



WORLD MONUMENTS FUND EVALUATION GRANT

British Council | Cultural Protection Fund

Abstract

A long-term mixed methods evaluation of four Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) projects led by World Monuments Fund (WMF), assessing whether the initiatives achieved the initial aims of improving livelihoods and heritage conservation.

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Executive Summary

Since 2017, the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) has supported World Monuments Fund (WMF) Britain and partners to implement four projects. These included training programmes in traditional stonemasonry in Mafraq, Jordan (Phase I: May 2017-September 2018, 42 trainees; and an advanced course, Phase II: March 2018-November 2019, 20 trainees) and in Tripoli, Lebanon (Phase I: April 2020-February 2021, 43 trainees), a capacity building programme in historic building conservation at the Imam Palace in the Old City of Ta'izz, Yemen (Phase I: November 2018-November 2019, five trainees, Phase 2: April 2020-February 2021, six trainees), and a capacity-building programme in historic town planning in the citadel city of Amedi, Iraq (October 2018 – November 2019, 15 trainees). With the latter two projects, the outputs included physical conservation of the exterior and interior of the Imam Palace, and the development of a conservation masterplan for Amedi.

An evaluation of each of the projects was undertaken at their conclusion, with the British Council commissioning this evaluation to assess the longer-term results of the CPF investment.

The main findings of the follow-on evaluation are:

- **All the CPF projects aligned with the intended outcomes of the Cultural Protection Fund**, albeit not evenly. These included heritage outcomes, where cultural heritage at risk was safeguarded for future generations, such as at the Imam Palace in Ta'izz; societal outcomes where people have developed skills leading to enhanced professional and other opportunities; or increased diversity, such as the male/female balance achieved throughout the phases of the stonemasonry programmes; or a greater appreciation and understanding of culture, which was apparent across all programmes; or in empowering local communities to engage in their own heritage.
- **Investment in heritage skills** (such as stonemasonry or broader conservation methodologies) **has a positive impact both on the built fabric of the historic environment** (e.g. the Imam Palace) **and on the livelihoods of those who took part.**
- **The improvement to livelihoods included increased levels of remuneration, promotion, new employment opportunities, improved access to the job market or to further educational attainment, and increased confidence or awareness of the world of others** (i.e. shared culture, or the lives of refugee or local recipient communities).
- While heritage conservation remains at the core of WMFs business, the **CPF projects demonstrated the wider benefit of investing in people through heritage**, which became a legitimate goal – i.e. people first, rather than bricks and mortar first.
- **Training modules can underpin a broadening of skillsets that extend beyond the original ambition of the programmes**, such as the lessons in geometry which can be applied to carpentry, tile and plasterwork, calligraphy, and art, as well as to the taught subject of stonemasonry.
- **Unexpected outcomes further demonstrated the value of the CPF programme**, such as the appearance of the restored Imam Palace on Yemen's popular *Al Allia* soap opera which resulted in over a million views.

- Feedback also suggested that **there is always room for improvement** should any of these programmes be run again, or similar ones be implemented; these included:
 - Recognising the value of practical outputs and outcomes of capacity training exercises, such as delivery of real-time conservation at the Imam Palace, versus the paper-based conservation planning and policy at Amedi.
 - The prospect for heritage capacity-building to include other educational opportunities, such as learning English as a foreign language.
 - Further support is consistently required in helping those who have developed heritage skill sets to ensure long-term sustainability, for example, all the Lebanese students would have attended a second phase of training (as in Jordan) to deepen their experience and confidence. Similarly, four of the Syrian students who set up as a stonemasonry business in Mafraq, Jordan, needed a small but important injection of operational management, design and marketing experience to help them transition from competent craftspeople to a thriving businesspeople.
 - Long-term objectives should always be in place for CPF projects, but these need to be based on thorough market research and the ability to measure impact.
 - Follow-on evaluations are extremely useful in identifying the real impact of a project and could usefully be implemented throughout the British Council and WMF's future programming.

World Monuments Fund | Cultural Protection Fund Evaluation Grant

Introduction and Project Overview

This six-month project from June-September 2023 evaluated the long-term impact of Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) projects led by World Monuments Fund (WMF) Britain in partnership with WMF Regional Directors and in-country organisations, and assessed the lessons learned to inform future British Council-led programming.

The projects evaluated concentrate on field-based training, two in the traditional skill of stonemasonry, two in the professional skill of conservation planning and documentation. The goal of all projects was both improving livelihoods and conserving heritage.

Stonemasonry Training Programme (Phase I & II), Mafrq, Jordan

Phase I: May 2017-September 2018, 42 trainees | Phase II: March 2018-November 2019, 20 trainees

The 'Syrian Stonemasonry Training Scheme' pilot (Phase I & Phase II) was developed with the aim of training local Jordanians and Syrian refugees in traditional stonemasonry, equipping them with skills to improve livelihoods through subsequent employment, and restore their heritage across the region post-conflict. All trainees received a Certificate of Completion from the UK-based National Heritage Training Group. The advanced course (Phase II) focused on increasing the skills of a select number of students on the production of stone ornament and the use of machines.

The programme was implemented in partnership with the Petra National Trust (PNT), with Turquoise Mountain (TM) also joining in the second phase.

Stonemasonry Training Programme (Phase I), Tripoli, Lebanon

Phase I: April 2020-February 2021, 40 trainees

Stonemasonry Training Programme (Phase I) built on the successes and lessons learnt in Jordan and implemented the programme in Lebanon, targeting local Lebanese and Syrian refugees. All trainees received a Certificate of Completion from the National Heritage Training Group. The project was implemented as a partnership with Directorate General of Antiquities (DGA) and International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Lebanon.

There was no advanced course (Phase II): an application to the CPF in 2021/22 was unsuccessful.

Capacity Building and Conservation, Old City of Ta'izz, Yemen

Phase I: November 2018-November 2019, six trainees | Phase 2: April 2020-February 2021, seven trainees

The project was two-fold, first to build capacity within General Organization of Antiquities and Museums (GOAM) in the latest conservation methodologies and techniques. Second, to apply the training to a building in need in of restoration post-conflict. For the latter, GOAM chose the Imam Palace, a 19th century Ottoman palace built for Imam Ahmad Hamid al-Din ruler of the Kingdom of Yemen.

The project was delivered across two phases of work in applied conservation skills training and physical restoration. The first phase (2018/19) concentrated on making the structure safe and on the restoration of the exterior fabric, while the second phase (2019/20) invested in the restoration of historic interiors in preparation for their return to a museum and community function. As training staff could not travel to Yemen, training took place in Kuwait and Egypt.

