

Connecting Cultural Heritage

Recruitment Information Briefing Session

Thursday, 08 June 2023

Presented by Anne Torreggiani, Chief Executive of The Audience Agency

Introduction

I am here with my colleague, Caitlin, from The Audience Agency, and we are delivering this programme for the British Council, called Connecting Cultural Heritage. It is commissioned by the British Council as part of their work under the Cultural Protection Fund, which some of you may know, is a specialist fund, targeting cultural heritage projects around the world. And its top aims are to help build the confidence, knowledge and networks of cultural heritage practitioners across the world.

This programme is being delivered by us at The Audience Agency with two lovely colleagues who are not here today, but whose names are Amanda and Sarah who are working with us just for this project who are specialists in peer learning. We're also working with Bayimba in Uganda, with the Asia Europe Foundation who are based in Singapore, and with Cultural Resource based in Lebanon. These three partners have been amazing so far in helping us to make sure this programme can and should work in different areas or areas across the world. If you want to know more, they are very happy to help talk to you about the programme and how it works. They're going to be our partners all the way through, and are there to support so if you wanted to have a chat with them, they are very happy to have a conversation.

So as I say, this programme is part of the Cultural Protection Fund. But it's also part of what the British Council call their 'What Works' programme, a really interesting strand of work, using the best evidence, we have to work out what's really successful, and to always focus on what's working and trying to learn about what works. So this is a kind of research strand of the Cultural Protection Fund around 'What Works'. It's not really about the British Council finding out about what works, it's about participants sharing what they know, so it's a dissemination format, really, rather than researching what works.

About the Programme

So what is the programme? Firstly, it is a peer and collaboration learning programme. What do we mean by peer and collaborative learning? In 2022, Sarah Boiling and Amanda Smethurst did a long piece of research around peering collaborative learning, and they wrote a wonderful report. And this is the definition that they use: *'Peer and Collaborative learning is a process which enables people in different or similar circumstances, to share, learn and collaborate with and from each other in a way that's best suited to their needs, and grows and develops over time.'* You'll see that all those characteristics are the things that we've tried very hard to design the programmes around.

Essentially, Connecting Cultural Heritage is an intercultural peer and collaborative learning programme. It's very specifically for people involved in protecting cultural heritage. So not for people who work in other parts of the creative industries, but particularly those working in protecting cultural heritage. It's what we think of as being people-centred. In other words, the participants decide what we talk about and how we talk about it. And hopefully, we've created a framework in which participants can lead the way in terms of content, what they want to discuss, it should also be a really safe space. So you should be able to talk about anything safely, and not feel that your words will be misinterpreted or used against you in any way. So hopefully a nice supportive space to help each other in the programme has been co-designed already.

We've worked with a small group of participants to create the framework. And we will continue to co-design the content as we go through the programme. At each stage, participants will be asked about what they want to focus on next, what's been most interesting, there's a lot of evaluation built into the programme, so we know what's working, and you know what's working and we can keep on track.

The aims of the programme are that we build long-term relationships between all the participants. So ideally, you will leave this programme with a great international network of people you didn't know before, who you can continue to support, support and talk with and liaise with over the years. We also hope that it will be an opportunity to share best practice to learn from each other and exchange great ideas built into the programme, is the idea that you can address real world challenges that you're facing at the moment. We have designed the programme around your being able to think about particular challenges in your circumstance at the moment. We're asking everybody to think about where they are now, what they're doing at the moment, and how they can help each other through the current challenges. We don't want you to leave feeling less confident or wowed by everybody else. And the idea is that you should walk away from this feeling really confident that what you're doing is important and interesting. And we want you to make everybody else feel like that as well. So the spirit of it is very much about encouraging each other. We're all on the learning journey, including I should say, Me, I'm so excited about this, because as partners in the project, I feel that we are going to learn a lot. And I'm hoping that our confidence is going to increase as well.

