised in many interviews, anticipating the Fund "would be flexible enough to accept delays or cancelations of certain activities" caused by Covid-19 restrictions. Concern was expressed by many about the "longer-term impact of Covid-19 on the Fund's work" and sought clarity about how the Fund might operate with longer-term constraints posed by Covid-19. A few of those interviewed also proposed that CPF "establish a special Covid-19 relief fund" "to support cultural heritage projects that have been particularly affected by the pandemic, "such as cases where building work needs to be postponed, where revenue or jobs are lost, or when special measures needed to be introduced due to conditions impacted by Covid".

REFLECTIONS and CONCLUSIONS

Can CPF address the serious issues of war, poverty and economic deprivation, water shortage, food security, corruption, inequality and social justice for all, discrimination, safety, the negative consequences of climate change, poor healthcare and education, intimidation,

exclusion, censorship, broken infrastructure, limitations of freedom and abuses of human rights, and at the same time help achieve significant sustainable economic and social impacts that will help achieve greater prosperity and promote inclusion and well-being in countries affected by conflict? The answer must be 'no'. Let's not pretend. Any such expectations or over-stated claims should be immediately dismissed.

However, based on the performance of CPF during its first phase (2016-2021), and backed by international research by bodies such as UNESCO and World Bank, there is evidence that demonstrates that cultural heritage programmes can make a significant contribution to inclusive growth, including social and economic development, especially when local communities themselves actively engage in promoting their cultural heritage linked to their history, identity, and place. There is less "hard evidence" to show that the programmes can engender a greater sense of belonging, well-being, and health. However, this is mainly due to the current limited selection of indicators and measures that prioritise quantifiable and easily verifiable data gathered, rather than the more subjective but equally impactful evidence garnered through personal stories, testimonials, and individual and collective accounts of what is experienced and gained by those affected. The measurement of "impacts" (both hard and soft) requires a sophisticated approach in the domain of cultural heritage. This matter is important if CPF wishes to capture the actual "value" of the projects supported, partly to meet the demands of agendas of stakeholders and funders, but also to understand the powerful intrinsic effects of its work on people whose lives have frequently been torn apart through war, conflict, loss of identity and fear.

The Fund remains one tool, amongst many others, to address the serious consequences of conflict, and can only have a direct impact on the ground and make a difference to people's lives if the projects it supports are carefully chosen as strategic interventions in a complex environment. Each intervention demonstrably needs to make a positive contribution that offers a building block that can inspire and combine with others to achieve sustainable results. Through practical actions, the building of local capacities in cultural heritage protection can continue to expand, be copied, and inspire confidence and know-how to create new projects. CPF projects must represent "models of good practice" that can be replicated and extended, or be pilot actions that set strong foundations on which to develop further.

In future, there will likely be increased demand on CPF. Ensuring the development of high-quality projects, and supporting only those that best realise the objectives and aspirations of the Fund should be a priority. In a region that has suffered intolerably, and with many examples of failed initiatives, projects of the Fund should be viewed as "acupuncture points,"[6] which add experience and knowledge to the system as a whole. Managing increasing expectations of what the Fund should deliver, and dealing with the disappointment or frustration of applicants whose projects are not supported will likely become major challenges. The need for careful prioritisation, transparency, robust assessment and evaluation, and strong relationships with potential grantees will be of considerable importance.

From the interviews undertaken during this review, it is apparent CPF is seen through different ''lenses," which illustrate diverse interpretations of the value of the Fund. This diversity is reflected in reports and documents of the Fund's work. Such lenses include viewing CPF action through a "traditional heritage protection" lens, CPF through the BC's core "cultural relations" lens, or CPF

[6] The analogy of acupuncture is valid in the sense that the Fund, like that of an acupuncturist, first analyses complex issues and decides on the best interventions across different intersections that might achieve the greatest impact, ultimately building on a system's overall momentum to develop. Small interventions lead to wider benefits. Acupuncture is a treatment derived from ancient medical practice, where fine needles are inserted into carefully chosen sites in the body that creates other positive effects and stimulates wider gains.