The projects were implemented as a partnership with General Organization of Antiquities and Museum (GOAM) and Centre Francais de Recherche de la Peninsule Arabique (CEFREPA).

Planning for the Future of Amedi, Iraq

October 2018-November 2019, 15 trainees

The overall aim was to develop conservation management frameworks for key areas within the historic core of Amedi (the 'citadel'). These frameworks could then form a model for heritage conservation across the entire citadel area and for rebuilding other regional historic towns post-conflict. As part of the project a programme of workshops in mapping, characterising, and preparing protection policies for the historic hilltop citadel town of Amedi in Iraqi Kurdistan was delivered. The programme targeted graduate and post-graduate students from the Spatial Planning Department, University of Duhok, alongside employees from municipal and directorate authorities. There was no aim for direct conservation of Amedi to be carried out during the project, but instead its purpose was to create a conservation framework against which proposals for change to the historic environment could be guided.

The project was implemented in partnership with Spatial Planning Department at Duhok University, the Municipality of Amedi, and the Directorate of Duhok.

Evaluation Aims

The evaluation aims were as follows:

1. Assess projects individually and collectively against the original objectives – effectively building on the original end-of project evaluation.
2. Gain a longer-term perspective on the effectiveness of the WMF's CPF activities – i.e., not just at the end of the project, but well beyond it. What has happened to the people we trained: have they found jobs, established their own businesses, gone on to educational opportunities, increased in confidence – trainers, trainees, and professionals?
3. Identify the lessons learned from the CPF – what really worked and what did not (the latter being just as important).
4. Demonstrate these lessons in simple, but eye-catching and creative ways which can be shared with wider audiences for the British Council and for the UK government.

Methodology & Methods

A mid to long-term mixed methods evaluation of four WMF-led CPF projects was used, assessing whether the initiatives achieved the initial aims of improving livelihoods and heritage conservation. An external evaluation consultant, Gina Haney founder of Community Consortium, was appointed to lead on data capture and analysis (Appendix A), which forms the basis of this report. The methodology used was qualitative ethnographic field research centring on online and in-person key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGDs), combined with survey and field observations.

Desk Based Research

A literature review was undertaken before data collection, material examined included CPF Project Evaluation Reports and wider academic literature.

Survey

An online survey using Google Forms was conducted for the projects in Lebanon and Jordan. Questions and answers were in Arabic and responses were translated into English using Google Translate. Translations were checked by Project Co-ordinators in both countries. Survey data was collected by WhatsApp for the project in Yemen by the in-country Project Co-ordinator from members the local community. Questions and answers were in Arabic and responses were translated into English by a Project Co-ordinator. No survey was implemented for the project in Iraq, the sample size was small, and all data was collected during FGD.

Key informant interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Deliberate selection interviews based on information provided in the Project Evaluation Reports and as directed by WMF project staff were undertaken by the external evaluation consultant. WMF staff contacted external trainers and others associated with the projects to initiate the KII and FGDs. In Mafraq and Tripoli, KII and FGD questions reframed and built on questions in the online survey. Online and in-person interviews KIIs and FGDs comprised the ethnographic field research and generated the core of the qualitative and quantitative data. Interviews were offered in Arabic, English and French, and participants chose their preferred language (Arabic or English). Interviews were translated live by Project Co-ordinators. Data was collected online for Yemen and Iraq, and in-person for Jordan and Lebanon.

Field Observation (Lebanon and Jordan)

Field observation was conducted in Jordan and Lebanon, this included site visits and working alongside in-country Project Co-ordinators. These individuals supplied information on the local context, held intuitional memory, and provided insights not necessarily available in project

documentation. They brokered contact with trainees and with in-country project partners. They also managed the online survey collection.

Consent

All participants received an email invitation to participate in the evaluation (English and Arabic) which included the purpose of the evaluation, data collection and processing, and how to consent to participation. This information was also explained to participants at the beginning of each KII or FGD, and participants were reassured of the confidentiality of the data.

Data Storage

Data (survey responses, field notes and evaluation report) is stored on Dropbox, in-line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and is only accessible to World Monuments Fund Britain employees. Access links will also be provided to the British Council.

Data Reliability

The methods proved successful in collecting good representative data for all four projects. In Yemen all six (100%) trainees were interviewed as part of the evaluation. For Jordan, 45 people were trained, 37 (82%) responded to the survey and 32 (71%) were interviewed. For Lebanon, 42 people were trained, 39 (93%) responded to the survey and 28 (67%) were interviewed. The evaluative data for Amedi is more limited, 15 people were trained and six (40%) were interviewed. This is due to a significant portion of the trainees relocating after completing their studies at Duhok University.

Evaluation Findings

Stonemasonry Training Programme (Phase I & II), Mafrqa, Jordan

The aim was to train 30 students in conservation stonemasonry with 20% female representation. The project exceeded the intended training outcome. 45 students (11 female) commenced training, three dropped out and 42 students graduated from the programme. All graduates received a certification of completion from National Heritage Training Group, United Kingdom. From the cohort, 20 of these graduates continued to a second phase of training to develop additional skills in stone carving. All trainees were contacted to participate in the evaluation, 37 out of 42 trainees responded to the online survey, and 32 participated in the interviews.