In the long run, the British Council hope that the programme will help to promote this idea of 'What Works' that we're all sharing the best of what we've learned over the last few years. And that being honest and truthful and useful. By thinking about what doesn't as well, I'm always very keen to share my experience of what has not quite worked as well, because of course, we learn a lot from that, too. So we should feel confident in this space to be able to do that.

The programme is going to run in three different phases over the course of 11 months. It's quite a long spread-out programme, lots of time to reflect, to think about what we're doing to have conversations in between. Each cycle is eight weeks long, there's a little gap in between, and then there's another eight-week cycle, and then the final one. And in the first cycle, we're going to focus in Cycle 1 on the practice of cultural heritage, in Cycle 2, about management and mechanical, operational issues. And then finally, in Cycle 3, we'll be thinking about advocacy, making a case for our work, who we need to persuade and bring in, and perhaps some issues around resourcing and so

on. These topics were chosen by our co-design group of participants who were helping us to think about what they really wanted to talk about. This is the framing, it's not the full agenda.

Each cycle will kick off with an induction session where we'll be looking at the main topics. And then we will then plan to break out into a number of different discussions over the following weeks. So over the next four to six weeks, we'll have a number of smaller discussions. It is up to you what you want those to be, might be two people, it might be 10, depending on who's interested in talking about what. We'll plan in that first session what themes we want to follow through with, they can take different forms, we're imagining, mostly, that's participants talking to each other. But if you want to invite someone else, we could also do that. And we will help everybody to set up those small groups. And then at the end of that period, when we've had our different, smaller discussions, we'll all come back together again, and share what we've learned.

Meanwhile, we will be asking you to keep a written/verbal diary of your learning and the ideas that occurred to you. We'll ask you to update these at the end of each cycle. And each of the cycles will then end with a final reflective discussion, what we learned, what was useful, what we might take forward, up to you what you choose to share in that session. What I should say is that we're going to ask everybody, not just go back over the over the three cycles. We're going to ask you to think of a particular Learning Question or Idea that you're really interested in pursuing. So perhaps you might have a big question like, 'what's my next career step?' or 'How am I going to find some more funding for my organisation?' You can bring any question you'd like. But we're going to ask everybody to perhaps think about one or two big questions they'd like to bring through the whole programme. And if you're willing to share that, hopefully other people can help find some answers to your big questions as we go through the year. So that's the structure.

Participant Criteria

This programme is for people who are actively involved in cultural heritage protection. So it's not really for people who are who are studying but haven't taken part yet. It's really for people who have an active involvement in cultural heritage protection. You might be a community leader, or an organiser, you might be any kind of practitioner, project manager. You don't have to be somebody who's working, actually hands on with objects or with buildings. You could be a manager, you could be an educator, but somebody who's actively working in cultural heritage, you need to be have experience in the one of the three eligible countries, regions, so across the Middle East and North Africa, East Africa, and South Asia.

It's really important that you come to the programme with a big commitment to sharing and learning. So if you don't want to, if you don't like sharing your ideas, this is not the place for you. And I think that's also about being willing to be weak in front of other people, if you like being honest and authentic, as well, as you know, being caring and looking after other people who are in similar situation.

Practically, it's very important that you can participate virtually, we know that the internet goes off and on in lots of places, but we can try to accommodate that. But ideally, you should have at least regular access to the internet. And to Zoom for our group sessions. We will also be using an information sharing platform where we'll just been exchanging notes and ideas and presentations and talking to each other via a platform. So you'll need to be able to access that as well.

And finally, after long consideration, we agreed that it would be important to have some working knowledge of speaking English. We thought perhaps there was a way of doing this through translators and interpreters. But because we tried a pilot version of the of the project last year, we realised it was very difficult to have these conversations in multiple languages at the same time. So we're asking people to have some working knowledge of speaking English. That said, we know that when you're trying to write and speak in English, and everybody's talking, it can be quite difficult. So we think there are ways of making that a little bit easier. Translating materials, written materials using Google Translate, going slowly repeating what we said. You don't have to be a perfect English speaker is the idea of the programme.