through a wider "arts and heritage" lens that connects other arts and heritage activities of the BC. CPF is also seen through a "socio-economic development" lens, and a "place-making and community building" lens, and a "gender equality" lens, and a "security, peace-building and conflict resolution" lens, and a "climate change" lens. One lens that appears inappropriate through which to view the work of CPF is the lens of "world heritage protection," as defined by UNESCO, referring to outstanding landmark sites that are inscribed in the UNESCO list of World Heritage, and which generally require substantial investment beyond the financial scope of CPF. However, because the brand of "world heritage" is well recognised, it has been assumed by some that CPF should support the financing of protection of renowned and acclaimed world heritage. The decision by CPF not to prioritise support to such projects should not reflect a lack of recognition of landmarks of outstanding cultural or natural importance; rather they fall, rightly so, outside the wider strategic focus and financial capabilities of the Fund, and indeed are priorities for other initiatives and funds. So, there are many "lenses" applied to CPF, some of which are applicable to its work, while others are not. These many ways of viewing and interpreting the Fund may be a consequence of the Fund's "holistic" approach and aim to meet the varying interests of its stakeholders. It is not that the combinations of lenses or perspectives necessarily are incompatible, but they can invoke confusion and ambiguity of the primary purpose of CPF, and create an overall a muddled understanding of what the Fund has been primarily established to achieve. This lack of precision of the Fund's principal purpose was evidenced in diverse views held by those who were interviewed.

Because CPF is an operational arm of the British Council, in addition to the various lenses that might be applied to cultural protection as summarised above, the BC itself adds a layer of institutional ambiguity, based on its overall mission. Possibly due to the relative newness of the Fund, there appears to be a vagueness of where the Fund sits in the British Council's hierarchy of priorities and operational tools. Is CPF a programme in its own right, a sub-programme of a programme, a component of the Council's arts and heritage work, a strategic instrument of cultural relations in the MENA region…or…? The different expectations of the Fund are not aligned.

The Fund's size and significance suggest the need for lucidity on such a matter, which in turn will help clarify the Fund's importance, relevance, and connection to the British Council as its parent body, and to the organisation's mandate. The role of the BC can only be enhanced through a consolidation of its work across a wider cultural heritage field of interests, which are housed in different parts of its operational structure. There is an obvious connection between the CPF and CH4IG, although this does not as yet seem to be fully realised. The Council's work in arts and heritage, which sits separately in operational terms to CPF, is another obvious linkage. By recognising the relationships between perceived separate elements dealing with heritage, the BC will have an altogether more powerful story to tell, and also be able to connect CPF to a larger "cultural ecosystem" of which it is inevitably a part. Also, clearer association with other elements of the Council's work on the creative economy, with cities, in education, in parts of its global consultancy activity, social enterprise, etc. will add coherence and combine to enhance and enrich the Council's primary cultural relations mission.

"Out of the clutter, find simplicity" was Albert Einstein's first rule of work. It appears that the clarity of CPF's fundamental objective has been "cluttered" with overlayers of expectations and views of the Fund's ambitions and potential. The "narrative" of the Fund, as judged by its various reports and communications, has been unclear for this reason. Although the Fund's objectives and outcomes are delineated in its documents, for those not "at the heart" of the Fund, its overall message remains opaque and hazy. Beyond the familiar management jargon and "politically correct" terminology used around CPF, there is a compelling storyline that could set the stage for the Fund's uniqueness and value, but this remains hidden. In addition to a relatively "dry" articulation of well-rehearsed objectives and outcomes, CPF needs an "emotional footprint" that can be clearly expressed,

understood, appreciated and remembered. Now that the Fund has been operating for several years, it has achievements and stories to tell. How various stories across 12 countries might weave together can offer a powerful "narrative" that will effectively communicate the Fund's meaning and distinctive importance. Such a narrative ought to be "people focused," and with increased attention given to the importance of cultural heritage in *restoring lives* and *rebuilding communities*, linked to the *cultural relations* mission of the BC.