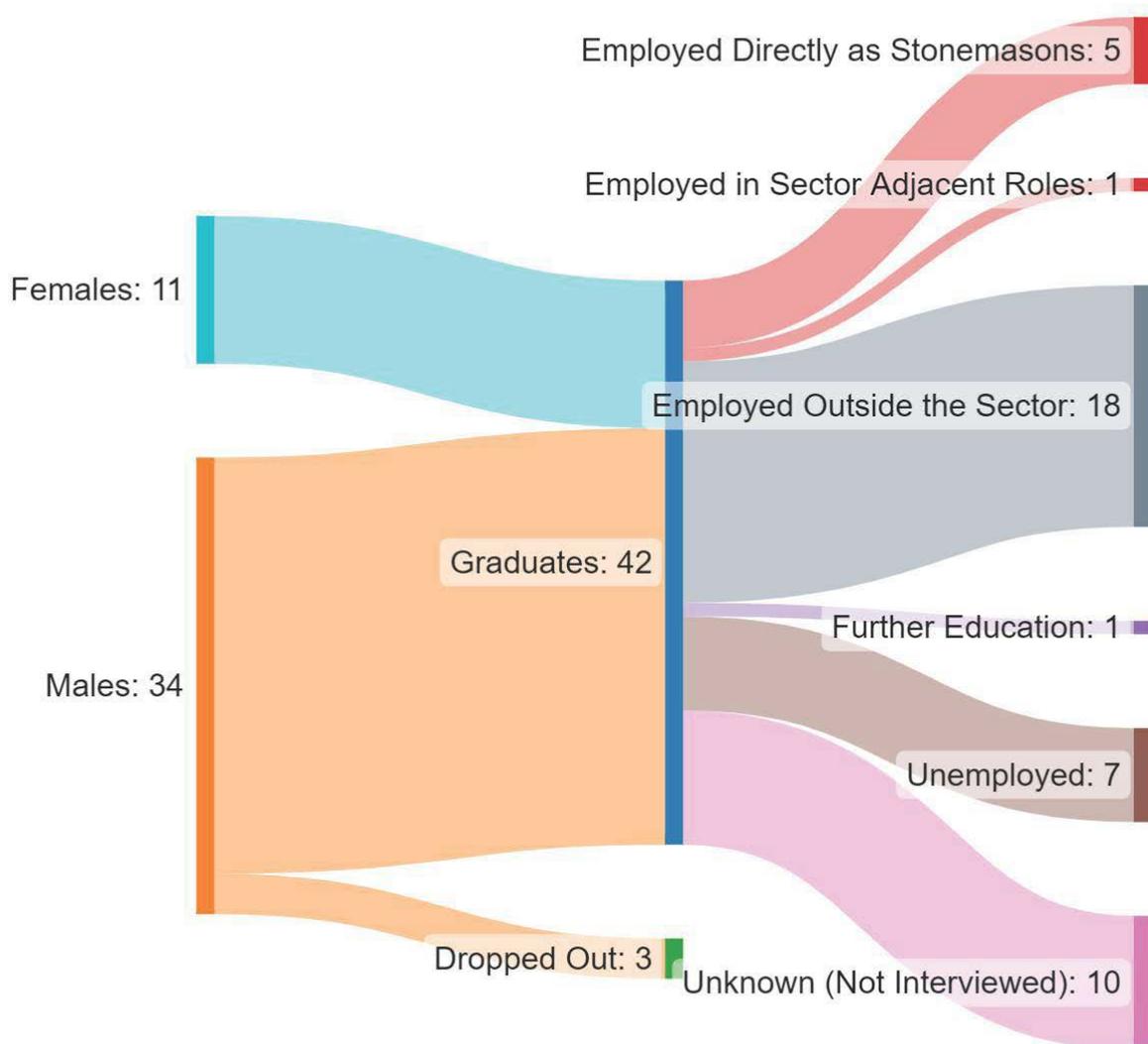


Figure 1: Sankey chart showing the number of Stonemasonry Training Programme trainees, graduates, and interview data from Jordan © Emma Sweeney

Course Feedback

All trainees interviewed felt the training was both well organised and inclusive. Several trainees mentioned the fieldtrips to local heritage sites as a benefit of the course. One mentioned the visit to their hometown of Umm El-Jimal as having a direct impact on her appreciation for the archaeological ruins.

Trainees enjoyed working side-by-side but in separate areas segregated by gender. Women noted their appreciation for this detail and recognised it as a positive reflection on the project management. Women trainees noted having a female in-country project manager made them more comfortable if they needed to be absent from training due to menstrual related issues and childcare.

In addition to the technical training, the trainees indicated they gained several other key skills, self-confidence was cited 16 times, communication 11 times, teamwork and language both five times.

Subsequent Employment and Cultural Heritage Conservation

Out of the 32 graduates interviewed, 24 are currently employed and one is in further education. Of this number, five are employed directly in stonemasonry and/or stone carving, and one applied the skills learned in training to find employment in a related field (furniture carving). 18 other trainees are working outside the sector in a range of roles including, small business owner, electrician, tile cutter and salesperson, four trainees are housewives. Of those interviewed, seven are unemployed.

The four trainees who currently work as stonemasons have been collaborating with Turquoise Mountain (TM) based in Amman, Jordan since they completed the advanced training in 2019. This ongoing relationship began when WMF introduced the trainees to TM and discussed the possibility of future business. Initially five trainees were employed as full-time salaried employees of TM. All Syrian, TM selected these men specifically for their motivation, skills, and interest in pursuing a career. The TM initiative was overseen by Becky Allison, who first worked for WMF as the Assistant Stonemasonry Instructor (May-Oct 2019), before moving on to TM (Nov 2019 onwards).

In 2022, Covid-19 disrupted the work, but TM continued to pay salaries for two months during this time. TM realised the men were not able to find employment themselves, and there was no market for large-scale stonemasonry projects in Jordan. Thus, TM shifted the financial model from salary to commission work, guaranteeing 4-5 months' worth of commissions from TM. The commissions are homeware items ranging from small stone bowls to larger interior pieces. TM staff travel to Mafrq to conduct quality control and pick up items. Items are available to purchase on the TM website and in the TM store in Amman. In addition, TM agreed to pay rent for workshop (space within a masonry yard) for one year (the rent ended in October 2023).



Figure 2: Four WMF graduates currently working as stonemasons, © Emma Sweeney



Figure 3: One of the WMF graduates carving capital in their workshop, © Emma Sweeney