Selection Process

Finally, the selection process. We think we probably will be oversubscribed, meaning we think there will be more people applying than we have places for. To some extent, it is competitive, but the final selection will be based on achieving a good balance of participants from across the regions with different skill sets and different kinds of experience. The judgement is not about you or your overall experience, whether how good you are or not, it's not about that, it's really about getting a good balance.

Who is the programme for -- Are you a cultural practitioner? Your interest in connecting with others and contributing to what works is that something that is of interest to you? The relevance of your interests and experience to the programme, in other words to your peers and other people on the programme?

And as I say, we are looking for a good mix of skills, interests, and different kinds of experience, mixing people who are very new with people who've been doing it for a long time, different kinds of areas of practice, we'd like to have some people who are community practitioners, as well as those who actually do hands on things. So we're looking for people who worked with big organisations as well as small ones. And we also want to achieve a mix of lived experience, gender, geographical spread. The selection is really based on getting a good mix; it's not really about judging you, it's just trying to get balance.

Applications are going to be shortlisted on those selection criteria. And then there will be a panel made up of the partners and people from British Council, who will make the final decision about who is accepted onto the programme. And we will be in touch with everybody by email explaining the outcome by the 26th of June. Once selected, we're going to ask everybody to sign a learning agreement so that we're clear about what we're all expecting of each other, and what you can expect from us and what we are asking you to commit to in terms of the programme, especially since there's been quite a lot of competition for it.

Questions:

Question:

Could you touch on the amount of commitment and the expectations of participants?

Answer:

We ask all participants to go through all three cycles. There are 8 full-group sessions lasting 2 hours, then a mix of the small groups lasting 1-2 hours, and the reflective sessions lasting 1.5 hours. In total, the programme is approximately 35 hours of online sessions, spread across 11 months.

Question:

Are there any written outputs from this engagement?

Answer:

Only if you want there to be. We are asking you to keep a learning log or a kind of learning diary. You write or record that, and we would really recommend that you do it, because we know that people get more out of the experience if you're recording things as you go. But it's up to you how much you write and what you write. For the learning logs, we do want to make it flexible for you. If you don't want to write, you can also submit a video or you can keep voice notes if you if that works better for you. Most of this would be private to you but we would ask you to share two things with the group and with us for the evaluation.

Question:

Are State parties involved in the selection process?

Answer:

No, the selection process will be done by us, The Audience Agency, our three international partners The Asia-Europe Foundation, Bayimba, and Culture Resource, and the British Council. Our three international partners are completely independent. No one else is involved on the panel.

Question:

Do you provide any certificate after the completion of the program?

Answer:

Yes, we will provide a certificate after the completion of the programme.

Question:

Are there any age limits for the participants of the program?

Answer:

No, there are no age limits. Certainly, you must be an adult but any age is very, very welcome. And as we said, we're really looking for that balance. So in fact, a diversity of age groups will be amazing, because we will have a lot to learn from each other in that way.

Question:

Are there any cultural protection experts that are joining the sessions?

Answer:

We are assuming that everybody on the programme is an expert. It's all about all of us being experts together and sharing what we know. However, if there's anyone in particular that we wanted to talk

to, we could approach them and ask them if they would like to kind of speak to us if there's somebody you really wanted to hear from. In the co-design sessions, where we were talking about what content and subjects people might want to talk about the area that we thought might be most interesting to bring external guests in would be particularly around advocacy.

Question:

I understand that one of the objectives of this project is peer learning, and you have people who will be facilitating peer learning within our sessions. Is peer learning the first and foremost objective or is it also cultural protection?

Answer:

It's a mix of both things. Going back to the aims that we set out, there's definitely something about discussing 'same problems, different context' and sometimes you get inspiration from that. From seeing how people in different contexts and cultures may have faced and addressed similar problems. And you also get this long-lasting network of peer supporters that hopefully can be sustained over a long time. So those are in themselves important objectives. I think we are hoping that individuals will find solutions to particular problems and perhaps improve their practice and certain areas where they feel that there's something in particular where there's a gap they'd like to fill. Hopefully, the programme can help you to do that. But it's not designed to pass on a specific curriculum of skills.