This review was asked to focus on the Levant, and as stated previously, this is a region at a critical crossroads where cultural heritage is exposed to many threats. The natural processes of decay and deterioration have always threatened cultural heritage, but the deliberate destruction caused by war combined with neglect have intensified the challenges. Many well-known historic conflicts characterize the Levant: territorial disputes, religious differences, competition for power, intolerance of the other, and the denial of rights and equality to some. Certain conditions in the region have altered somewhat since 2016, and this updated context should be taken into account when considering the Fund's priorities in its next phase: the spill over of the Syrian civil war in Lebanon, the Iraqi insurgency, large-scale uprisings in Iraq and Lebanon, and increased numbers of Syrians fleeing their homes. In OPT, there have been increased restrictions of movements and goods out of Gaza, and an expansion of settlements in the West Bank, as well as intensified demolitions and additional discriminatory policies against Palestinians. There has been the devastation caused by the major explosion in Beirut. Then there are the significant and increasing impacts of climate change: rising sea levels, extreme heat, drought. Cultural heritage, if managed in the right way, has the potential to help unify society, and contribute towards fostering a culture of peace, as well as mitigate, although in relatively modest ways, the effects of climate change. A wide view of cultural heritage, such as the one advocated by CPF, can offer a vehicle to diffuse conflicts, build cohesion, and address environmental concerns. It is so needed in the Levant

From this review, a strong case has emerged to create a pilot "cluster" of CPF work in the Levant, the term CPF "cluster" preferred to CPF "hub" or CPF "centre," which seemed to many who were interviewed to carry worrying connotations based on negative experience of the models and practices of "hubs" and "centres" elsewhere. The rationale for establishing a CPF "cluster" in the Levant seems apparent. The region has historical and geographic coherence from a cultural heritage perspective. A regional "cluster" holds the benefits of working closer to where the activity is concentrated, taking advantage of the existing knowledge on the ground, the ability to use already developed relationships while fostering new ones, and working more directly and consistently with projects to achieve greater impact and sustainability. By "becoming more than the sum of its parts," a well-managed and coordinated cluster arrangement would harmonise efforts to enhance local capacities across the region, create connections between projects, develop project networks to share experience, and offer a collective platform for relevant and strong communications in the region. As argued, this would most effectively be achieved through developing the role and practical support offered by the British Council local office in each of the countries, while at the same time encouraging a coordinated approach to the Fund's management, shared between the BC country offices and the Fund's UK headquarters and central operations. This model may be described as a *co-creative ecosystem model of management,* characterised by collaborative relationships, shared responsibilities and a *one-team* approach, regardless of where members of the CPF team are based.

Although CPF should continue to prioritise its work in the Levant, it cannot ignore its wider remit across 12 conflict-affected countries in the Middle East and East Africa. The evidence provided by the first operational phase of the Fund demonstrates the Fund's capabilities. There may be potential in extending the CPF "cluster" model beyond the Levant to include, for example, CPF work in East African countries and perhaps elsewhere, should additional funding be raised for expansion of the Fund's geographic focus. The Levant "cluster" could act as a pilot for wider development.

The main strategic and operational weaknesses of the Fund as a whole as identified in the interviews should be addressed before the launch of the Fund's next phase, hopefully in April 2021. By the same measure, CPF should take heart by the immense support it has generated, and the extraordinary work it has supported during its first phase.

As emphasized earlier, CPF needs to be coherently connected to BC's other programmes in arts and heritage especially, but also in other fields, and the organisation's general cultural relations endeavours. The leadership to achieve this will need to happen at a senior management level of the British Council, but practice on the ground will be demonstrated by coordination achieved at a local level in country offices. The ambition to connect CPF to a "wider cultural ecology" in a country or region can be realised through synergistic connections between projects developed centrally and locally.

This demands a more strategic overview of how CPF is integrated into the BC's overall corporate strategy, into its regional strategy, and into the strategies and priorities of local offices in countries where the Fund operates, with sufficient resources to achieve such integrative objectives. This does not mean simply adding CPF to an already crowded workload of an arts officer, or to the many other responsibilities and priorities of a country director". Integration infers strategic incorporation, not "adding on" and, as stated, the resource implications to achieve integration must be considered if integration is to be more than a "paper exercise" that will probably not result in practical joined-up action, and therefore not be delivered in any meaningful way.

The proposal for developing a more "networked approach" to managing the Fund should characterise the next phase of the Fund's operation. This also implies fostering a "networked approach" both to internal operations and to the projects that the Fund supports. We live in a time when the formation of alliances and networks demonstrate powerful means to create societal change. Networks are essential for people finding like-minded others and sharing knowledge and experience. However, networks are frequently based on self-interest; people often network together for their own benefit and to develop their work. That is why networks tend to have fluid memberships; people move in and out of them based on how much they benefit from participating.

