



PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE IN KUWAIT

12 DECEMBER 2022

Kuwait University

#PreserveKuwaitHeritage



TABLE OF CONTENTS

03	Introduction
04	Agenda
08	Speakers Profiles
11	Resources in Kuwait



INTRODUCTION

UNESCO, in partnership with Kuwait University, will be organizing on December 12 a conference on Preserving Kuwaiti Cultural Heritage.

The conference will aim at shedding light on the different aspects of Cultural Heritage and its current state of preservation in the State of Kuwait. The conference will offer a venue to explore the opportunities and challenges related to Cultural Heritage in the State of Kuwait and provide networking opportunities to create new projects and partnerships to ensure its protection and preservation.

The conference will focus on documentary heritage as well as intangible and tangible cultural heritage and their role in promoting innovation and creative industries.

Taking its cue from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, documentary heritage, as an information resource, lends itself both to the “public access to information” component of Target of 16.10 of SDG 16 and its “fundamental freedoms” component. While the question of ensuring universal access to documentary heritage remains a foundational concern, there is a strong focus on how documentary heritage can be used to promote inclusive, just and peaceful societies.

The safeguarding and conservation of cultural heritage of all its components and elements contribute to sustainable development within each of the dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the ‘New Kuwait’ Vision of 2035. Culture broadly contributes to SDG 11.4 on sustainable cities and resilient communities, SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 8 on productive employment and decent work, SDG, and lastly, SDG 17 to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnership in the State of Kuwait and abroad. Moreover, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in particular contributes to other SDGs such as food security (SDG 2), health care (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), and climate change (SDG 13).

Agenda



09:00 - 09:15

Opening

09:15 - 10:15

Ensuring preservation and access to documentary heritage: introduction to the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme

The first panel discussion will introduce the work of UNESCO with regards to documentary heritage protection. It will present the World Registry for documentary heritage and how Kuwait could submit new proposals to raise awareness about its rich heritage.


It will highlight the importance to preserve heritage as the memory of the country and for future generation, as well as to ensure its access to facilitate research and build knowledge societies. It will explain the risks faced by documentary heritage and share best practices on how to ensure its preservation and protection.

Speakers:

- Fackson Banda, Head of the Memory of the World Secretariat, UNESCO
- Ahmed Bin Rashid Al-Shahi, Representative of Memory of the World National Committee in Oman
- Alanoud Al Khamees, GCC Memory of the World Representative in Kuwait

10:15 - 10:30

Coffee Break



10:30 – 11:30

Documentary heritage preservation in Kuwait

In 2019, UNESCO conducted a regional survey on the state of documentary heritage in the Arab region, including a mapping of Kuwait documentary heritage institutions. The survey registered more than 20 million items, demonstrating the richness of the documentary heritage being preserved in Kuwait.

This session will aim at discussing the current state of documentary heritage preservation in Kuwait and the strategies put in place to better preserve it. It will review the main challenges to preservation and share good practices.

Speakers:

- Yousif Al Suraie, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information for Broadcasting Affairs
- Sheikha Al Kharsan, Head of the Department of Restoration and Preservation at the Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait
- Hasan Ashkanani, Professor of Archeology and Anthropology at Kuwait University

11:30 – 12:30

The role of private collectors in preserving heritage in Kuwait

This session will focus on the important role in Kuwait of private collectors in ensuring the preservation of documentary heritage. It will discuss the challenges private collectors are facing in this endeavour and the possible solutions and way-forward to support further preservation.

Speakers:

- Fahad Al Abduljalil, Head of The Society of Kuwait Heritage
- Ali Ghulom Ali Alrais, Private collectors and owner of the largest archival materials on Sheikh Ahmed Aljaber and Sheikh Abdullah AlSabah
- Essa Dashti, Specialist in collecting archival material on Kuwait-British relationship

12:30 – 13:30 **Lunch Break**


13:45 – 14:45 ***Protection of cultural and natural heritage. Lessons learned from 50 years of the implementation of the UNESCO 1972 Convention.***

Cultural and natural heritage in the region are under increasing threats: besides natural decay, they are also affected by changing social and economic conditions aggravating the risks of damage and destruction. The most significant feature of the 1972 World Heritage Convention is that it links together in a single document the concepts of nature conservation and the preservation of cultural properties. The Convention recognizes the way in which people interact with nature, and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two.

The convention was ratified by the State of Kuwait in 2002. The country has no property inscribed on the World Heritage List yet, but has one site on the tentative list : 'Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jabir Palace' inscribed in 24/02/2015. This presentation aims to discuss the national plans and strategies to protect and preserve cultural and natural heritage in Kuwait while highlighting challenges, prospects and lessons learned from 50 years of the implementation of the UNESCO 1972 Convention.

