

Our Common Heritage

A Civil Society Review

Pejë/Peč, Klinë/Klina, Deçan/Dečane, Istog/Istok, Gjakovë/Đakovica and Junik

› 2013

Support to the Promotion of Cultural Diversity

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* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.



Our Common Heritage

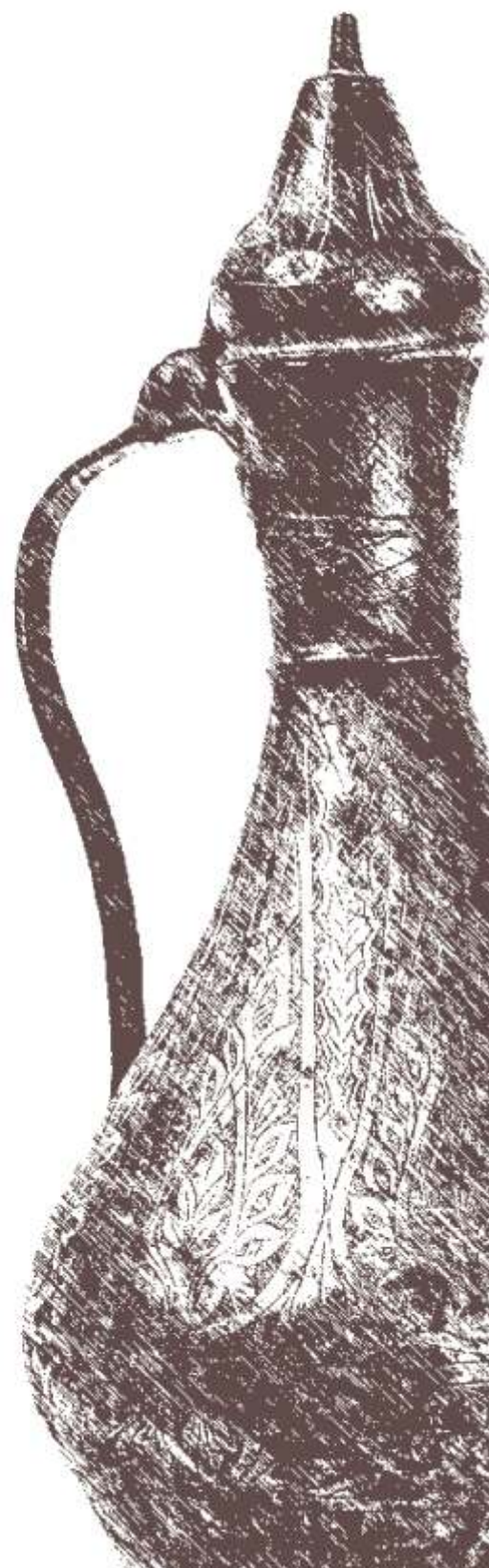
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Key concepts

Local Economic Development (LED)

In the context of this initiative, LED refers to an integrated approach to heritage and heritage management through the responsible use of heritage resources as promoted by the Local Economic Development (LED) component of the PCDK project. It is inspired by the Local Development Pilot Project (LDPP) of the Council of Europe's Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage in South East Europe. In Kosovo, LED followed a more specific focus on heritage tourism, laying out a sound methodology and tools alongside concrete examples of programme implementation.

Heritage Plan (HP)

The Heritage Plan for Kosovo West is a community-based strategic document which intends to identify the most appropriate approaches to advance a sustainable heritage tourism component within an overall tourism strategy for the region. Heritage Plans are based upon an intensely participatory process that encourages local actors to play an increasingly important role in maintaining the heritage of their own communities and planning for its future. The Plan calls for coordinated action among all parties by activating local groups, stakeholders and communities to engage directly with heritage, and use the technical as well as social and economic tools that can be employed to ensure its protection.

From the Promotion of Heritage Management Programme (PHM) to the Heritage and Diversity Programme (HDP)

The HDP is considered a community-based and independent think-tank group for Kosovo West, which was originally developed as a PHM in order to conduct extensive research, collect data about the region and carry out comparative analysis, feeding into long term strategies and plans developed locally. Through developed capacity at the local level, these plans are prepared by local stakeholders for the local communities, in accordance with the laws and regulations set by the central authorities. Working with the six municipalities of the region, HDP focuses on research, promotion, innovative actions, professional development and support to strategy making and heritage planning.