However, the Fund's longer-term objective should be to move beyond the notion of *networks* to the development of *communities of practice* in the field of cultural heritage protection. A *community of practice* is a *learning community* where people share what they know and intentionally create new knowledge for their field of practice. In a *community of practice*, the focus extends beyond the needs of the group. There is an intentional commitment to advance the field of practice as a whole, and to share those discoveries with a wider audience. They make their resources and knowledge available to anyone undertaking related work.

This review was asked to investigate the feasibility of creating a pilot *What Works Centre for Cultural Heritage* in the Levant. A *What Works Centre* sounds like a structure, but what is being suggested by this review is encouraging an approach to collaborative learning in the Levant – a *community of practice* that includes the British Council country and UK offices, the CPF projects, and other cultural heritage partners, as part of what might be termed a regional "knowledge management" system, combining *knowledge creation, knowledge capture, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing, and knowledge application.* Currently, CPF has no knowledge management system in place that can store, organise and retrieve knowledge and experience to improve understanding, foster collaboration, and share learning. This would need to be developed as a central component to the CPF system. Such an element should be part of an enhanced regional approach in the Levant, co-owned by regional partners in the cultural protection field. The Levant CPF "cluster" should be used

to "test and build" a prototype that would later be incorporated into the proposed International Cultural Heritage Protection Responses What Works Centre (ICHPRWWC). This should not prevent the process of developing wider partnerships and approaches for an ICHPRWWC operating more globally, and which could run in parallel, but probably be constructed at a slower speed. However, the creation of a CPF knowledge management system piloted in the Levant is an action that can begin relatively quickly, and become an integral part of the region's capacity-building efforts in cultural heritage protection.

" If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading" advised Lao Tzu, the ancient Chinese philosopher. Without suggesting any major change of direction, it is opportune during the period before the next CPF programme is launched to consider modifications and variations to the Fund's current path of travel. In the next CPF phase (2021-2024), the focus should shift from the Fund's preoccupation with developing a proficient and professional grants system to achieving a more effective and resourceful mechanism for achieving sustainable impacts in the countries in which CPF operates, using the cultural protection instrument that the Fund offers, and becoming more integrated into wider cultural ecosystems that exist across the region. The attention to addressing cultural protection at risk, and the criterion of offering "value for money" through the projects the Fund supports must not be diluted, but certain shifts in thinking and practice in delivery should move preoccupations in new directions. The indicative shifts that are suggested for adoption in the next phase of the CPF programme, as reflected in this review, are summarised below:

- *From* **centralised** management of CPF projects *to* **decentralised, networked and coordinated** management of CPF projects
- *From* focus on project **outcomes** *to* project **impacts**[7]
- *From* **building capacity** *to* achieving **sustained delivery capability**
- *From* **implementation** of projects *to* **sustainability** of projects
- *From* processes of **evaluation** *to* **learning** *to* **knowledge management and sharing**
- *From* **supporting individual CPF projects** *to* **establishing CPF project networks**
- *From* **embedding CPF project networks** *to* **developing communities of practice in cultural heritage protection**

Where better to pilot such shifts, but in the Levant.

As mentioned at the start of this report, and it is worth re-stating at the end, that after an initial period of operation, the future of CPF remains unclear with no guarantee, as yet, of future funding. However, the undisputed and documented achievements of the Fund, the opportunities to build on its strong foundations and to increase its impact, combined with its demonstration of UK leadership and power in cultivating relationships in the countries of its operation all create a strong case for continued government support. When looking at the potential of the Fund beyond the next 3-year cycle, although not included in the remit for this review, it may be opportune that consideration of the longer-term vision of the Fund moves outside the limits of the current legal agreement between the British Council and DCMS, and includes the exploration of attracting additional funds from a range of sources, to expand its work.