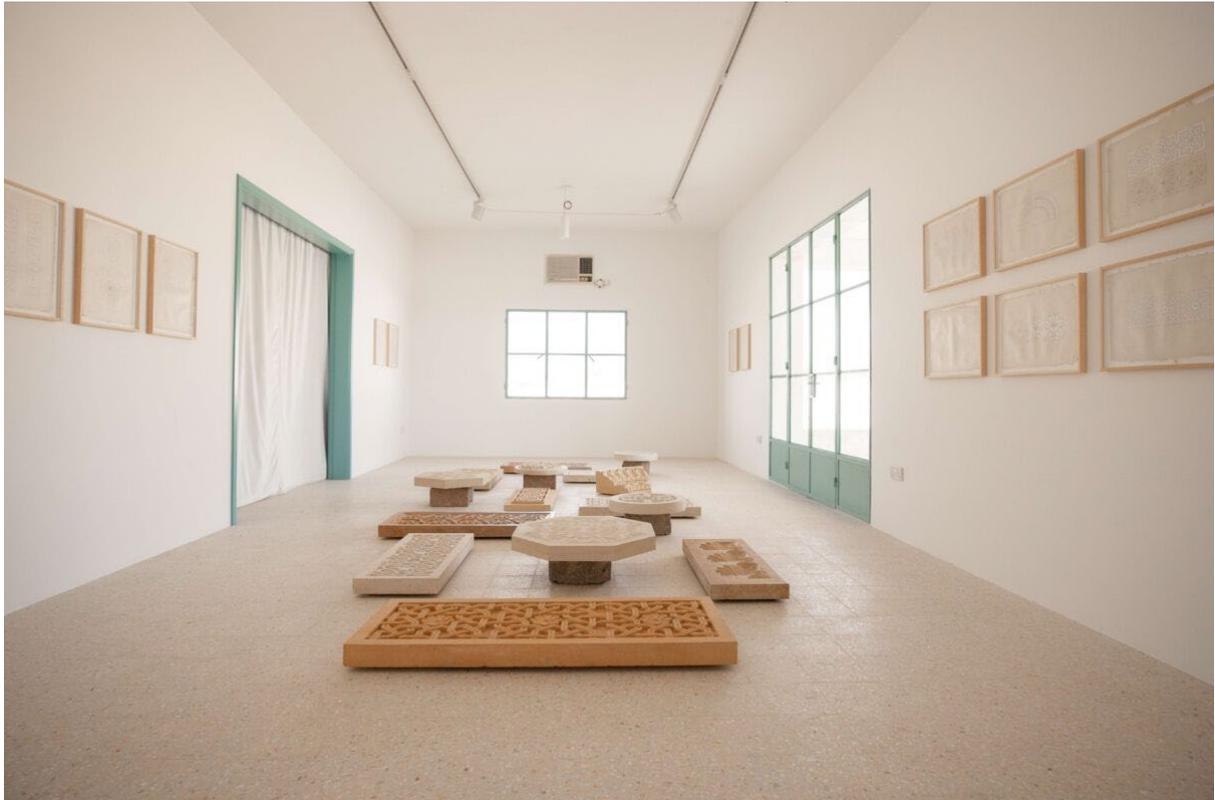


Figure 4: *When the Dust Settles* by Dana Awartani, © Dana Awartani



Figure 5: WMF trainee creating piece for *When the Dust Settles*, © Dana Awartani



Figure 6: Stonemasons and Project Co-ordinator in the Mafraq workshop with items created for Turquoise Mountain, © Emma Sweeney



Figure 7: Bird bath created for King Charles III by WMF stonemasons, © Gina Haney



Figure 8: Small carving created by WMF graduate to sell at heritage festivals, © Gina Haney

In 2022 TM connected the stonemasons and Palestinian-Saudi artist Dana Awartani who worked together to create *When the Dust of Conflict Settles*, an artwork which explored the repercussions of conflict on cultural heritage, the communities that are left behind, the challenges of rebuilding that which has been destroyed. Additional external commissions included a patron who requested a window in a private home and a bird bath for Charles III, King of the United Kingdom. A representative of TM indicated he hopes that private commissions such as these will stimulate the economy around large stonemasonry work in Jordan.

The other stonemason who initially worked for TM, decided to pursue work in hospitality as it provides regular income, but continues to carve on a freelance basis. He creates small carvings to sell at heritage festivals in July and August at sites such as Jerash. At the last festival he sold between 25-30 pieces, which would be approximately 500-600JD income.

The Mayor of Umm El-Jimal, formerly a Byzantine town with a history of stone-built architecture situated 20km from Mafraq has commissioned him to decorate a large, stone marking the entrance of the adjacent village. This trainee will be joined by the four stonemasons discussed above to produce the work. One trainee indicated the municipality has purchased additional tools for the commission and the payment will be around 200JD, they state the certificate awarded by WMF via the Heritage Training Group, allowed them to increase their commission charge by 30%.

For those outside the sector, we did not receive significant responses to the survey to understand if training impacted their ability to find employment. However, there was no evidence that it had a negative impact. In one FGD with four males employed in roles outside the sector, they noted an average salary uplift by 30% resulting from their training and certification.

The Project Manager and Trainer for Jordan were also involved the delivery of Lebanon. They both stated the experience contributed to their personal and professional development. For example, following Phase I the Project Manager completed a Masters in Sustainable Development and currently works as a freelance project consultant for NGOs. The Trainer recently completed her master's degree in architecture and has worked on other conservation projects in Jordan.



Figure 9: Props for television series designed and created by WMF stonemasonry graduate, © Mahmoud Sarhan



Figure 10: Props created by WMF stonemasonry graduate for Lebanese television series, © Mahmoud Sarhan



Figure 11: Set created by WMF stonemasonry graduate private event, © Mahmoud Sarhan



Figure 12: WMF stonemasonry graduate applies geometry teaching to create wooden items for sale, © Emma Sweeney

Stonemasonry Training Programme (Phase I), Tripoli, Lebanon

The objective was to train 40 students in conservation stonemasonry with 20% female representation. The project exceeded the intended training output. 43 trainees (eight female) commenced the programme (including four employees from the DGA), one trainee dropped out and 42 students graduated from the programme. All graduates received a certification of completion from National Heritage Training Group, United Kingdom. All trainees were contacted to participate in the evaluation, 39 trainees responded to the online survey, and 28 participated in the interviews.