Our Common Heritage - A Civil Society Review

This is a follow-up document that aims at providing credible information and assessments to inform authorities, the business community and the public to further engage the community in pursuing economic, social and environmental sustainability. It serves as an annual update and a fact sheet that lays any emerging issues in front of the public for collective problem solving.

Foreword

The regional communities in western Kosovo are a dignified people, living amongst a beautiful natural environment that is also rich in cultural heritage. They are gradually developing a better understanding of the value of heritage in society and, considering these heritage assets as a resource, there are increasing efforts to understand how they can collectively work towards ensuring a sustainable society that can be enjoyed by their children and future generations.

For many, cultural heritage is considered an economically viable asset in terms of tourism while, at the same time, cultural and natural heritage are acutely endangered due to short term economic interests, growing urbanisation, lack of awareness and care. Kosovo remains one of the poorest areas of Europe, with as much as 45% of the population living below the official poverty line and 17% being extremely poor, according to the World Bank. As a response to address the issues around poverty, responsible use of local resources by and for local communities, with a long term shared vision, increasingly becomes a matter of survival.

Responsible management of cultural and natural heritage in Kosovo West is not only a necessity for the preservation of important features but also an opportunity for local socio-economic development.

In order to actively manage, restore, enhance, and protect the natural, cultural, and landscape heritage of Kosovo West, systematic and coordinated work among municipalities and communities is unavoidable and cannot be delayed.

The "Our Common Heritage - A Civil Society Review" report is a follow up to the recommendations of the Heritage Plan West (2012-2015) and aims at providing credible information and assessments to inform authorities, the business community and the public to further engage the community in pursuing economic, social and environmental sustainability.

We hope that this report offers inspiration and encourages all communities in the Kosovo West region to get involved and contribute in whatever way they can to improving the state of our common heritage, to improve our quality of life and to act today to contribute to a better Kosovo West.

Kosovo Heritage Community Network

Introduction

The diversity and richness of heritage and landscape in the western part of Kosovo is often emphasised as one of the essential attractions of this region. The juxtaposition of historic and modern, urban and rural buildings and architectural typologies, a variety of handicraft traditions passed down by generations of artisans, a wealth of stories that have been told through the centuries, the presence of a number of ethnic and religious groups, and the renowned and genuine hospitality, are some of the particularities of this region.

The region is a unique - but, at the same time, complex - example of the value of heritage to society. The recent history of Europe clearly demonstrates the reciprocity of cultural and natural sites and monuments with the local peoples to whom it belongs and to those who interact with it in different ways and on different levels; heritage plays a large part as a backdrop, environment and setting for contemporary life, simultaneously being a landmark itself within the landscape. Irrespective of which social or cultural group to which one belongs, the Rugovë/Rugova valley and mountains are considered special, at a personal level, to many people who have visited its gorge. Its uniqueness and significance is clear to all those who have spent a large proportion of their lives nearby. The Patriarchate of Pejë/Peć offers a peaceful sanctuary from the world, regardless of one's belief system, and leaves a strong impression which often changes one's outlook.

Beyond its wealth of cultural and natural heritage, Kosovo West offers unique stories. While it is still a pleasure to be able to visit a mosque or hammam from the 15th century, eat delicious, traditional food at a stone *kulla* and visit the World Heritage Site of Deçan/Visoki Dečani Monastery, we also witness the rapid degradation of nature, the vanishing of heritage sites and dying practices, in the name of development and progress. All these aspects of

heritage as a local resource might not be significant to some; however, it is sacred to many who live there.

This publication, "Our Common Heritage - A Civil Society Review 2013", is not about listing existing assets in the region and providing technical and historical data on them, but offers a critical look at the current state of these assets, and provides factual data about their responsible utilisation, protection, maintenance and management.

The publication is addressed firstly to the local communities and authorities who take pride in and enjoy the benefits of living in this area. Further, it provides a framework for those institutions, central authorities and potential donors who can gain an overall picture of the situation for future planning and cooperation. The aim of the document is to go beyond the reasons why certain work has not been done by whom. It tries to identify a clear set of actions, bringing interested parties together to work in synergy and address these issues with an effective community-based development approach.

This report should be considered a follow-up action to the regional heritage plan as well as acting as a "factsheet" that lays any emerging issues in front of the public for collective problem solving. It encourages active citizenship and democratic participation, where local resources are in the public interest today as well as for the next generations to come. The document, reporting the best practices and facts on a yearly basis, also offers the opportunity to measure progress and keeps the public informed about matters related to heritage in the region. It encourages increased intercultural dialogue by putting shared heritage at the heart of community life.

