

PRESS RELEASE

UK awards £76k to Bakonzo and Alur communities to help tackle climate change threats

- International cultural protection partners to collaborate across East Africa
- Projects tackle the threat to cultural heritage in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda from climate change
- Advancing knowledge and sharing skills within the global heritage community

The communities of the Bakonzo and the Alur are to receive a grant of £76k from the UK government to assess and mitigate against the threats posed to them by climate change.

The British Council is pleased to announce the Cultural Protection Fund has awarded funding to five global heritage projects, which will use technology, skills development and community engagement to respond to the risk of climate change to heritage in East Africa. Selected as part of the Cultural Protection Fund's Disaster and Climate Change Mitigation round, the projects will address the threat to valuable cultural heritage in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda by increasing capacity and resilience through risk planning, training programmes and digital innovation. The Fund continues a partnership between British Council and the UK Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to protect threatened heritage in and around the Middle East and Africa.

In Uganda £76,447 has been awarded for the protection against the impact of melting snow and flooding rivers on Uganda's Bakonzo and Alur communities due to global warming. Interventions to protect national monument Wang Lei will support knowledge sharing with Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire, UK. Additional recording of tangible and intangible cultural heritage will run alongside community training and awareness initiatives. The work will be carried out in a partnership

with the International National Trusts Organisation (UK) and Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (Uganda).

The four other projects awarded funding are:

Ancient rock churches, Ethiopia

- £106,700 to support risk assessments and action planning for 23 ancient rock churches in the historic Gheralata Mountain Region. Plans include production of conservation manuals and local skills training to protect traditional conservation materials and techniques.
- Partners: Federal Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage, (Ethiopia), Addis Ababa University (Ethiopia), Mekelle University Institute of Paleoenvironment & Heritage Conservation (Ethiopia), Womersley's (UK).

Photographic history preservation, Kenya

- £109,744 to digitise and protect the physical collection of late 19th Century paper and photographic collections at the McMillan Memorial Library chronicling key Kenyan historical events, which is at risk from climate-related heat and moisture.
- Partners: Book Bunk Trust (Kenya), African Digital Heritage Foundation (Kenya), Built Environment Surveyors & Infrastructure Consultancy (BESIC) Group (Kenya).

Coastal heritage, Kenya

- £109,430 to develop disaster risk management strategies for preserving Kenyan coastal heritage sites at risk due to rising sea levels, coastal erosion, salt evaporation and storms. Plans include the development of site staff to manage risks, implement interventions and host community training programmes to support local engagement.
- Partners: ICCROM (Italy), National Museums Kenya (Kenya).

Coastal heritage, Tanzania

- £60,501 to assess risks and digitise the UNESCO World Heritage coastal sites of Kilwa Kisiwani and Bagamoyo, Tanzania. Mitigating against future rising sea levels will run alongside documenting risk to intangible heritage of coastal communities, such as oral traditions and craft skills.
- Partners: University of Dar Es Salaam (Tanzania), St. Andrew's University (UK).

Millicent Mugabi, British Council Country Director of Uganda said:

"Climate change is a global threat and needs global cooperation to tackle it. I hope this award strengthens the many partnerships we have with different organisations in Uganda and the UK and helps forge stronger relationships between our two countries."

Stephen Stenning, Head of Arts & Society, British Council, says:

'The Disaster and Climate Change Mitigation pilot to support cultural heritage at risk from climate change is an urgent area of focus for the global heritage community. With continued support from DCMS, this alert to our shared environmental vulnerabilities has resulted in some extraordinary international partnership projects. Sharing concerns and solutions around the impact of climate change, from North Yorkshire in the UK to the Rwenzori Mountains in Uganda, is a great example of the mutually beneficial collaborations at the heart of the Cultural Protection Fund.'

The Disaster and Climate Change Mitigation Fund was announced in 2019, as part of an additional funding round of the Cultural Protection Fund.

Established in 2016, the original £30 million Cultural Protection Fund, is a partnership between the British Council and the UK Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, to protect heritage at risk in countries in and around the Middle East and North Africa.

For more information on the Cultural Protection Fund: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development/cultural-protection-fund>

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. Last year we reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive a 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government.

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About Cultural Protection Fund

The Cultural Protection Fund is managed by the British Council – the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations – in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). It aims to foster, safeguard and promote cultural heritage overseas.

The Fund is a key part of the British Council's work in Culture and Development overseas, which focuses on ambitious, artistic and creative initiatives that foster social cohesion, freedom of expression, inclusive institutions, dynamic communities, and improved social and economic well-being.

For more information about the Cultural Protection Fund, a full list of those organisations awarded the Fund and details of their proposals, visit www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development.