

Culture in Crisis: Cultural Heritage and Wildlife Conservation: Cross-disciplinary Learning Opportunities (Kigali Workshop)

29 – 31 August 2016

Kigali, Rwanda

The V&A and the Yale Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage, in collaboration with the National Museums of Rwanda and the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin, are preparing for a major international conference, to be held in Kigali, Rwanda with a unique focus on the benefits of both Wildlife and Heritage Conservation during the post-conflict recovery of a nation. The output of this conference will be the creation of a series of workshops in which Rwandan experiences can pave the way for the creation of 'road maps to recovery' within more contemporaneous conflict zones.

The conference will serve to highlight the value of these two parallel branches of conservation; demonstrating that through their adoption successful sustainable development on a national level can be achieved.



Delegates from the Workshop on Nature and Culture Conservation in Karongi, Rwanda (29 -31 August 2016)

We understand the profound and long-lasting impact of both environmental and cultural heritage loss on communities, and the contrasting positive role that nature conservation and heritage protection can have in rebuilding and recovering these areas following war or disaster. As such, the project aims to encourage a cross-disciplinary approach; raising public awareness and working with organisations from a variety of backgrounds to take a holistic approach to the protection of heritage in all its forms.

The recovery of Rwanda makes it a worthy case study for success. Following the genocide of 1994 the country invested heavily in the promotion of wildlife conservation as a way to reinvigorate its ecosystems, economy and people. The results have been; greater social cohesion amongst local populations, the development of a thriving international eco-tourism industry and the world's largest population of Mountain Gorillas – to date the only primate species anywhere in the world that is increasing in number.

Over 20 years after the restoration of peace in Rwanda, the conference will look back on the experiences of the nation, considered within a wider African context, to reflect on the value of Wildlife and Heritage Conservation during recovery from conflict. Through shared discussion we hope to isolate key successes and identify templates which other countries

could use as they recover and rebuild. This will lead to the development of 'road maps to recovery'; strategies which we hope to share and replicate within other nations emerging from conflict; specifically those in the Middle-East.

Through developing academic and professional partnerships first in Africa and then in the Middle-East, we hope to construct a network of individuals and organisations who are unified in their resolve to protect the world's heritage. Uniting and comparing the experiences of these two regions is a core ambition of the project; with a view to ultimately develop better links through which mutual learning may be achieved. Through discussion and the sharing of expertise across a variety of disciplines we hope to combat the global threat to heritage using a multi-lateral approach which can be enacted from community to governmental level.

This conference will not only be a chance to learn from the experiences of a country recovering from internal conflict, which will serve to inform post-conflict recovery efforts elsewhere in the world, but it is also a chance to draw parallels between the two conservation practices which, though harmonious in ethos, rarely collaborate to share practices. Through studying mechanisms used within Wildlife Conservation, such as the IUCN's Endangered Species Red Lists, Cultural Heritage Preservation professionals may one day be able to create their own priority lists for conserving the world's shared heritage too. This 'prioritising' of heritage protection is intrinsically valuable in that it will provide a framework for identifying, categorising and targeting conservation efforts in a more objective and international manner, following the success of models used in Wildlife Conservation.