While CPF is awaiting the outcome of the government spending review, which will determine its future, one option is for the British Council to "stand by" and wait for the government's decision, which hopefully will come sooner than later. The other option is to assume positively that that value of the Fund will be recognised, and use this period until a decision is finalised, even if it transpires

[7] Impacts can be conceptualised as the longer-term effects of outcomes. While outcome evaluation tells us what kind of change has occurred, an impact evaluation paints a picture of how a project might have affected participants' lives on a broader scale.

that the result is a further one-year funding arrangement, to set in train a process that will strengthen the Fund's role and work, so that that it will be poised at the starting line in readiness to grasp the opportunity ambitiously the moment assurances are given of its continued support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. British Council

8.1.1 Integrate CPF into the primary cultural relations mission and operational structure of the British Council as a whole, including incorporating CPF into BC Regional and Country strategies in areas where the Fund operates. The role, status, and priority of CPF requires clarity, including its connection to the Council's other cultural relations activities, as well as to relevant programmes in arts work, education, social enterprise, heritage for inclusive growth, and other Council programmes. The integration of CPF will consolidate and add significant weight to the delivery of BC's core mission due to the scale of the Fund and its contribution to the UK's international agenda linked to "soft power" and the UK as a " trusted global leader".

8.1.2 Develop a pilot cluster in the Levant where certain CPF functions are undertaken by BC country offices: Functions to be taken on by country offices would include communicating the work of the Fund, identifying potential CPF projects based on clear criteria and guidelines, assisting in the preparation of applications, advising on decisions, monitoring successful projects and contributing to their evaluation, developing connections between projects, fostering networking in cultural heritage protection, and helping to connect the Fund both to other BC programmes, and the wider cultural ecosystem in each country. The 5 country offices in the Levant would act as a pilot "collective cluster" for CPF activity. The additional human financial resources to undertake this role needs to be assessed. Decisions need to be taken about precisely which functions are undertaken by country offices, and which are retained in the UK, and effective processes for coordination and decision-making. A Levant CPF lead manager should coordinate the work of the pilot "CPF cluster" in the region.

8.2 *Cultural Protection Fund*

8.2.1 Determine a clear narrative for the Fund with a unified core message: A narrative is the "story" behind CPF that must combine simplicity with being compelling that responds to the question: why CPF? what drives the Fund?

8.2.2. Develop a comprehensive strategic plan for communicating the Fund's work, targeted to different constituencies, stakeholders, interest groups and publics, identifying appropriate communication tools and resources for delivery. The plan should coordinate different delivery partners in the UK and in the region, including BC country offices, CPF projects, and a communications vehicle that is based in the region itself. A robust communications plan should be included in each project, but linked to a broader CPF communications strategy. The communication of the impact of the Fund's projects conveyed through stories should be at the core of the CPF narrative. The CPF communication plan should be tailored to address different constituencies in different ways, and include, *inter alia:*

- Internal communication with all components of the CPF grant-making system

- Internal communications with relevant BC staff (based in the UK and abroad)
- External communications with relevant government stakeholders (based in the UK and abroad)
- External communications with potential grantees, current grantees, post-grantees, and other users of the Fund
- External communications with the wider cultural ecosystems in the countries of CPF operations
- External communications with the cultural heritage sector in the UK
- External communication with potential and actual partners of the Fund (e.g. other funders, professional bodies, institutional structures, etc)
- External communication with affected publics in the region
- External communication with UK public

The plan should embrace the specific communication requirements of the pilot "CPF cluster" in the Levant (refer to 8.1.2), and include the creation of a CPF communications focal point located in the region with a locally engaged team using both English and Arabic language, and appropriate regional communication and social media platforms. CPF communications should embrace a creative approach and consider involving regional artists, designers, film-makers, and journalists.

8.2.3. Strengthen the Fund's focus to become a more effective and resourceful mechanism that achieves sustainable impacts in the countries in which CPF operates. To achieve this, consideration should be given to, *inter alia*:

- Revising the Fund's guidelines to emphasise sustainable impact
- Weighting decision-making criteria to emphasise sustainable impact
- Encouraging the longer-term design and planning of projects
- Supporting projects with the capability of scaling up to ensure wider impact
- Undertaking contextual mapping of cultural heritage protection across the region
- Determining priority interventions based on context, need, relevance, quality and feasibility
- Revising impact and evaluation measures to emphasise sustainability and learning
- Enabling multi-year planning by overcoming the cut-off of the end of a financial for projects
- Building longer-term relationships with key providers
- Developing connections between projects, and supporting project networks
- Nurturing cross-border projects
- Identifying and supporting innovative pilot actions to test new ideas
- Retaining the ability to stimulate and encourage new regional providers
- Enhancing the leadership and management capacities of regional providers
- Transferring the leadership of projects to regional organisations when possible
- Ensuring that legacy planning is included in projects
- Introducing post-project follow-up