Question:

Can we share the information with other members of our organisations or communities?

Answer:

Absolutely! Please send the application to other people in your organisation. Also, in the overall programme, we are definitely hoping that people will share learning with their organisations, we will ask everybody to follow a Chatham House Rules approach, in which you can talk about everything that's happened, as long as it's not attributed to a certain person. If there's something that somebody feels very sensitive about and does not want to be shared outside the group, they can flag that. But other than that, yes, we really hope that you would share that much more widely and find opportunities to do this.

Question:

Is there an email address we can send questions or concerns to regarding the application?

Answer:

Yes, for general questions, please direct emails to Caitlin.wagner@theaudienceagency.org
For regional-specific questions, please contact the following: Middle East and North Africa (Fatin.Farhat@gmail.com); East Africa (Faisal@bayimba.org); and South Asia (grey.yeoh@asef.org)

Question:

How will we get back to you and how useful this programme has been?

Answer:

There is a heavy commitment to evaluation throughout the programme. There are quite a few reflection sessions with our evaluator, as we're trying to work out whether this programme can deliver on the things that it says it does, and which parts of it are most successful. So I think we will

end up with a fairly good idea about what's worked on at a collective as well as individual level. There is an opportunity to feedback as we go and adjust accordingly. And there will be an opportunity to look back in the final reflective session at the whole programme and ask, 'Did this actually deliver on the things that we wanted it to?'

In this programme, participants are responsible for our own learning, though, and the programme is designed so that you will get out of it, what you put in. It's not the same as doing a university course or something that's very much about specifically sharing technical knowledge. It has different kinds of outcomes.

Question:

Can you share the link to the application form?

Answer:

Yes! Please apply here: <https://forms.office.com/e/fUeFnZA5eu>

Connecting Cultural Heritage

Cultural Heritage Protection Peer & Collaborative Learning Programme

Anne Torreggiani & Caitlin Wagner, The Audience Agency



Introduction: *Connecting Cultural Heritage*

- Commissioned by **The British Council**
- **Cultural Protection Fund** - help develop the confidence, knowledge, and networks
- Delivered by The Audience Agency, Bayimba, Asia-Europe Foundation and Culture Resource
- Part of the **British Council Cultural Protection Fund's** 'What Works' programme.



What is *Connecting Cultural Heritage*?