Speaker:

Rasul Samadov, Programme Specialist for Culture at the UNESCO Office for the Gulf States and Yemen



14:45 – 15:45

Community-based safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage: methodologies and perspectives in Kuwait

UNESCO is the depository of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Ratified by the State of Kuwait in 2015, the Convention is the only binding multilateral instrument that exists in the field of intangible cultural heritage. Three elements from the State of Kuwait are inscribed in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:

- Arabic calligraphy: knowledge, skills and practices (2021),
- Traditional weaving of Al Sadu(2020),
- Date palm, knowledge, skills, traditions and practices(2019).

The convention 2003 testifies to the desire of broadening the international discourse around cultural heritage beyond monuments and sites to include communities' living heritage.

Through the example of the "Tradional weaving of Al Sadu", inscribed to the list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity in 2020, this session will demonstrate how the 2003 convention is being implemented in Kuwait and how, through a community based approach, the country's intangible heritage is being preserved. It will also explore the transmission of intangible cultural heritage is being strengthened through formal and non-formal education and promoting creative industries.

Speaker:

Sheikha Bibi Al-Sabah, Chairwoman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti Sadu Society

15:45 – 16:00

CLOSING OF EVENT

SPEAKERS PROFILES



Fackson Banda

Dr. Fackson Banda is the Head of UNESCO's Documentary Heritage Unit. In this capacity, he oversees the Memory of the World Programme and its implementation around the world. Banda is a scholar of African political thought and media, he has published in the areas of postcolonial theory and media, technology and development, civic education and communication as well as community media and policy, among others.



Ahmed Bin Rashid Al-Shahi

Head of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding Section at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of the Sultanate of Oman. He is a member of the Arab working group to prepare the joint Arab file in intangible cultural heritage, member of the National Executive Committee to prepare a national strategy for the protection of forms of cultural expression, and a member and rapporteur of the Memory of the World National Committee.



Alanoud Al Khamees

Alanoud Al Khamees is an ICH team leader, and representative of the State of Kuwait to the GCC Memory of the World National Committee. She is part of the National Council for Culture Arts and Letter in Kuwait.



Youssef Abdelwahab Al Suraie

Undersecretary for Broadcasting Affairs, Director of Kuwait Radio 2 and Local radio stations of the State of Kuwait. Among the leadership positions he held in Kuwait TV: Director of the Cultural and Religious Programs Department, Director of the Ithraa Channel Department, Director of the Production Department, Director of the Coordination and Follow-up Department, Director of the Shows Department, and the establishment of the TV station, the Al-Qurain Heritage Archive Channel.



Shaikha AlKharsan

Shaikha AlKharsan is the Head of Restoration and Preservation at the Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait. In her capacity, Sheikha AlKharsan oversees the restoration and preservation of paper collections of all kinds, represented in the form of historical documents, maps and plans, in addition to heritage photographs. She is an expert in the field of documentary heritage restoration and preservation, she has done extensive studies especially on the type of ink used in Kuwaiti manuscripts and its origins.



Hasan Ashkanani

Associate Professor of Anthropology and Archeology, and supervisor of the Museum and Laboratory of Anthropology and Archeology at the College of Social Sciences at Kuwait University. He assumed the position of the first director of operations for the museums of the Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center affiliated to the Amiri Diwan in the State of Kuwait. Owner of a personal museum since the age of 12, which contains more than 6,000 pieces and more than 11,000 archival pieces of audio, visual and paper materials.



Fahad Ghazi Al Abduljalil

Fahad is the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti Society for Heritage, Member of the National Committee of the International Council for Available, Member of the Higher Committee for the Development of Mubarakiya Markets, Member of the Heritage Mosques Committee, Former Member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti Writers Association and Chairman of the Social Committee, Member of the Stamps and Coins Association. He is the author of the Encyclopedia of the History of the Ancient Kuwaiti Economy.



Ali Ghulum Ali Alrais

Alrais is a private collector who owns the largest archival materials on Sheikh Ahmed Aljaber and Sheikh Abdullah Alsalem AlSabah, rulers of Kuwait. Among the books he published are “Kuwait in Postcards”, “Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Documents and Pictures of his life”, “Kuwait in the Egyptian Press: The Beginnings of the Renaissance”, “Pictures from the old markets of Kuwait (1916-1966 AD)” and “Kuwait in the Records of the Emerald Warship (1927-1928)”.



Essa Yahya Dashti

Researcher in Kuwaiti-British relations and holder of the British Empire Medal from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for his service to Kuwaiti-British relations. He has more than 35 books and pamphlets on the history of Kuwaiti-British relations, in which he documented the most important historical visits and historical events related to the two countries. He is currently the Secretary of the Kuwaiti Society for Stamps and Coins, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Bosta Magazine, and a trainee philatelist.



Rasul Samadov

Rasul Samadov is the Programme Specialist for Culture at the UNESCO Office for the Gulf States and Yemen based in Doha, Qatar, with more than 15 years of experience working in the field of culture and heritage at the international level. Rasul specializes in creativity, tangible and intangible cultural heritage and is responsible for design, implementation and monitoring of projects and activities at UNESCO aiming to strengthen policies and capacities in the field of culture in the Gulf States and Yemen and advancing the role of culture for sustainable development in the region.