With the support of the PCDK project, we are proud to issue this publication and happy to voice the constructive opinion of civil society, calling for citizen action to protect, care and promote heritage of the region with an inclusive and holistic approach.

Heritage & Diversity Programme Officer


Background

The report on "Our Common Heritage - A Civil Society Review" is an initiative of the HDP West. Although there is no formal requirement in Kosovo, this is a first attempt to highlight coordinated actions for the entire region. This report is based on consultations, observations and factual data provided by the local stakeholders, in the region. In addition, in preparation of this report a number of group and bi-lateral consultations took place with local stakeholders and two heritage forums were organised in 2013 bringing interested stakeholders together to lay out the existing situation and potential next steps for the consideration of communities in the Region West.

The existing immovable heritage of Kosovo West was documented primarily by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) through its Regional Centres for Cultural Heritage Pejë/Peć and Gjakovë/Đakovica. During the development of the Heritage Plan West, out of these lists of immovable heritage, those which were presentable to and accessible by public were highlighted for immediate and mid-term actions. The process of development of the Heritage Plan for Kosovo West (2012-2015) further helped to develop the list of natural heritage sites and intangible heritage practices to be identified and bring them to public attention. While these lists are not an exhaustive record of all existing assets in the region, they put emphasis on those which could be utilised in the short and immediate term. In addition, there are numerous sites that need urgent and mid-term intervention in order to ensure their protection, while management plans in the long term are needed for many. The Heritage Plan is a crucial framework document for this purpose.

With a long term vision, the office for the Promotion of Heritage Management (PHM) - West was established in 2012, in line with the objectives of the Regional Development Agency (RDA) – West and the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the six municipalities of the region, pledging political and financial support. Through developed capacity at the local level, heritage plans are prepared by local stakeholders for the local communities, in accordance with the laws and regulations set by the central authorities.

In this capacity, 2013 was considered a pilot year for PHM to turn theory into practice, also trying to set an example for other PHMs to be developed in other regions late in 2014. At the end of this pilot period, in line with lessons learnt as well as sustainability concerns, it was decided to make a shift from an office-based structure to a programme under various civil society organisations across Kosovo. With designated programme officers in respective regions, the title of the initiative was also changed to 'Heritage and Diversity Programme (HDP)' as part of a network across the territory, affiliated with the Kosovo Heritage Community Network.

A large, dark, textured rock with a bright white circular mark on its surface. The rock is the central focus of the image, with its rough, uneven texture clearly visible. The white mark is a stark contrast to the dark rock. In the background, there are more rocks and some greenery, but they are out of focus.

A Heritage Plan is an opportunity to identify heritage issues and needs at the central, regional and municipal level, and to address them locally. It is intended to influence the actions and activities of all the key players and stakeholders involved with heritage, and to raise awareness of that heritage, its value and its potential. It is therefore both a strategic statement about what the population wants to achieve in terms of heritage management and conservation over a 3 year period, and a list of actions to be undertaken to achieve the strategic aims and objectives.

<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kosovo/Publications/HeritagePlan-ENG.pdf>

Heritage Review 2013

In 2013 there have not been specific changes to the report "Our Common Heritage - A Civil Society Review" and approach to heritage in Kosovo West. There has been increased public attention to intangible heritage practices and natural heritage, through awareness raising activities, while more discussions on heritage and tourism took place in a comprehensive manner. Although no significant progress can presently be observed, the main actors seek more cooperation and a systematic approach. According to discussions at the heritage forums, site visits, initiatives and plans developed by different stakeholders, the overall picture of Our Common Heritage - A Civil Society Review in the region in the past year can be presented across several sectors.

- The potential of natural heritage sites of the Rugovë/Rugova Gorge, Accursed Mountains, Deçan/Dečane canyon and its mineral water source, Drini i Bardhë/Beli Drim spring and waterfalls, Mirushë/Miruša waterfalls, Mokna mountains, Gjeravica/Đeravica Peak, Thermal Water Spring in Banja e Pejës/Pečka Banja and water springs in Vrellë/Vrela and Istog/Istok, were recognised by the central and local authorities. Attention has increased on the need for an integrated approach to the development and implementation of spatial and environmental protection initiatives and plans (Mirushë/Miruša waterfalls development plan, regulation of Klinë/Klina river confluence, etc.), as well as the need to develop mechanisms for maintenance of the recently declared National Park of the Accursed Mountains. An integrated approach to the issue is even more important because this natural monument extends through the territory of several municipalities (Pejë/Peć, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Junik, Deçan/Dečane and Istog/Istok). The initial action on recognition of cultural and natural landscape importance (provided in Klinë/Klina) for local development strategies is a new approach to the environment, safeguarding it for future generations.