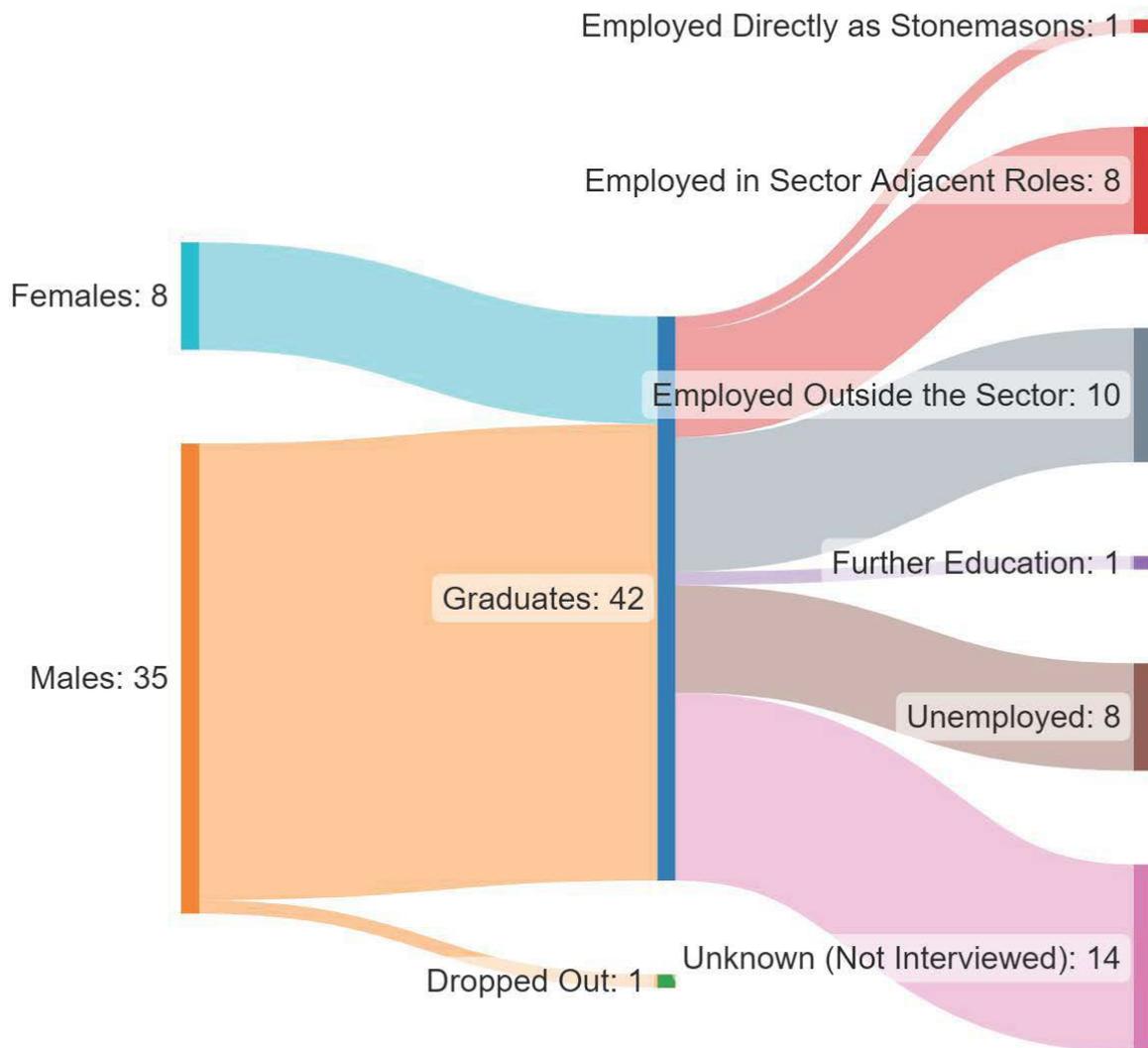


Figure 13: Sankey chart showing the number of Stonemasonry Training Programme trainees, graduates, and interview data from Lebanon © Emma Sweeney

Course Feedback

One male trainee highlighted the course in Jordan was longer as there were two phases, this allowed the trainees to acquire more knowledge and skills. Male refugees interviewed would like to take their skills in stone masonry and work in Syria. However, they are afraid of forced service in the Syrian army.

In separate FGDs two trainees mentioned having no training in machine tools is a barrier to finding employment. One stated there is a lot of work in both Tripoli and Beirut, but new methods are in demand, and there are limited options for traditional skills. The other trainee faced the same feedback when in discussion with a potential employer in Dubai who cut him off when he spoke about hand tools.

Several women felt the training hours enabled them to participate as they had weekends off to care for the family and conduct household activities. One woman noted feeling anxious about her gender at the beginning of training, however this anxiety diminished when a trainer from the Jordan course showed photographs of women working alongside men. Several interviewed women agreed with this statement. Men believed that the presence of women was a positive influence on the programme.

In addition to the technical training, the trainees indicated they gained several other key skills: self-confidence was cited 12 times, communication eight times, teamwork 10 times and language two times.

Subsequent Employment and Cultural Heritage Conservation

Of the 28 graduates interviewed, 18 are currently employed and one is in further education. Of this number, one is directly employed as a freelance stonemason and eight are in employment related to stonemasonry. Of this number, four are employed by the DGA, and four have applied skills acquired in the training to woodcarving, curatorial work, or set creation for events and TV. The interviews revealed 10 trainees are working outside of stonemasonry in a range of roles including, hairdresser, teacher, carpenter, painter, and sales, and eight are unemployed.

The trainee working as a freelance stonemason takes commissions for stone carving and artistic forms upon request. Former trainees working with the DGA (four completed the course, three were interviewed) explained the programme filled a gap in knowledge they were not aware existed. Following completion of the course, they possess a greater understanding of heritage conservation, which they have applied to their roles within the DGA. One of the interviewees employed at the Tripoli Citadel explained that as a result of the course, he will reassemble stone using appropriate mortar and conservation techniques.

The other four trainees working in sector adjacent roles credit the course as providing them with the knowledge and skills to secure employment. One female trainee stated the experience gained during the programme enabled her to find employment as a curator at an archaeology museum in Dubai. Two trainees applied the geometry teaching to freelance carpentry and woodworking, another uses the skills to create items for events and props for TV.

In 2020 four trainees were selected by the DGA to participate in a project focused on the rehabilitation of buildings in Beirut after the explosion at the port. The work was short-term (approximately three months), two trainees stated the accredited certificate as the reason they were able to secure employment. At the time of the interview, these four trainees were either employed in unrelated sectors or unemployed.

Several trainees who are employed noted salary increases of between \$100-400 per month. An exact percentage of income increased was difficult to ascertain as trainees currently employed have benefitted from diverse income increases. Two respondents were able to give examples of how their salary increased due to the training. The trainee who applied the geometry skills to woodcutting indicated their salary rose by \$400-500 after they purchased a laser cutter to create the objects. The

trainee who creates backgrounds in foam and plaster for theatres, birthdays, and TV series, applies skills acquired during the training and his salary has increased by \$100.

Several survey respondents confirmed that the skills the programme had given them (listed above) enabled them to find employment. When asked what other skills they gained from the programme, self-confidence was cited 12 times, communication eight times, teamwork 10 times and language two times.

The Project Manager has progressed to Professor of Architecture at City University, Tripoli, and credits her time overseeing the programme as seminal for her career progression. It was the first opportunity to apply her architecture degree in the field, and because of the project her network tripled. Similarly, the Project Accountant was a recent graduate when he was selected by the DGA. Before this role he thought an accountant was office based, but during this project he worked primarily in the field and constantly interacted with trainees and trainers. As a result, he now works with Save the Children on their projects, as well as adults in need of financial advising.

