

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

First Aid to Documentary Heritage under Threat

GENERAL INFORMATION

Following a resounding response to previous calls in 2017 and 2018, the Prince Claus Fund, through its Cultural Emergency Response (CER) programme, and the Whiting Foundation announce a third round of the Open Call for First Aid to Documentary Heritage under Threat. We invite proposals for projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean to safeguard documentary heritage that is acutely threatened by recent conflict or other disaster, whether natural or man-made.

What's at stake

Manuscripts, rare books, archives, tablets, inscriptions, and other kinds of written records are testimonies of the ideas of bygone eras, sometimes the only form in which the past survives. Whether they are housed in libraries or held by families who have passed them down from generation to generation, they are cherished by the people who watch over them as objects of historical importance and deep local meaning. They are also especially fragile, susceptible to fire, insects, and humidity – and sometimes singled out for deliberate destruction by those afraid of their power to express viewpoints and cultivate nuance. When disaster strikes – an earthquake, a flood, or an armed attack – the threat to these cultural objects is heightened; when that threat is overlooked or local resources for rescue are lacking, the heritage may be lost forever.

What we are doing

Through the two previous rounds of this call, the Prince Claus Fund and Whiting Foundation supported stewards around the world to prevent and minimize loss of documentary heritage by funding 26 projects. They responded to different kinds of threats, urgently safeguarding a wide variety of collections and inscriptions. In the Marshall Islands, we supported the Alele Museum to digitize and improve the storage conditions of an important archive and helped to prepare for the consequences of climate change. In Palestine, where the ancient manuscripts of the Great Omari Mosque were threatened by the ongoing conflict, staff was trained in preservation and digitization of the collection and how to carry out urgent rescue. In Ecuador, where the library collection of the monastery of Santo Domingo suffered from earthquake damage and humidity, we empowered local efforts for the emergency cleaning and preservation of the collection and the recovery of the library. And in Colombia, we funded the visual documentation and dissemination of pre-Hispanic inscriptions threatened by active mining.

We received an overwhelming number of applications from more than 70 different countries over the past two years, illustrating a pressing need for support. Nevertheless, there are still countries we have not reached during previous cycles. We therefore strongly encourage applicants from South-East Asia, Central Asia, Central Africa, South America and the Caribbean to apply. However, we consider applications from all over Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Eastern Europe.

This third round will continue to expand the scope of this initiative and facilitate the vital work of safeguarding physical objects and making the information they carry accessible to a wider public for generations to come. In doing so, we hope to contribute to the appreciation of cultural achievement and historical diversity and foster the worldwide dissemination of forgotten or endangered stories.

ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY FOR SUPPORT

I. Is my project eligible?

- The project must aim to safeguard documentary heritage (i.e., cultural heritage designed to carry information in writing, such as manuscripts, books, archives, tablets, and carvings or inscriptions).
- The project must respond to an emergency situation, and must be to preserve or disseminate documentary heritage threatened or recently affected by an acute, current, or impending conflict, natural disaster, or other condition that pose an acute risk. Cases of long-term neglect are not eligible.
- The country where the intervention is to take place must be in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, and the applying organisation or individual must live and work in one of these regions.
- The heritage involved must be significant for a specific community, whether local, regional, national, or global.
- Local communities, a local organisation, and/or local authorities must be involved in the emergency response, preferably leading it, and the legal owner must support the proposed measures.
- The intervention must be able to be carried out within a time frame of twelve months, corresponding to the emergency character of the collaboration.
- No direct or indirect support will be provided to individuals or organisations currently subject to US sanctions.
- Through its activities, the project must contribute to increasing the accessibility of the affected documentary heritage and the dissemination of the stories it holds.
- The project could, among other things, fulfil one or several of the following aims:
 - Emergency conservation, preservation, and restoration for the urgent safeguarding and stabilization of damaged and/or threatened documentary heritage.
 - Emergency digitization, documentation, or scanning of damaged and/or threatened documentary heritage.
 - Evacuation and/or relocation of threatened collections.
 - (Re-) organization, cataloguing, inventorying, and documentation to enhance the accessibility of collections for researchers and other users.
 - The restoration and/or improvement of storage facilities, and the enhancement of safety and security conditions for the sustainable preservation of collections.
 - Capacity building and training activities to enhance the abilities of the caretakers of the collection and other stakeholders, for example in restoration and conservation skills, inventory methodologies, and digitization.
 - Dissemination and awareness-raising activities to increase access to the documentary heritage and to bring it to the attention of the larger public, for example through educational programmes, exhibitions, or workshops for the surrounding

communities. (Note: these activities can only be part of a larger project aiming at safeguarding and improving access to documentary heritage).

2. What expenses are eligible to be covered?

- Grants will average about €15,000.
- Grant funds can only cover project-related expenses, not running (operating) costs for organisations.
- No support will be provided retroactively (i.e., to projects already implemented).

SELECTION CRITERIA

Projects will be evaluated by Prince Claus Fund staff and external expert reviewers. The selection criteria are:

- Urgency of the need identified – the threat of imminent loss of the affected heritage must be pressing.
- Soundness and sustainability of the plan for preservation and/or dissemination – the plan must be feasible, realistic, and well thought out to prevent or limit future vulnerability.
- Significance of the threatened documentary heritage to local, regional, and/or world communities – the heritage must be of value to an identified group of people

This grant selection aims to ensure that projects are selected in a transparent and fair manner, according to clear criteria, and through a rigorous process giving due consideration to all proposals that meet the eligibility requirements.

HOW TO APPLY

Proposals will be accepted throughout the call. The budget for this call is limited and the most urgent applications are given priority. The deadline for applications is 17 February 2020 at 17:00 Amsterdam time (CET). Applications received after the deadline cannot be considered. We recommend that applicants not wait until the deadline but to apply as soon as possible after your documentary heritage is affected by conflict, natural, and/or man-made disaster.

To apply, please download and complete the Statement of Need form available on our website: www.princeclausfund.org/open-call-first-aid-to-documentary-heritage-under-threat-2019. The form can be completed in English, French, or Spanish. Please send the completed form, with supporting materials (if available), to cer@princeclausfund.nl,

Applicants will receive an email confirmation once the Statement of Need has been received. The most promising applicants will be invited within about seven days to submit a more complete application. Given the urgent nature of these projects, it is anticipated that, in most cases, complete applications will receive final decisions within a few weeks. The response time may be longer if additional information is needed from applicants.

ABOUT THE WHITING FOUNDATION

The Whiting Foundation supports literature and the humanities. We believe that it is imperative that the collective treasures of history and memory be passed on to the future with as little loss as we can manage. Recognizing that irreplaceable cultural heritage is being destroyed at an alarming rate around the globe, we are committed to supporting the urgent fight to save the fruits of human civilization.

ABOUT THE PRINCE CLAUS FUND

Based on the principle that culture is a basic need, the Prince Claus Fund's mission is to actively support, connect and celebrate artists and cultural practitioners where cultural expression is under pressure and to stand firm with those who create, who believe in the transformative power of culture, who advance new ideas and explore new perspectives.

Through its Cultural Emergency Response (CER) programme, the Fund provides rapid and effective emergency relief for cultural heritage affected by man-made or natural disasters. By taking immediate action, CER aims to prevent further damage and implement basic repairs. Launched in 2003 in reaction to the looting and demolition of artworks from the National Museum of Iraq, CER believes that rescuing cultural heritage provides hope and consolation to affected communities and thereby contributes to restoring human dignity, continuity and a sense of identity. Culture is a basic need and cultural emergency relief should therefore be an integral part of humanitarian aid.