



F o n d s

**Culture is a Basic Need, Revisited.**

**Reflections and future perspectives on Cultural Emergency Response in Conflict and Disaster**

**Where:** Pakhuis de Zwijger, Piet Heinkade 179, 1019 HC Amsterdam

**When:** 11 November 2013

**Why:** Since September 2003, when the Cultural Emergency Response (CER) programme was established, it has been able to successfully address a new and unacknowledged field of needs. CER triggered the recognition of culture as an intrinsic part of emergency response based on the principle that 'Culture is a basic need'. The unique niche of cultural emergency response is its ability to respond quickly and flexibly to urgent cultural needs in situations of conflict and disaster. CER provides first aid to cultural heritage threatened or damaged by man-made or natural disaster, as the cultural ambulance it was set out to be. Ideas about what constitutes an emergency may change over time, But providing a quick and fitting response to cultural emergency needs, to rescue cultural heritage at risk or prevent damages to cultural heritage from aggravating, remains the core business of CER.

Since CER was established in 2003, its scope of work and the emergency needs as formulated in project proposals have evolved. The way CER responds to cultural needs has also evolved. After ten years of cultural emergency experience, we increasingly operate in the context of conflicts where cultural heritage may be intentionally targeted and where a growing number of natural disasters are due to climate change.

The CER programme has developed based on the knowledge and experience of its project partners who implement CER projects. Together with its partners from the various regions of the world, the CER bureau would like to develop a better understanding of the context in which it operates and define the priorities for future cultural emergency response. From our exchange of views, we hope to gain a better understanding of the complexities our partners are facing in the countries where they work.

In the morning session we will reflect with around 40 participants on some strategic choices that the CER programme is currently facing. After lunch we will split up in 5 technical expert meetings, to discuss our common experience with specific issues and formulate a way forward. Later that afternoon we will welcome a wider audience and give partners an opportunity to present, in a highly concise manner, selected recent CER projects and raise a specific issue in that context.

**Agenda**

Morning: Strategic Reflections

Moderator: Christa Meindersma, director Prince Claus Fund

09.30-10.00

Registration and coffee

10.00- 10.05	Word of welcome by Christa Meindersma, Director Prince Claus Fund
10.05-10.20	Reflections on 10 years CER by Charlotte Huygens, Chair Cultural Emergency Response Steering Committee
10.20-10.40 Plenary session	Salma Samar Damluji: How to operate in complex emergencies and ongoing conflict.
	<p>Confronted with violent complex and fluid conflict situations, involving extremist groups, government armies, rebel groups, and possible foreign intervention, in air or on the ground, how can CER, through local partners, operate and what can be its role and significance in such situations? In conflicts, cultural or religious heritage may be intentionally targeted for its significance for one or more population groups. What does it mean that foreign money supports the rescue of certain cultural heritage? Does this politicize CER's role?</p>
	<p>Result: Operating in conflict situations is only possible for CER when it has already established a basis of trust with partners. This means that before a conflict CER should already have identified partners on the ground. CER actions in conflict situations do not need to draw attention but empower people in their courage and resistance. CER actions are especially important in protracting conflict and forgotten conflict. This comes back to solidarity principle and its function as signaler.</p>
10.40-11.00	Discussion
11.10-11.40	Coffee & Tea break
11.40-12.00 Plenary session	<p>CER and Cultural Diplomacy by Vince Michael, director Global Heritage Fund In many situations cultural emergencies are the consequence of long-term neglect, due to the inability or unwillingness of governments to engage. In some situations the authorities might consider heritage structures a relic of the past and not in tune with modern development ideas. What, if any, is the significance of a cultural emergency intervention in such situations? Should government commitment be a prerequisite for CER action? Or could a quick and small-scale intervention serve to create awareness on the part of the authorities on the value of the heritage? Is it better to work under the radar?</p> <p>Should the Prince Claus Fund actively try to engage governments and other organisations in saving heritage (broker role, cultural diplomacy) or limit itself to quick and small-scale emergency interventions?</p> <p>Vince Michael will share GHF and other experiences, including China, pointing out examples where lobby with governments has worked (Colombia) and places it has not (Cambodia). Both GHF and PCF see their work as a catalyst for commitment on the part of local and national governments. Governments should take care of their heritage but often an international NGO's focus on a site - reinforcing international significance - can help aggregate resources internally where they would not have emerged without intervention.</p>

What does Cultural Diplomacy mean for CER? This could be diplomacy beforehand, like the GHF does, but it could also be after an action. Why is Cultural diplomacy important for CER? This comes back to the notion of marginalised communities, Zones of Silences etc. Where is the balance between diplomacy beforehand and having other parties joining in and taking their responsibility and being able to operate independently? If you are taking into account that CER often operates in marginalised communities (often also political) how do you go about cultural diplomacy? Christa could draw from her experiences from Tibet. How does CER supporting actions in Tibet help general consensus on the need to help (pimpim?) and how does it relate to politics and therefore independence?

What do we want to have as a result? Cultural diplomacy is mostly relevant for CER after or during an emergency intervention. A broker role and setting a good example by doing should be CER's focus. In relation to sustainability we need to keep in mind CER was set up to offer only emergency aid. We are depending on other organisations, like now the GHF and other, to take up after we have raised attention.