- Immovable cultural heritage research, conservation and restoration are the major subject of interest of the two regional centres for heritage. In 2013 attention was put on the restoration of stone "*kulla*" buildings, most of them located in Istog/Istok. Continuously exploring archeological sites of national importance in 2013, such as those located near the villages of Dërsnik/Drnsnik and Vrellë/Vrela, is also an activity in which experts from these centres actively participate. Although the investment in immovable heritage continued from both public and private sources, there is still a lack of means for continuously and effectively undertaking works which, together with the lack of capacity within institutions, is a serious problem highlighted by all interested parties.

- Celebration of traditional events, organisation of annual festivals and fairs for the promotion of traditional games, food, and artisanal practices, were the focus of activities in 2013 in the region. Most of them, such as the "Rugova Games" (in Pejë/Peć), the "Chestnut Festival" (in Deçan/Dečane), "Sofra Gjakovare" (in Gjakovë/Đakovica), or the "Apple Festival" (in Istog/Istok), are increasingly gaining popularity and the interest of local the population and visitors. Initiatives and plans for the development of such projects in 2013 are evidently recognised by each of the municipalities, central level agencies and international organisations.



Overview 2013

1/

Community interest in heritage in Kosovo West has continued to grow. There is increased understanding of the relationships between natural and cultural values, and increased recognition of intangible cultural heritage and cultural landscapes.

2/

Capacity to monitor the conditions and trends of heritage is rather limited. The lack of data remains a chronic problem for reporting on heritage.

3/

Knowledge and management of cultural and natural heritage has remained limited.

4/

Some promising approaches are emerging to integrate heritage work and community participation into management programmes; however, concrete results will only be seen in early 2015.

5/

Our heritage is being threatened by natural and human processes, and a lack of public funds does not meet the required needs in the field.

6/

There were commonly-experienced problems due to inadequate management and land use issues.

7/

Natural heritage sites call for systematic maintenance and management plans in order to contribute to local economic development in the region.

8/

The efforts to rehabilitate immovable cultural heritage assets are not at a satisfactory level, with the exception of a few which have undergone emergency interventions. There are many important buildings of architectural merit listed by the regional centres for heritage that need immediate attention.

9/

Heritage-related events are closely linked to tourism development in the region and should be increasingly supported by the local and central authorities.

Regional Highlights

a) Production of an album on intangible heritage practices

The MCYS, together with the Regional Centre for Cultural Heritage Pejë/Peć and in close cooperation with other stakeholders, worked on creating an album about the habits, songs, poems and holidays popular in the region. (The album was produced in Albanian and will soon be translated into Serbian and English).

b) World Tourism Awards

A World Travel and Tourism Council Award named the Rugovë/Rugova region as one of the 2013 Winners of Tourism For Tomorrow (Stewardship Destination) and enlisted it as a World Tourism Destination. Already known for its recreational and sports activities (skiing, hiking, rock climbing/caving, mountain biking), this brought international attention to the area, potentially promoting the importance of environmental and natural heritage protection. The winning project, "Peaks of the Balkans", is a 192km cross-border trail that completes a circuit crossing the three countries: Theth (Albania), Plavë/Plav (Montenegro) and Pejë/Peć (Kosovo). www.peaksofthebalkans.com

c) The declaration of the Accursed Mountains National Park

The Municipality of Pejë/Peć, together with the Municipal Spatial Planning Support Programme (MuSPP) implemented by UN-Habitat and financed by Swedish Development Cooperation, organised a workshop on the Rugovë/Rugova Valley and the Spatial Plan for the Bjeshkët e Nemuna/Prokletije (Accursed Mountains) National Park.

