



World Monuments Fund Secures £536,000 to train Syrian Refugees in Heritage Conservation Skills from the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund

LONDON, JUNE 20, 2017 – Advancing its mission to respond meaningfully to the devastating impacts of conflict on cultural heritage sites and their communities, World Monuments Fund is pleased to announce that it has secured £536,000 from the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund for a new heritage conservation training program in Jordan for Syrian refugees. The award is part of the British Council and the UK government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport's £30 million fund to help to create sustainable opportunities for economic and social development through building capacity to foster, safeguard and promote cultural heritage affected by conflict overseas.

To launch this new initiative, World Monuments Fund and its British affiliate, World Monuments Fund Britain, will work with Petra National Trust in Jordan to create a training facility and recruit a catalyst group of qualified candidates who, once trained, can become mentors for subsequent trainees in the 18-month program. The program recognizes that cultural heritage is a source of pride and identity for those displaced by conflict, and that when rebuilding efforts begin in earnest, there will be need for qualified professionals and craftspeople. Along with building capacity in masonry skills, which are essential to conservation programs and the larger construction trade, the program will implement a teaching program in local schools to present heritage sites as an inspiration and show connections between the history, architecture, and traditions of the region that can transcend contemporary national boundaries.

Joshua David, President & CEO of World Monuments Fund, said, "In recent years we've witnessed the devastating impacts of human conflict on the Syrian people and their treasured cultural sites, and we are eager to help renew community strength through this exciting new initiative."

John Darlington, Executive Director of World Monuments Fund Britain, said "This project addresses a significant need to assist displaced Syrians, many of them young and in search of a future, and provides valuable skills essential to heritage conservation."

The program will be conducted in partnership with a British academic institution to be identified, and will include training in stone cutting; manufacture of molds, templates, and maquettes; repair of damaged masonry; stabilisation of arches, vaults and domes; underpinning and reinforcement of foundations; hoisting and lifting of stone block; methodologies for grouting and pinning masonry surfaces; lime technologies; surveying; stone selection and quarrying; cleaning historic stone; mortar analysis; and other related masonry conservation skills.

The program grows from World Monuments Fund's longtime commitment to protecting and conserving heritage in conflict zones and strengthening communities around sustainable commitments to heritage. The organization began work at Angkor Archaeological Park, in Cambodia, in 1989, after the Khmer Rouge genocide decimated the local population, including those with the knowledge and skills to care for this remarkable heritage site. World Monuments Fund works at Angkor to this day and employs over 100 Cambodians working there fulltime. And in the 1990s, at the end of the Balkan conflict, World Monuments Fund partnered with UNESCO and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture to address destruction of heritage sites with projects that included the reconstruction of Mostar Bridge.

In the aftermath of the US-led invasion of Iraq, World Monuments Fund launched programs in training, site management, and conservation skills at Babylon, in partnership with the Iraq State Board of Antiquities and Heritage. Early on, when it was still too dangerous to work in Iraq, the organization partnered with UNESCO and the Getty Conservation Institute on training programs for Iraq State Board of Antiquities and Heritage personnel focusing on documentation, new technology, and rapid condition surveys. As it was difficult at the time to organize training in Iraq, courses were based at the American Center of Oriental Research, in Amman, and bringing Iraqi heritage professionals to Jordan for intensive programs that included seminars and on-site training at archaeological sites. The program provided immersive learning opportunities and helped the Iraqi heritage professionals expand their international networks. Similar opportunities are presented today through the new masonry training program. Displaced Syrians living in Jordan will have the opportunity to attain valuable skills, develop relationships with professional colleagues, and reinforce their commitment to and memories of the damaged cultural treasures of their homeland through the study of the important sites of their host country.

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Petra National Trust (PNT) was founded in 1989 as a non-governmental, non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the UNESCO World Heritage site of Petra. To implement its goals, PNT oversees and conducts various preservation projects in Petra, plays an active advocacy role and implements outreach programs aimed at raising awareness amongst the youth of Petra to re-establish the missing link between the community and their heritage.

World Monuments Fund is the leading international nonprofit organization devoted to heritage conservation. Founded in 1965, WMF has worked at more than 600 sites in more than 100 countries. WMF runs the World

Monuments Watch, a call to action to bring attention to the heritage conservation advocacy needs of sites throughout the world. For more information on our programs visit www.wmf.org

WMF Britain is a registered charity in the United Kingdom. Founded in 1993, WMF Britain is a strong advocate for heritage needs in the UK and assists WMF's work across the globe. For more information, visit <https://wmf.org.uk/>

For more on the program visit

British Council: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development/cultural-protection-fund/projects/syrian-stone-masonry>

World Monuments Fund <https://www.wmf.org/project/building-conservation-capacity-syria-and-jordan>

For more information about the Cultural Protection Fund visit

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development/cultural-protection-fund>



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