Sheikha Bibi Al-Sabah

From teaching Accounting at the University to the philanthropic work of heading AlSadu Society. Education and innovation are her two main focuses. Key international achievements under her leadership include: Accredited NGO advisory for ICH UNESCO, inscription of “The Art of AlSadu weaving” on the representative list of UNESCOs intangible cultural heritage, development and implementation of “the Art of Weaving” within the National Curriculum at the Ministry of Education which led to the Registration of Good Safeguarding Practices at UNESCO, and granted AD HOC observer status by WIPO.

RESOURCES IN KUWAIT

Through the subsequent booklet section, we list memory institutions and main organizations of cultural heritage preservation in Kuwait with the aim of providing useful local resources to the readers.

KUWAIT NATIONAL MUSEUM

The Museum aims to preserve the country's heritage and history, through exhibitions to include artifacts, animal fossils, bronze coins, among other items.

KUWAIT NATIONAL LIBRARY

The Library preserves the history of Kuwait, by illuminating its present and safeguarding national memory. It hosts over 50,000 books and volumes, over 6,000 periodicals, and several rare manuscripts.

KUWAIT UNIVERSITY

The University is home to several libraries and the Historical Archive Center Museum, which introduces through its valuable collections the heritage of Kuwait and the region.

CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND STUDIES ON KUWAIT

The Center was established with the objective of collecting and preserving various heritage items of Kuwait. The Center provides restoration and preservation services.

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS OF THE AMIRI DIWAN

The Amiri Diwan of Kuwait holds valuable heritage collections that reveal the rich history and culture of the country and region.

DAR AL-ATHAR AL-ISLAMIAH

The organization preserves the heritage of Kuwait as it hosts more than 35,000 objects ranging from rare manuscripts, instruments, carpets, jewelry, and others.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM AND LABORATORY

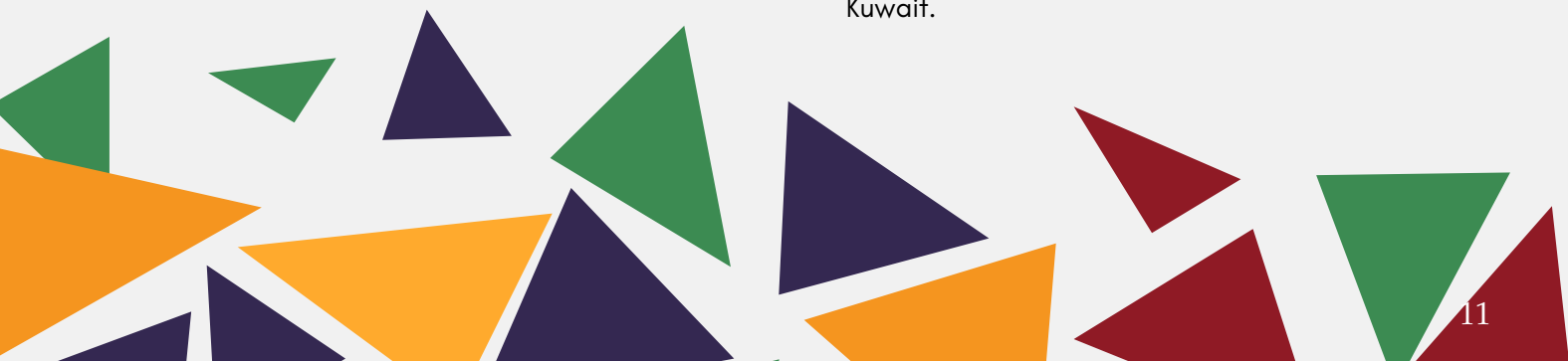
Located at the College of Social Sciences at Kuwait University, it is the only anthropology and archaeology museum and training laboratory in the Arabian Gulf at the collegiate level preserving over 2,300 ethnographic materials and antiquities. Its library contains over 900 books in anthropology and its subfields, and over 8,000 archival audio-visual materials.

HASAN ASHKANANI PRIVATE MUSEUM

The private museum preserves over 30,000 pieces covering a range of extremely rare traveller books to the Arabian Gulf, manuscripts, newspapers, coins, musical instruments, extremely rare of Thomas Edison Private collection and phonographs, traditions costumes and 6,000 governmental and family letters etc.

AL SADU SOCIETY

Al Sadu Society develops in-house programs for youth and creative professionals to relaunch the practice of Sadu-weaving. Al Sadu has been recently recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage in Kuwait.





© Yasser Al-Zayyat via Kuwait Times

LET'S GET IN TOUCH

ANISSA HARFOUCHE

Programme Officer
a.harfouche@unesco.org

MARIA NJEIM

Communication Officer
m.njeim@unesco.org

UNESCO GULF STATES & YEMEN OFFICE

66, Lusail Street, West Bay
P.O.Box 3945 - Doha, Qatar

Tel: +974 4411 3290

Fax: +974 4411 3015

Website: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/doha>