The Institute of Spatial Planning, within the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, is currently drafting the Spatial Planning (MESP) for the

Bjeshkët e Nemuna/Prokletije National Park in accordance with the Law on National Parks 04/L-086. The process of drafting the plan is being driven in parallel to the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) revision process in Pejë/Peć, which covers an important area of the National Park and Rugovë/Rugova Valley.

www.unhabitat-kosovo.org/en-us/News-and-Events/740

d) Heritage Forums

The aim of the forums in 2013 was to gather all the stakeholders from the different Kosovo institutions who have been involved in the process of developing the Heritage Plan – West 2012–2015, or who have provided strong support to the Plan (such as the Regional Centre for Cultural Heritage (RCCH) Pejë/Peć and RCCH Gjakovë/Đakovica, representatives of the six municipalities of the western region, NGOs and civil society representatives from the region). The forums created a platform through which to discuss and share views and experiences on the current situation of heritage, protection measures undertaken or requested, the development of management plans and other issues related to heritage as a common resource. The events will continue to take place bi-annually.

e) European Heritage Days

• Heritage Train 2013

The implementation of the project organised by the NGO PHM took place in the municipalities of Pejë/Peć and Deçan/Dečane during three weekends in September 2013, where visitors had the opportunity to visit important and attractive heritage sites and be introduced to the local culture of both municipalities. Around 700 participants from a variety of backgrounds - including families with children, students, the elderly, and people from local and international communities - witnessed and experienced the cultural heritage attractions of the Kosovo West region.

The event was sponsored by the PCDK project, the British Embassy Pristina and the Office of the EU Special Representative in Pristina.
www.phm-west.org/phm/projects.html

- **Herb Garden Project:**

During the activities celebrating Natural Heritage Days in October 2013, the launching of the Herb Garden Project in Pejë/Peć was organised by the NGO PHM with the participation of pupils, local authorities and other stakeholders. The project was designed to promote an important natural heritage asset - medicinal herbs of the region. The Herb Garden is a social meeting place for elderly people, as well as a location for informal education for a range of social groups.
www.phm-west.org/phm/projects.html

- As part of the Natural Heritage Days, a "Fruit Fair" was organised in Junik by the NGO Balkan Promotion, in cooperation with the PCDK project.
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kosovo/WellBeing/awareness_en.asp

f) Dear West project: West Kosovo at reach
<http://www.dearwest.org>

g) “Hajde” visits , organised by local NGOs in cooperation with the PCDK project
www.coe.int/pcdk-Newsletter13

h) “Let's Clean Up Kosovo”
<http://www.letsdoitkosova.org/>





Sheep shearing rite in Deçan/Dečane

Municipal Highlights

Deçan/Dečane

Achievements / commitments

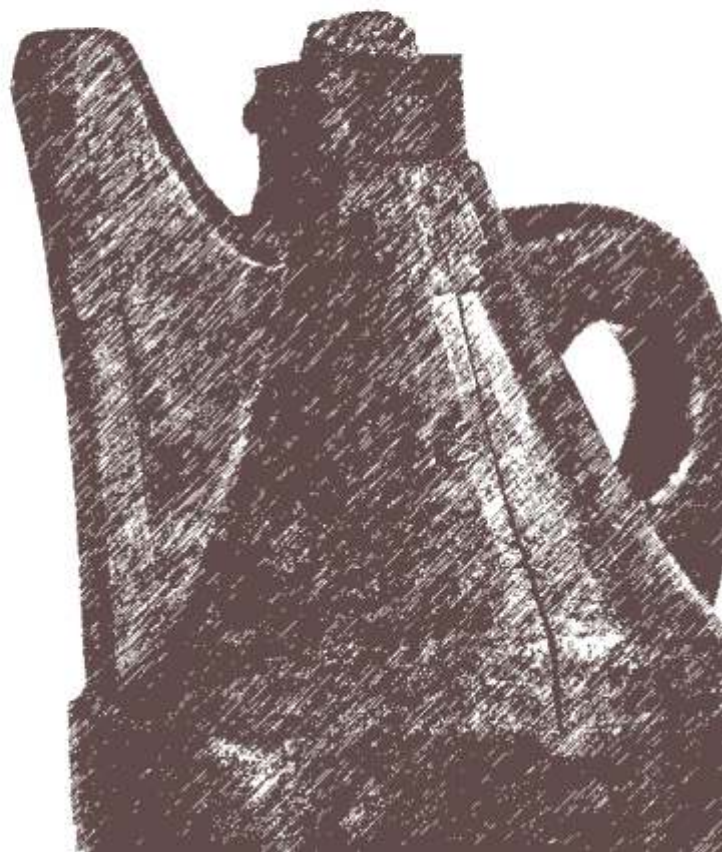
- a) **Beekeeper Project**
<http://arda-kosovo.org/en-us/EURED-GS-Projects-in-West-Region/Golden-honey-from-Decan-Honey-Processing-Factory-173>
- b) **Sheep shearing rite**
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kosovo/videos_en.asp