8.2.4. Establish a coordinated approach to capacity building and training in essential skills required for cultural heritage protection, as part of the pilot "CPF cluster" in the Levant. The emphasis should be on "training the trainers" and embedding capacity building into the work of local providers, as well as fostering the development of networks and communities of practice in cultural heritage protection in the region. The BC Country Offices would lead this initiative (refer to 8.1.2)

8.2.5. Revise the CPF evaluation methodology to place more emphasis on qualitative evaluation, independent evaluation, storytelling, and the development of robust and in-

depth case studies, as well as introduce a process of post-project longer-term evaluation. CPF's model for evaluation and the process of embedding evaluation into every funded project is good practice, but should embrace an assessment of the challenges that are faced in each project, and the personal experiences of those involved that are important to learning. In addition to achieving the objective of defending the value of the Fund using appropriate indicators and metrics, the evaluation framework should prioritise evaluation for shared learning purposes, including qualitative aspects and the story of each project. The methodology for creating case studies should be enhanced.

8.2.6. Develop appropriate knowledge management systems for the capture, storage, sharing, and the application of learning from CPF projects in the Levant, as a pilot action. The pilot knowledge management system created for the Levant should be designed so it can be replicated in in other regions, and be components of a larger prototype leading to the establishment of an *International Cultural Heritage Protection Responses What Works Centre.*

8.2.7. Review the role of the CPF Advisory Group, clarify its responsibilities within the governance of CPF, and determine the expertise required of its members in the next phase of the Fund's operations. This should be part of a review of the CPF strategic oversight and grant-making systems, which should aim to establish closer connections and information flow been the different components of the system (e.g. advisors, grant management, assessors, approval panels, monitoring, evaluation).

8.2.8. Review current processes and procedures for CPF grant-making to address issues raised in this report about the application, decision-making, reporting, and monitoring practices, to achieve greater efficiency, simplicity, and ease for grantees to meet requirements, whilst at the same time respecting the needs for due diligence and robust financial accountability. This review should encompass the development of a variety of approaches, depending on the scale or type of activity, and also take into account measures that will be time-saving to those who are managing grant processes, thereby releasing capacity for managers to build relationships, coordinate projects and, when appropriate, become more involved in project design, development, and networking.

8.2.9. Establish an Emergency Response Mechanism within the Fund, identifying, criteria and conditions for its use, and processes for its implementation.

8.2.10 Consider adaptations to the management of the Fund that can best take into account the impact of Covid-19 on the Fund's activities.

8.2.11 Devise an external partnership strategy for the Fund which will identify and develop alliances with appropriate funders, agencies, UK government departments, professional bodies and organisations that directly or indirectly are linked to cultural heritage protection and other instruments of international development both in the UK and internationally. A comprehensive exercise of mapping potential partners should be undertaken. In the short term, special attention should be given to establishing partnerships that will help strengthen the pilot "CPF cluster" in the Levant.

8.2.12 Taking into account the above recommendations, review the human resources requirements to achieve the Fund's objectives efficiently in the next phase of its operation, and address current shortcomings to enable the Fund to develop. The review should recognise human resource needs to achieve additional capacity that may be needed to

achieve a pilot "CPF cluster" in the Levant, as well as the enhancement specifically of the Fund's communications, knowledge management, and partnership engagement functions. Decisions about human resources should be taken with a view of ensuring the continuity and stability of the CPF staff structure for the full period of the next phase of operations.

8.2.13. Establish task forces to follow up on the recommendations of this report. Each task force should have a specific mandate, with a deadline for reporting, and comprise a team of relevant British Council staff, with a designated lead, and also include appropriate external advisors and others with experience of the first phase of the Fund's operations.