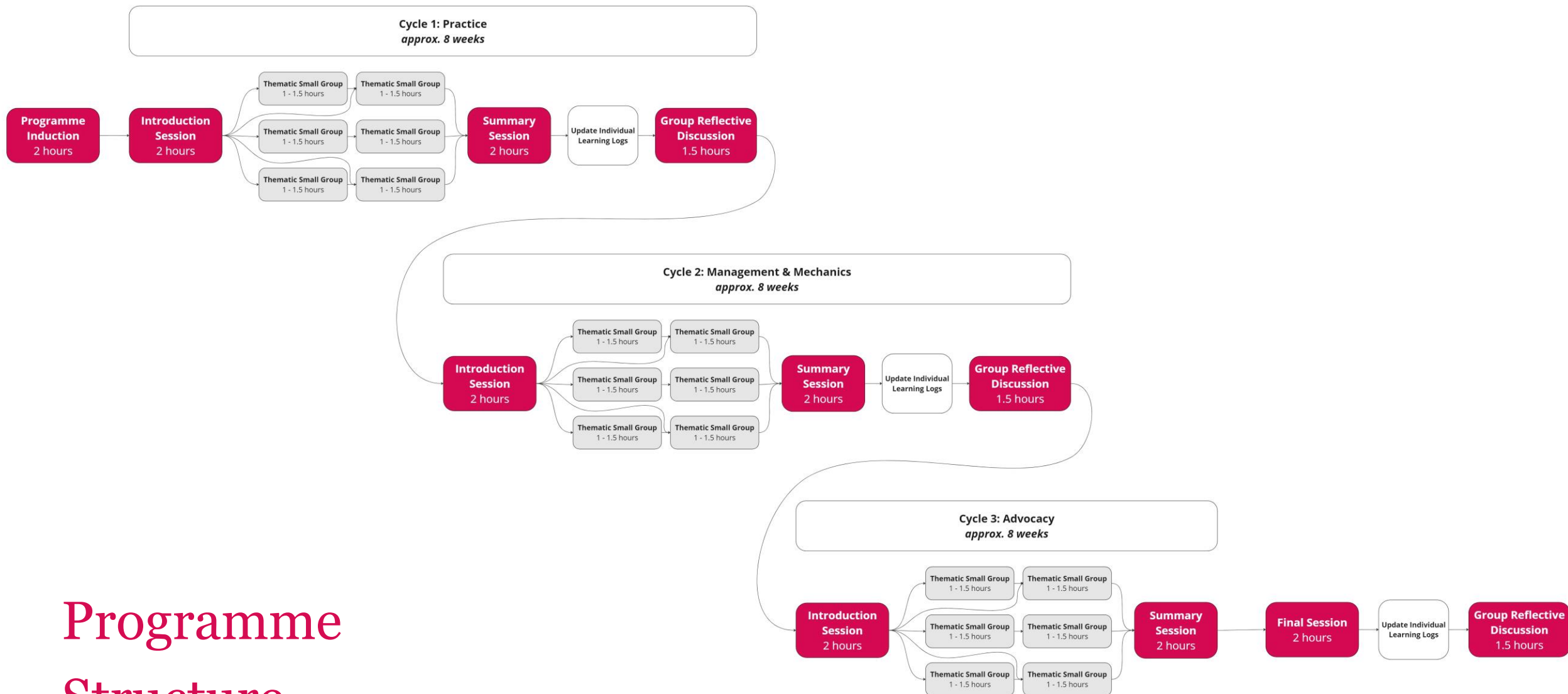
- an intercultural, peer & collaborative learning programme
- for people involved in protecting cultural heritage.
- “people-centred”: you decide
- co-designed
- build long term relationships,
- share best practice, learn from each other, exchange ideas
- address challenges
- increase confidence and
- Increase action “what works” - and what doesn’t

Peer & Collaborative Learning is...

‘a process which enables people who are in similar or different circumstances, to share, learn and collaborate with and from each other in a way that is best suited to their needs and grows and develops over time.’

(Boiling and Smethurst, 2021)

Programme Structure



Participant Criteria

- People with an **active involvement** in cultural heritage protection.
- A **role** such as community leader/organiser, cultural heritage practitioner, project lead/manager
- Experience in cultural heritage protection in an **eligible country**:
 - **Middle East & North Africa**: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen
 - **East Africa**: Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda
 - **South Asia**: Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan
- A commitment to sharing, and learning ‘What Works in Cultural Heritage Protection’ with international peers
- An ability to **participate virtually** (access to internet and Zoom during group sessions and information-sharing platforms in between sessions)
- Some working knowledge of speaking **English**

Selection Process

Using a transparent assessment process, the final selection of programme participants will be based on the following criteria:

- How well you match the intended profile (see Who is it for above)
- Your interest in connecting with others and contributing to ‘what works’ for cultural heritage protection
- The relevance of your interests and experience to the programme and its aims
- Achieving a good mix of skills, interests, and professional experience (including length and type of experience, whether you have worked in heritage within a community setting or within a heritage organisation)
- Achieving a mix of lived experience, gender, and geographical spread across the eligible countries

Selection Process

- Applications will be shortlisted based on the selection criteria as above. Final decisions will be made by a panel, taking into account factors such as balance of skills, experience, and interests in cultural heritage protection.
- You will be contacted by email regarding the outcome of your application by 26 June 2023. If selected, you will be asked to sign a Learning Agreement that outlines your role, responsibility, and commitment to the programme.

Questions?

Thank you