Trends / plans

- Development of the Beekeeper Project which was initiated and financed by IPA funds.
- Continued support to the organisation of the sheep shearing rite.
- Establishment of the Children's Game Library and implementation of the programme on 'Children's Games and Performances', in line with the Heritage Plan–West 2012–2015, forming part of the Cultural Itinerary Programme for Kosovo West.
[_www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kosovo/RegEcoDvt/Events/default_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kosovo/RegEcoDvt/Events/default_en.asp)

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Gjakovë/Đakovica

Achievements / commitments

- a) The International Festival of Comedy, "Comedy Fest", was held in Gjakovë/Đakovica on September 2013 for the second year in a row. 9 theatre troupes from Kosovo, Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia participated in this cultural event.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Events_and_festivals_in_Gjakova)
- b) Gjakovë/Đakovica Film Festival is an international short film festival, organised in cooperation with the Department of Culture of Gjakovë/Đakovica municipality and the Association of the Writers and Artists 'Etuta'.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Events_and_festivals_in_Gjakova)
- c) Lyra Fest is a traditional and national festival for children's songs. The festival participants (aged 6 to 13) gather from many Albanian-speaking areas. Arranged as a competition, the festival has been organised since November 2007.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Events_and_festivals_in_Gjakova)
- d) St George's Day is celebrated by all communities as a day of joy and faith. People communally build a fire, dancing and singing around it, and blessing their houses, fields, children and other important parts of their lives with holy water.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_George's_Day)

Trends / plans

- A Tourist Information Office will be established with the support of the municipality.
- Hajde Heritage Train – 2014
- Sofra Gjakovare event
- The programme on 'Intangible Heritage and Artisanship' will start to be implemented in 2014 in Gjakovë/Đakovica. This initiative stems from the Heritage Plan–West 2012–2015 and is part of the Cultural Itinerary Programme for Kosovo West. (www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kosovo/RegEcoDvt/Events/default_en.asp)



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An old stone house, known as a 'kulla/kula', in Junik

Junik

Achievements / commitments

- a) **Shepherds' return** (http://www.phm-west.org/phm/Junik_MAP.pdf)
- b) **Municipal library**
(<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/94938704>)
- c) **Assessment of educational activities and children's games in Junik.**
- d) **Case study on Urban Rehabilitation of the Neighbourhood of the Regional Tourism Centre in Junik (within the PCDK project - Summer Camp/Summer School Programme)**

Trends / plans

In 2014, Junik will commence with the implementation of an Education and Rehabilitation Programme on stone structures, entitled "Stones that Talk". This initiative is based on the Heritage Plan–West 2012–2015 and is part of the Cultural Itinerary Programme for Kosovo West. (www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kosovo/RegEcoDvt/Events/default_en.asp)

Further information / Key contacts

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Klinë/Klina

Achievements / commitments

- a) Biodiversity assessment on river banks conducted by PCDK project.
- b) Landscape inventory conducted by PCDK project.
- c) Discovery of archaeological site near Drësnik/Drsnik village.

Trends / plans

The municipality of Klinë/Klina will develop an educational programme in order to research and safeguard the natural environment and its biodiversity. Case studies through the performing arts and the rehabilitation of the designated area along the area's two main rivers (Klinë/Klina River and Drini i Bardhë/Beli Drim River) will also be conducted.

Further information / Key contacts

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Istog/Istok

Achievements / commitments

- a) Conservation and restoration interventions on traditional stone buildings (*kulla/kula*), such as Qerim Rugova's kulla (in Llukavc i Begut/Begov Lukavac), Hasan Rexhë Salihaj's kulla (in Sushicë/Sušica), and Lash Uka's kulla (in the village of Kaliqan/Kaličane), as well as on the the Ali Bel Bicaj stone mill in Vrellë/Vrela village.
- b) Earth day celebrations – less vehicles, more oxygen (istog@redcross-ks.org)
- c) National paragliding championship (<http://aeroklubiprishtina.com>)
- d) Traditional festival “Apple Day” (<https://kk.rks-gov.net/istog/News>)

Trends / plans

In 2014, the programme on "Traditional food & Gastronomy" in Istog/Istok will start to be implemented. This initiative stems from the Heritage Plan–West 2012–2015 and is part of the Cultural Itinerary Programme for Kosovo West. (www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kosovo/RegEcoDvt/Events/default_en.asp)

Organisation of the traditional, annual "Apple Day" festival, by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD) and the municipality of Klinë/Klina.