Lessons Learned: Stonemasonry Training Programme

For both Jordan and Lebanon, WMF was able to execute high quality training programs that were enjoyed and valued by the participants. Both exceeded the intended number and diversification of trainees. As well as certifying participants, the courses were successful in being forums for teaching valuable social skills including confidence, communication, teamwork and improving language. In particular, the courses were an important forum for increased awareness around gender roles. They also brought about an increased appreciation and understanding of neighbouring cultures, and the issues faced by locals and the Syrian diaspora.

Some clear themes emerged as lessons for the future. Although not discussed above, WMF is aware that across the courses participants experience financial difficulties in attending the programme. Training course outputs could be improved by greater financial support for the trainees to be able to attend these programmes. When there are female trainees, there should be at least one female in the training staff or project management. Also, English language tuition could be offered as part of the teaching programme, in partnership with the British Council who have substantive experience in this field.

Only seven of trainees interviewed from the two courses found employment as stonemasons, five through one market opportunity and two are freelance. As such, the programme has not acted as an effective conduit for trainees to find stable employment in the conservation or stonemasonry industries based on the skills learnt.

There are opportunities for improvements to the course to support employment outcomes, including broadening the training to include working with machines, and the teaching of wider range of materials and traditional skills, alongside support for independent business development.

However, the lack of employment appears to be primarily due to the lack of direct market opportunities. Arguably a better appreciation of likely employment paths should have been built into the project strategy as part of its initial design.

However, the surveys show that attendees did find their salaries increasing after the course. While it is difficult to assess the impact of the wider social skills gained in the course it seems that it appeared to boost employment outcomes in general. The evidence shows the programmes were successful in improving livelihoods, despite the lack of direct market opportunities. Trainees leveraged taught skills to find employment in adjacent sectors, and salary increases as a result of course completion

were noted. There is suggestion in the data that learned skills have been beneficial for trainees who found employment outside the sector. All in-country members of the project team experienced career development as a result of their employment in the training programme.

This evaluation has highlighted the lack of stable market opportunities for stonemasonry in these two locations. Traditional hand-carving and conservation stone repair skills are critical for cultural heritage preservation, but it is unlikely that significant direct employment for large numbers of people will result from future courses. As such it is recommended that a different format is applied in the future, one that could act as a template for similar courses:

- Phase I: Stonemasonry Training Programme that aims to support a range of employability, social and cultural skills through the practical delivery of stone carving. The main goal of this phase remains livelihood improvement, but in its broadest sense. This can include direct employment as a stonemason, as well as employment in sector adjacent roles, progression to further education or employment outside the sector as a result of secondary goals. Secondary goals would be inclusivity and awareness, while achieving wider social goals of confidence, communication, and gender roles reappraisal. This course should be more flexible in its timing for allow for ease of attendance. The geometry teaching should continue, English language tutoring could be included, and practical teaching should include an introduction to a range of heritage craft skills relevant to the regional context (e.g. wood carving, plasterwork, working in lime, glazing, geometry, and calligraphy).
- Phase II: Trainees should be selected from Phase I. The program is for those wishing to pursue employment in the field or related, with support for deeper technical skills, and business skills. The course should include input from potential employers and trainees should be assigned a mentor who is a potential employer throughout the program. This program is similar to an apprenticeship program. Learning from this evaluation and as well as WMF's Bridge to Craft Careers (B2CC) program in New York, can be applied.

Heritage conservation was not a direct output of the project, but it was hoped it would be an indirect outcome as a result of the training. While not widespread there is evidence of the skills being used of cultural heritage preservation by employees of the DGA, by trainees involved with projects in Beirut after the blast, as well as trainees employed as stonemasons in Jordan. It was intended the Syrian trainees could return to Syria post-conflict and use skills to restore their heritage. This has yet to happen due to the ongoing situation but may be achieved in the future.



Figure 14: Evaluation participants in Jordan at celebration event, © Emma Sweeney



Figure 15: Evaluation participants in Lebanon at celebration event, © Emma Sweeney



Figure 16: Exterior of Imam Palace featuring in al-Allia soap opera, © al-Allia



Figure 17: Interior of Imam Palace featuring in al-Allia soap opera, © al-Allia

Capacity Building and Conservation, Old City of Ta'izz, Yemen

The aim was to improve conservation capacity in GOAM by training five local professionals in conservation techniques and providing the opportunity to apply theoretical learning to the restoration of a historic building in Ta'izz. The project exceeded the intended output, six trainees from GOAM and one from the municipality participated. Theoretical teaching was applied directly to the 19th century Imam Palace in the National Museum Complex, and both the interior and exterior were restored.

Course Feedback

The training was described as well organised, but trainees hoped for more regular contact with WMF project staff following the in-person training in Kuwait and Egypt. One trainee stated the knowledge gained during the in-person training was essential to conducting the practical work.

The only female trainee noted, the training provided an opportunity for her to interact with the local community, rather than being solely office-based.

Subsequent Employment and Cultural Heritage Conservation

All trainees were interviewed, and all trainees continue their roles as before, employed at GOAM or the municipality. At the time of the training, over half of the trainees were relatively new employees and required the conservation skills covered during the training. These skills directly translated to the restoration of the Imam Palace where, according to a WMF Regional Director, trainees excelled at restoration work. The restoration work was completed by 58 skilled and unskilled workers, creating employment for local men who continue to work at other historic sites in Ta'izz. One trainee stated knowledge and experience gained during the Imam Palace restoration is being applied to the restoration of Hammam al-Mudhaffar and Mosque in the care of GOAM.

An unforeseen outcome of the training, due in part to restrictions on international travel, was that local organisations were perceived as spearheading the restoration work. One trainee felt the Imam Palace restoration went beyond intended conservation outcomes, rebuilding faith and trust with GOAM. A former employee maintains that this project is one of the few that they were able to deliver in Yemen due to the expertise, international knowledge, and relationships with those authority and people on the ground provided by WMF.

Livelihood improvement can be assessed in terms of social conditions affecting resident life in Ta'izz. In the words of the in-country project manager, work at the Imam Palace announced the return of life to the city. According to him, training occurred at the right moment when coffee shops and schools were reopening across the city. He felt that the interest and attention of the international community to the city gave a sense of security post-conflict, and was a way to reconstruct identity, and introduce the museum to a new generation.