Appendix 1 – LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Interviews organised by Reece Waldron (Education and Society), assisted by Uma Bradshaw (Arts)

Name	Surname	Organisation	Project/Role
Jehad	Abu Hassan	Première Urgence Internationale (PUI)	Protection, preservation and promotion of Gaza Strip Historical archaeological sites
Waseem	Al Bahri	British Council	Grant Manager, CPF
Abdullah	Al Kafri	Directions Independent Culture (known as Ettijahat - Independent Culture)	Douroub (Pathways): Promoting Syrian Intangible Cultural Heritage
Abdulhamid	Al Qabbani	Jouri Research and Consultancy	Specialist in Conflict Resolution and Sustainable Peace, CPF Assessor
Robert	Bewley	Oxford University	Training in Endangered Archaeology methodology with Middle East and North African Heritage Stakeholders
Didier	Bouakaze-Khan	Institute of Social Sciences, Middle East Technical University - METU/ODTU	Member of CPF Advisory Group
Khaldun	Bshara	RIWAQ- Centre for Architectural Conservation	" The Life Jacket" : The Revitalization and Development of Rural Jerusalem
David	Codling	British Council	Programme Director, CPF
Martin	Daltry	British Council	Country Director, OPT
John	Darlington	World Monuments Fund Britain	Investing in Skills to Rebuild a Nation: The Syrian Stone Masonry Training Scheme Pilot
Marwan	Daweish	Coventry University	On Our Land: Protecting Bedouin Lived Cultural Heritage in the Occupied Palestinian Territories
France	Desmarais	Diriyah Gate Development Authority, Saudi Arabia	Museums Senior Director, former Deputy Executive Director & Scientific Director, ALIPH, former ICOM (Director of Programmes and Partnerships), Member of CPF Advisory Group
Richard	Dwerryhouse	Turquoise Mountain Trust	Protecting Levantine craftsmanship through embedded training and traditional learning
Basma	El Husseiny	Action for Hope ASBL	Action for Hope Music Schools for Refugees
Alexandra	Fiebig	ALIPH - International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas	Project Manager
Stephanie	Grant	British Council	Senior Programme Manager, CPF
Mike	Grogan	Virtual Experience Company	Palais Qsar Es-Said-Bardo
Xavier	Grosset	Première Urgence Internationale (PUI)	Protection, preservation and promotion of Gaza Strip Historical archaeological sites
Philip	Hall	British Consulate General, Jerusalem	British Consulate General
Harriett	Hoffler	Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	Head of Cultural Protection, Cultural Diplomacy, DCMS

Hannah	Lewis	Safina Projects CIC	An Ark for Iraq: Emergency response programme for the endangered watercraft heritage of Iraq
Rosanna	Lewis	British Council	Senior Programme Manager, C+D
Thom	Louis	British Council	Programme Manager, C+D
Christopher	Lyle	Turquoise Mountain Trust	Protecting Levantine craftsmanship through embedded training and traditional learning
Roger	Matthews	University of Reading	Protecting Iraqi Cultural Heritage: Deterring Antiquities Looting and Trafficking
Cindy	Mizher	British Council	Arts Manager, Lebanon
Joanne	Orr	Royal BC Museum	Deputy CEO and Vice President, Collections, Member of CPF Advisory Group, and Specialist Assessor
Sir Derek	Plumbly	Diplomatic affairs/UK Embassy in Lebanon	Former CPF Approval Panel member/Ambassador; former UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon.
Joan	Porter Maclver	Basrah Museum Project	Basrah Museum Project
Kate	Pugh	Independent Consultant	Former Chief Executive of the Heritage Alliance; Trustee to various Heritage orgs. Chair of CPF Advisory Group
Tim	Purbrick	Ministry of Defence	Commanding Officer of the British Cultural Property Protection Unit (CPPU)
Caroline	Qutteneh	Welfare Association (WA-UK)	“Restoration of Al-Madrassah Al-Jawhariyya and Ribat AlKurd Façade in the Old City of Jerusalem, as a part of the Rehabilitation of the Bab El-Hadid Street neighbourhood”
Chris	Rawlings	British Council	Regional Director, Middle East and North Africa
Shatha	Safi	RIWAQ- Centre for Architectural Conservation	" The Life Jacket" : The Revitalization and Development of Rural Jerusalem
Rashad	Salim	Safina Projects CIC	An Ark for Iraq: Emergency response programme for the endangered watercraft heritage of Iraq
Patricia	Sellick	Coventry University	On Our Land: Protecting Bedouin Lived Cultural Heritage in the Occupied Palestinian Territories
Stephen	Stenning	British Council	Director of Arts and Society
Peter	Stone	School of Arts and Cultures , Newcastle University	UNESCO Chair in Cultural Property Protection & Peace
Prof Stuart	Taberner	University of Leeds University	Phase 1 Co-Investigator and Principal Investigator of PRAXIS (Arts and Humanities for Sustainable Development)
Ian	Thomas	British Council	Head of Evidence, Arts
Stephanie	Twigg	British Council	Regional Arts Director, Middle East and North Africa
Christopher	Young	Christopher Young Heritage Consultancy	Heritage Specialist, Member of CPF Advisory Group, and Specialist Assessor