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Rugovë/Rugova games in Pejë/Peć

Pejë/Peć

Achievements / commitments

- a) VIA FERRATA project
The "Via Ferrata" climbing route is the first climbing destination organised in Kosovo. It is located at the third kilometre from the entrance to the Rugovë/Rugova valley, and is 140m in length. (www.marimangat.org; www.majet.org)
- b) The Tourism Information Centre "Porta West"
This centre was established by the Municipality of Pejë/Peć and managed by the NGO Porta West. The centre is located close to the Pejë/Peć Patriarchate, at the entrance to Rugovë/Rugova Valley, and offers visitors information and other services as well as equipment for outdoor sports.

www.rdawest.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=186:eured-project-promotion&catid=51:events&Itemid=94&lang=en
- c) Initiative for cooperation between the University of Haxhi Zeka (Pejë/Peć, Kosovo) and the University of Shkodra (Albania) on cultural heritage management. The first step was an agreement for an academic staff exchange.
- d) Green Path
This is a project of Associazione Trentino con i Balcani with local NGOs Rugova Experience, Marimangat e Pejës and ERA. The initiative is supported by the Municipality of Pejë/Peć, the Autonomous Province of Trento and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic, through the Vertical Action 2C "Valorization of Environmental Tourism" in the framework of Programme Seenet II, "A Translocal Network for the Cooperation between Italy and South-East Europe".
<http://www.eradirect.org/green-path.html>

Trends / plans

- Monoact 2014 is an international theatre presentation where monodramas from different countries will be presented. This will be organised by the municipality of Pejë/Peć, and will be based on traditions. <http://akt-production.com/>
- Kids' International Book Day is an initiative of the Azem Shkreli municipal library.
- Rugovë/Rugova traditional games
- Mill of Haxhi Zeka – A project run by the Municipality in cooperation with IOM's "Beautiful Kosovo" project, for the revitalisation of one of the mill buildings to be used for the programme on 'Outdoor Sports and Traditional Game Festivals'. This initiative stems from the Heritage Plan–West 2012–2015 and is part of the Cultural Itinerary Programme for Kosovo West.

(www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kosovo/RegEcoDvt/Events/default_en.asp)



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Challenges in management

The sustainable management of heritage, in its diverse forms, presents a set of challenges worldwide. Cultural heritage monuments, sites and landscapes as well as intangible heritage practices are increasingly recognised and valued as social and economic resources. Cultural heritage is steadily becoming an essential factor of development and a catalyst for social cohesion.

The reasons for these challenges facing the heritage sector today cannot be identified as coming from a single root cause. Failings that are evident are the result of a combination of factors operating together so that no single entity can be blamed, as most problems are the result of different actors having different agendas without cross-checking and often without realising the consequences of their actions. As there is no overall coordination, no single actor in the process is responsible for the overall picture, for resultant problematic development, and its impact on cultural and natural heritage.

In working towards this goal, property managers and professionals will strive to achieve proper preparation and sustainability of heritage resources, balanced with the ability to provide meaningful recreational experiences for visitors. Basic steps should be taken seriously, with active community involvement ensuring inclusiveness and variety of creative ideas. A holistic approach to development that is promoted by HDP West extends well beyond economic objectives, aiming at improving the lives of people living in the area by better preserving and utilising heritage resources through research, innovative actions, coordination, promotion and facilitation, and through long-term strategy-making as set out in the Heritage Plan West.

Gradual integration of local communities in cultural heritage management initiatives is considered crucial for local community ownership and longevity of the actions with a greater understanding of long term impacts.

Commonly experienced challenges across the region

1/

Lack of business and management planning for restored and rehabilitated facilities.

2/

Inadequate consultation, information exchange and coordination between institutions, including municipal urbanism departments, Regional Centres for Cultural Heritage (RCCH) and owners prior to the works taking place at sites and individual monuments. Unclear roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders add to these challenges.

3/

Owners' refusal to make the facilities available for public or other tourism-related purposes, even if the works are funded by public money.

4/

Insufficient and inaccurate research to provide detailed data about heritage assets.

5/

Inadequate systematic documentation of assets.

6/

Lack of volunteerism and cooperative work for a common interest, in spite of the young population advantage.

7/

Destruction and misuse of monuments already under protection.

8/

Lack of resources at the institutional level in order to monitor the entire region and document heritage assets properly.

9/

Difficulty in organising active citizen action and community involvement in heritage management.