The Imam Palace featured as a location in Yemeni soap opera *al-Allia*, the episode has over one million views on YouTube. A trainee believed that coverage on *al-Allia* showcased the Imam Palace both nationally and internationally, introducing the building to the local community after years of disuse. Another trainee remarked that viewing the Imam Palace on *al-Allia* allowed him to see the building as a whole and reinforced his sense of community pride, something he could not comprehend as a trainee. He noted that this medium was an important way of introducing heritage to locals. Others considered *al-Allia* as one of the best ways to raise local awareness for cultural heritage.

Planning for the Future of Amedi, Iraq

The objective was to deliver a workshop for 15 trainees to ensure understanding of urban planning and landscape protection. The project met the intended training outcome, 15 individuals completed the workshops on planning and conservation principles.

Course Feedback

The trainees working for local authorities agreed that classroom training was delivered at a high level, but they wished for more practical field work. Another interviewee noted that training offered an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in the field. A former student (currently working with an NGO) agreed but, for him, the time spent in the classroom was more valuable than time in field and he became a better writer, added value to his CV, and recently gained admission to University College, London for further studies.

All trainees agreed that they enjoyed both working in groups, individually, and on the diversity of training topics offered. Trainees appreciated the freedom to speak up and be heard in class.

Subsequent Employment and Cultural Heritage Conservation

Of the six trainees interviewed, three retain their jobs as either municipal or directorate employees, two trainees found temporary work with an NGO, and one is completing a master's degree at University College London (UCL).

One trainee explained that field-based training resulted in increased respect for heritage on a personal level, but all interviewed trainees agreed that the sustainability of heritage conservation and planning in Amedi would have benefitted from additional advocacy at the governmental level. All trainees agreed the authorities are interested in the Erbil Citadel, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, rather than Amedi. Following the training, several trainees continued work as a committee but eventually disbanded at end of 2019.

Lessons Learned: Ta'izz and Amedi

For both Ta'izz and Amedi, WMF was able to deliver successful professional development training which boosted participants career and educational opportunities. Both met the intended number of trainees, from the intended professional and academic backgrounds. The training outputs could be improved through increased practical application of teaching, and more opportunity for increased discussions with WMF staff throughout the project.

Across both programmes, all trainees from the national or local heritage authorities remain employed within those organisations. Therefore, the programmes have been successful in building capacity within the partner organisations.

However successful conservation outcomes are mixed. The key difference between these programs was the immediate application of the professional skills to a conservation project. This provided the platform both for local employment and cultural benefits, as well as benefits for the reputation of heritage organisations and authorities involved. It led to conservation of additional historic buildings in Ta'izz, namely Hammam al-Mudhaffar and Mosque. In contrast, the overall aim of the Amedi project was to raise awareness of the value of this historic town at the local and governmental level which in-turn, would lead to its protection and conservation. As yet, the training did not create tangible conservation outcomes for Amedi. There is evidence for increased awareness but there has been no follow-on action from the local authorities.

While preliminary, this evaluation has highlighted the challenges of influencing planning frameworks at a local and national level. Although raising awareness of the importance of planning frameworks

for historic areas is possible during a short period of time, affecting significant policy change requires a longer-term approach. As such, the following recommendations should be considered for future projects with similar outcomes:

- Ensure there are direct conservation outputs and outcomes in the project.
- Any policies or conservation documentation is approved and adopted is a project output and outcome.
- Implement a longer-term approach by committing to continued support over a medium to longer period to ensure policies are adopted and applied.

The enforced travel conditions to Yemen allowed the local organisation to be perceived as leading the project, restoring faith in the national heritage organisation, and boosting local pride in the resulting activities. In future, this hands-off approach should be considered where possible for future WMF projects.

The evidence shows the programmes were successful in improving livelihoods in a variety of ways, beginning with strengthening knowledge within the participant cohort – leading to consolidation of career roles, boosting employability, or helping in assist higher educational standards.

Heritage conservation outcomes were successfully achieved in Ta'izz as a result of the programme. In Amedi, it was hoped the provision of conservation knowledge and skills would lead to the conservation outcomes. The conservation frameworks have yet to be implemented, as such this outcome has yet to be achieved.

Challenges, Learning and Recommendations for Evaluation in these Contexts

Reflecting on the overall process, conducting a long-term evaluation has been an insightful and constructive project for WMF. However, as there was no original intention to revisit projects and evaluate subsequent results, the main challenge was the lack of longer-term targets, outputs and outcomes specified as part of the original projects. A recommendation for future CPF grants would be to implement a medium to long term evaluation as part of the grant conditions or provide an optional funding supplement for grantees to conduct longer term evaluations.

WMF is accustomed to delivering projects in these contexts. Evaluation in these contexts should be seen as an 'approach' rather than strict methodology, how methods are applied will vary from context to context. For example, the survey via Google Forms worked well in Lebanon as the trainees had access to internet and technology. Trainees were comfortable using the survey platform, this was also the case in Jordan. In Yemen following the interviews, the evaluator wanted to capture the perspectives of the local community and implemented a survey. Access to technology and internet was limited so questions were asked verbally, and responses set via WhatsApp. Both applications of the same method were successful in gathering data.

As expected, in-person interviews yield better quality data than online. The levels of engagement with trainees will vary considerably and evaluators need to respond accordingly when in the field. For this reason, in-country co-ordinators are essential to the process. In future, a local evaluator should be commissioned to gather the data in the local language and translate to English following the interview. If this is not possible, additional time could be spent with the trainees before interviews are conducted, but due to budget and time constraints, this was not possible as part of this evaluation.

Alignment with Cultural Protection Fund Outcomes

The findings of the evaluation align with the undernoted Cultural Protection Fund outcomes.

Heritage Outcomes

Cultural heritage at risk is safeguarded for future generations (mandatory)

- Stonemasonry Training Programme, Jordan and Lebanon
- Capacity Building and Conservation, Old City of Ta'izz, Yemen
- Planning for the Future of Amedi, Iraq

In Ta'izz heritage at risk was safeguarded through the restoration of the Imam Palace. The successful outcomes led to further projects at historic buildings in the city. In the other projects evaluated it was hoped the provision of conservation knowledge and skills would lead to the conservation of heritage at risk. In Amedi, the conservation frameworks have yet to be implemented, as such this outcome has yet to be achieved. For the stonemasonry training there is evidence of conservation work from several trainees, but the direct market opportunities in both locations were smaller than anticipated. Consequently, trainees have leveraged skills to find employment in related fields. Initially it was hoped the trainees from Syria would be able to return home and apply the skills to post-conflict conservation. However, due to the ongoing situation this has not yet been possible, nor is it likely in the short-term.