Appendix 2: QUESTIONS USED IN INTERVIEWS

A. Experience of the CPF Process

1. From personal experience, what are the major strengths and weaknesses of the Fund?
2. What additional support from the British Council would be valuable - especially what might be offered locally?
3. How might the Fund better add value to the cultural heritage work you are doing?

B. Impact and Sustainability of CPF Projects

1. How might the Fund generate greater impact and benefits locally, and across the region as a whole?
2. How might the Fund operate to ensure a stronger legacy of the projects?
3. What approaches might the British Council take to support the longer-term sustainability of the work?

C. Enhanced Value of a Regional Hub or Centre for CPF Work

1. Would the development of a regional centre or hub (across the 5 countries) be useful to enhance and better coordinate the work of the Fund?
2. What additional support might such a centre/hub offer that would be of value to you, for example in coordinating activities, information sharing and training? What should the regional centre not do?
3. Where might such a centre/hub be based, and what resources would it need? Who might be valuable partners to involve (in addition to the British Council)?

D. Other

A final open question at the end of the interview will prompt interviewees to add any other comments/suggestions regarding the Fund, and strengthening Cultural Heritage Protection in the region or highlight particular local circumstances (e.g. better coordination between funders/agencies; particular pressing and urgent needs such as the impact of the explosion in Beirut; expertise that is missing in particular countries and training needs; relations with governments, etc.).

Different questions/issues were raised with those who were neither connected directly to the BC/CPF nor recipients of grants.

Appendix 3: SUGGESTED PARTNERS FROM CPF REVIEW INTERVIEWS

Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN)
Aga Khan Foundation
ALIPH Foundation
Ambassadors Funds
AM Qattan Foundation
Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC)
Arab Network Supporting Cultural Heritage (NSCH)
Arcadia Fund
Baghdad University
Blue Shield International
British Institute in Amman
British Museum
Council for British Institute for Study in Iraq
Council of British Research in the Levant
Cultural Heritage for Peace
Cultural Resource (al Mawred al Thaqafy)
Damascus University
Danish Institute
Dutch Institute
EU National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC)
French Agency for Development (AFD)
Gerda Henkel Foundation
Getty World Monument Fund
Goethe Institute
Grant Makers for Cultural Heritage Protection (GCHEP)
Hebron University
Independent Culture (Ettijahat)
International Council for the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)
International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)
International Council of Museums (ICOM)
International Council on Archives (ICA)
International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)
Iraq Civil Society Solidarity Initiative (ICSSI)
Islamic Development Bank (ISDB)
Islamic University of Gaza
Jordanian Department of Antiquities
Kenyon Institute
Levantine business community
Levantine expat communities in the UK
Mobaderoon
National Heritage Foundation/Save Beirut Heritage Initiative
Newton Fund
Norwegian Agency for Development
European Union (various EU international aid programmes)

OpenDemocracy
PETRA National Trust (PNT)
Prince Klaus Fund
Research Institutes in Ankara and Bagdad
Said Foundation
Smithsonian Institution Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI)
Swedish Development Agency (SIDA)
Syria Trust Organisations,
Tom J Kaplan Fund
United Arab Emirates (various aid programmes)
UN Habitat
United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine (UNRWA)
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
Victoria & Albert Museum
Welfare Association - WA Taawon
World Bank
World Food Programme (WFP)
World Health Organization (WHO)

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