Toward responsible management

Although there are many good practices around the world from which we could learn, the processes of identifying, protecting, managing and celebrating our heritage remain the basis for any responsible and effective heritage management. Clear identification and mapping of all existing assets, in close cooperation with authorities that deal with cultural heritage, spatial planning and landscape, is a fundamental step for any management plan. Regular monitoring of the state of our heritage at a community level is one of most effective ways of protection, coming to the attention of involved individuals, communities and authorities.

Some of the basic requirements include:

- Mapping and studying the area carefully, based on documented data and in accordance with international standards and tools
- Sharing a long-term vision, with active citizen participation
- Maintaining a realistic overview, being inclusive of all communities and ensuring their representation in the development process
- Capitalising on the publicity advantage of World Heritage Sites
- Increasing communication between the institutions and information shared from and to the public
- Developing clear business, management and conservation plans before any intervention takes place
- Ongoing work with local community members and professionals on heritage management
- Combining activities to diversify options and interest for potential visitors searching for distinctiveness
- Encouraging youth and creative industries to promote and transmit intangible heritage practices

Social inclusion

Accessibility should be ensured for people with disabilities, the elderly and small children through guaranteeing safety.

Ethnic groups and their cultural representation should be embraced and, through consultation, should be reflected in programming.

Such programmes should encourage all groups in the region to contribute to the process with dignity, by considering the representation of identity a value to society. Embracing diversity as an asset is crucial to attract visitors with diverse backgrounds and interests.

In light of the high level of unemployment (unemployment being considered a form of social exclusion), activities encouraging active youth involvement with socially-responsible business development practices would be worth exploring.

Recommendations

- Clear and updated heritage assessment reports by six municipalities of the region (mapping all types of heritage and landscape; having one single document supported and accepted by all parties in the territory) by December 2014.
- Evaluation of these assets by two RCCHs and contribute to the report on "Our Common Heritage - A Civil Society Review" by December 2014.
- Inclusion of lessons on integrated heritage into curricula by education directorates (examples provided by PCDK and other entities) for the academic calendar 2014-2015.
- Support ongoing activities and efforts to promote heritage assets and branding the region in order to achieve positive a reputation by HDP West (e.g. cultural itineraries).
- Transmission of skills and practices to youth by setting up workshops (non-formal education) during 2014.
- Ensuring active engagement of local communities in municipal and regional development plans (local governance and participation) by municipal authorities.
- Encouraging owners of heritage assets to consult the relevant authorities in any rehabilitation / restoration work (RCCH, municipality, MCYS, MESP, and MAFRD).
- Encouraging owners and authorities to seek assistance for management planning before investing in renovation works.
- For a steady regional development, aim for achievable objectives with impact at the community level.
- Community-based strategy development taking all kinds of heritage into account – a place- or community-based approach that brings all parties together around a common interest, with a focus on heritage management in general, marketing, promotion activities, quality services, guides, museum webpage / documentation planning, cooperation between institutions, museums and schools.



Heritage Community West and Partners

Heritage Community West is a group of organisations and individuals who also take part in the Kosovo Heritage Community Network, with the mission to 'contribute to the promotion and protection of natural and cultural heritage, increase awareness for the values of heritage while opening new doors for intercultural cooperation and communication with all groups of interest for sustainable local development'.

Shared values and interest in heritage bring this community together in order to seek ways to improve the quality of life and living environment of citizens in the western part of Kosovo, through utilising the advantages gained from heritage and diversity. Members of this community and partners in 2013 include:

JP – EU/CoEPCDK - www.coe.int/pcdk

European Union Office in Pristina
http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo/index_en.htm

The British Embassy Pristina
<https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-embassy-pristina>

Municipality of Pejë/Peć -
<http://kk.rks-gov.net/peje>

Municipality of Gjakovë/Đakovica
<http://kk.rks-gov.net/gjakove>

Municipality of Istog/Istok
<http://kk.rks-gov.net/istog>

Municipality of Klinë/Klina
<http://kk.rks-gov.net/kline>

Municipality of Junik
<http://kk.rks-gov.net/junik>

Municipality of Deçan/Dečane
<http://kk.rks-gov.net/decan>

Regional Development Agency (RDA) WEST
<http://www.rdawest.org>

NGO Marimangat Pejë
<http://www.marimangat.org>

INGO Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB)
<http://chwbkosovo.org>

NGO Rugova Experience
<http://www.rugovaexperience.org>

Haxhi Zeka Public University - <http://unhz.eu/>

NGO ERA - <http://eradirect.org/>

NGO 7 Shtatori

NGO Porta West

NGO Agimi Isniq

NGO Arteza

NGO Podguri

NGO Balkan Promotion



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