Society Outcomes

Local people have developed skills, potentially leading to increased professional or other opportunities.

- Stonemasonry Training Programme, Jordan and Lebanon
- Capacity Building and Conservation, Old City of Ta'izz, Yemen

- Planning for the Future of Amedi, Iraq

All courses were successful in developing the skills of trainees. For Amedi and Ta'izz this led to enhanced professional outcomes. For the stonemasons' courses, this is more mixed with some trainees gaining employment in stonemason or related fields, but the majority working outside these sectors. However, there is some evidence the course boosted wider employable skills to enhance broad employment opportunities.

The profile of people engaging with cultural heritage is more diverse with respect to gender imbalances, age, ability, sexuality, ethnicity, and social/religious background where appropriate.

- Stonemasonry Training Programme, Jordan and Lebanon

The stonemasonry training programmes were successful in engaging both male and female trainees of varying ages, from a range of educational, ethnic and social backgrounds. Trainees valued the opportunity to work alongside both genders, and perceptions of gender norms were challenged. The mix of ethnicities was seen as positive in both courses, but the evidence of improved social cohesion was stronger in Lebanon. In both programmes there is evidence these interactions changed participants views.

Local communities have a better understanding of their cultural heritage and value it more.

- Capacity Building and Conservation, Old City of Ta'izz, Yemen
- Stonemasonry Training Programme, Jordan and Lebanon

Both courses resulted in locals understanding and valuing their heritage more. The fieldtrips undertaken as part of the stonemasonry training programme increased appreciation for local heritage. Several trainees went on to find employment at sites visited on fieldtrips and participate in projects protecting heritage at risk in Beirut. Others have an increased appreciation for heritage sites they interact with as part of daily life. In Ta'izz the restored museum is a source of local pride. Featuring on TV increased appreciation for the quality of the restoration work and showed local communities the significance of the building.

Local communities have played a more active role in protecting their cultural heritage or sharing it with others, potentially leading to increased social cohesion and a greater sense of well-being.

- Capacity Building and Conservation, Old City of Ta'izz, Yemen
- Planning for the Future of Amedi, Iraq

The project in Ta'izz was delivered by locals, as such it was perceived as a 'locally led' initiative, restoring faith in the national heritage organisation, and becoming a symbol of national identity post-conflict. In Amedi, trainees did actively engage with heritage during fieldwork activities and continued a committee beyond the project, but it ceased in 2019. As yet, there been no additional sustained effort to preserve local heritage. In the future, the direct application of theory to practice as part of the project or a longer-term approach would be required.

Key Lessons and Actions

Lesson		WMF & CPF Action
All projects need long-term targets, outputs and outcomes to inform evaluation beyond the lifespan of the funded project itself.	⇒	<p>WMF is implementing full M&E frameworks throughout its projects to inform project managers and local partners.</p> <p>Recommend that CPF builds in basic medium to long-term M&E plans into future proposals.</p>
<p>Where projects aim at employment pathways through training, market research should be carried out to ensure appropriate targets.</p> <p>Where employment pathways are limited, ensure training can provide wider employment or social benefits.</p>	⇒	<p>WMF is changing its project approach with regard to stonemasonry to ensure a more appropriate two-stage process. Future employment projects will be informed by market research as part of project design.</p> <p>WMF continues to support WMF's the small active group of stonemasons in Mafraq, Jordan. WMF is exploring the skills and tools the stonemasons in Jordan require to transition from individual craftspeople to a business collective.</p> <p>CPF should ensure any long-term employment targets within projects are backed-up by research.</p>
Where possible, professional training should be contextualised within supported processes to apply that training.	⇒	WMF will ensure future professional training is embedded within processes that allow for application in local environments, ideally in an appropriate "hands-off" fashion.

Conclusions

WMF recognises the importance of monitoring and evaluation to demonstrate impact and improve future initiatives. As such WMF is currently working on organisational monitoring and evaluation processes. Future initiatives will have a full evaluation framework to ensure quality baseline and monitoring data can be captured, and projects can be evaluated over the medium and long term, and lessons extracted. This allows WMF to implement the recommendations discussed to projects beyond the scope of this evaluation. Such an approach will ensure a clear framework that can be used by local evaluators, will build long-term relationships with communities and professionals, and will lead to revisiting projects over the medium to long term.

The evaluation has shown that heritage can improve livelihoods. The projects reviewed presented examples of participants gaining employment, both within and without the heritage sector, gaining new jobs or academic qualifications, commanding higher salaries because of their enhanced qualifications, or even in terms of simpler but no less important achievements, in gaining

confidence, in making new friends and social groups, or in the pleasure of a heightened appreciation of their cultural heritage and that of their neighbours.

An example of the practical outcome of this evaluation is WMF's continuing investment in the small active group of stonemasons in Mafraq, Jordan. WMF is exploring the skills and tools the stonemasons in Jordan require to transition from individual craftspeople to a business collective. Evidence from the Lebanese stonemasonry training scheme illustrates what is possible with the right combination of skills, entrepreneurialism, and creativity. It is hoped there will be an opportunity to exchange knowledge between trainees from both programmes.

The evaluation has also demonstrated that CPF investment in traditional conservation, in particular the physical fabric of buildings, such as the Imam Palace in Ta'izz, has obvious direct benefits for cultural heritage in enhancing the value of such monuments and improving their lifespan. Similar benefits will accrue from the enhanced conservation capacity of those trained throughout the programmes, which will lead to further heritage protection.

Future Evaluation

The current WMF and CPF project entitled Turath Benghazi (Building Heritage Capacity & Local Engagement in Benghazi's Historic City Centre) is a hybrid of the projects in Ta'izz and Amedi. In collaboration with Benghazi Historic City Authority and Create Streets, the project aims to build capacity within the local authority on conservation principles, document the condition the buildings within the historic centre of the city, develop a conservation framework for their protection, and invest in small-scale physical conservation of a building or public open space. The primary intended outcome is to enhance the confidence of the historic city authority team so that they can present a consistent, data-led and professional conservation approach to the many development proposals that threaten Benghazi's spirit of place. The 'learning by doing' approach mirrors that of the GOAM team in Ta'izz. Data will also be gathered from trainees assessing the level of conservation knowledge prior to completing the workshops. If future evaluation funding became available to revisit the project over a medium to long term, WMF would assess if the intended outcome of increased heritage protection has been achieved.