12.00-12.30 Discussion

12.30-13.30 Lunch

### Afternoon

Technical Expert Meetings in separate groups 13.30-15.00

- ***Disaster Risk Preparedness, mapping and coordinated response***  
***Introduction: Yasmeen Lari, moderator: Charlotte Huygens, minutes: Eveline de Weerd***  
With the help of 'First Aid Training' and other disaster risk preparedness activities and tools it is possible for people in conflict areas or areas prone to certain disasters to gain knowledge on disaster response. Knowledge, insights and available documentation are the key to a quick and focused response. Damage assessments aim to identify needs to cultural heritage and cultural property immediately after a disaster has taken place and enables CER, but also other organizations to organize a suitable response even in areas that are outside of the scope of regular media reporting. What role does mapping of players and heritage play in emergency relief and how does CER relate to requests for mapping or inventory prior to a disaster? Would it be a possibility for CER to identify organizations that could serve as satellites in identification and assessment of needs, and if so, how would that work? 'How can CER and its partners be proactive in engaging qualified (local or international) organizations in order to be as prepared as possible? Could the role of 'broker' CER sometimes plays during the aftermath of disaster also be applied in the preparations to deal with upcoming or potential disaster? This actually is more a question linking to the GHF presentation?
- ***Capacity building/sharing knowledge of new techniques/use of digital tools***  
***Introduction: Brittin Alfred, moderator: Gerd Junne, minutes: Emma Bijloos***  
Following disasters or conflicts, new techniques are developed to restore heritage in certain environments, for instance earthquake resistant restoration of traditional structures, etc. etc. There is a need to share experiences across regions facing the same challenges, for instance

earthquakes, floods etc. The last years CER has seen many sites in the same region struggling with the same problems, with sites consisting of similar architectural features and materials and facing the same disasters or threats. How can experiences developed in individual situations best be shared and adapted? What tools exist for sharing this sort of knowledge? How can we create a network of organisations working on addressing similar problems with creative solutions? How do you prevent the trap of creating tools that will never be used? And how would we keep 'tools' updated, fluid and useable. Is on the ground training the best way to share experiences and create networks or are there other ways?

- ***Heritage under pressure of human development***

***Introduction: Terry Little, moderator: Ole Bouman, minutes: Else de Kleine***

More and more cases of imminent need derive from what we call man-made disasters, the Manasir in Sudan lost their homeland due to the construction of a dam, Yemen is losing its mud brick structure at an incredible pace due to the concrete boom and mining in Kenya results in selling of ancient rock art as basis for paint to foreign companies. However, a reverse situation is also possible. The traditional India step wells in Rajasthan could be a source of potable water in an area where water shortages are huge and under growing pressure by the expanding communities and pressure on natural resources. Economic development is even sometimes used as an excuse to destroy heritage. How does CER relate to these situations and in what way should or could it respond? What are the tools available to mitigate damages in situations where economic interests prevail? What are the interests at stake CER needs to take into consideration and can it really make a difference?

- ***Building first aid capacity***

***Introduction: Anna dal Maso, moderator: Mette Gratama van Andel, minutes: Sarah Smith***

CER as a responsive unit relies on the expertise that is available on the ground to implement emergency measures or salvage collections. In situations where it can be predicted heritage will be targeted or unintentionally victimised. CER could anticipate by having trained capacity stand by on the ground. How can CER best identify available capacity and strengthen capacity. What have been the results and lessons of previously undertaken projects to build on first capacity locally? What organisations could CER team up with to build this capacity and how do you sustain trained capacity once it's in place.

- ***Where should Cultural Emergency Aid come into the process between humanitarian relief and reconstruction efforts?***

***Introduction: Willem van der Put, moderator: Paul Meijs, minutes: Cora Taal***

How could CER make optimal use of its network within, but also outside of the heritage field, and optimise use of strategic links? The cooperation with the first humanitarian relief providers could enable CER to get to an emergency case very fast but heritage workers are poorly equipped to work in humanitarian disaster situations and Humanitarians have little knowledge of cultural heritage or artefacts. Disaster response requires all the attention of the humanitarian response units. If the heritage people cannot fend for themselves, they will not be included in a humanitarian mission. Would a cooperation with humanitarian actors be beneficial for CER's work? Or might it be better to clearly identify the different phases of humanitarian relief recognising CER steps in either a preventive phase or in a phase of reconstruction? Is CER role of bridging humanitarian relief and development aid. What exactly could that role be?

To what extent has awareness among the humanitarian community grown that cultural is an important element of post conflict or disaster rebuilding and reconstruction? Could CER learn from the experience of humanitarian relief organisations. What other fields or disciplines could be identified where lessons might be drawn from?

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## Public Programme

Grote Zaal Pakhuis de Zwijger

- 15.30-16.00 Welcoming guests for public event [coffee & tea]
- 16.00- 16.05 Louk de la Rive Box, host of this afternoon, welcomes guests
- 16.05-16.10 Word of Welcome by Christa Meindersma, director Prince Claus Fund
- 16.10-17.15 Featuring our partners. Three partners will give a short introduction to their work. This will be followed by a short Q & A moderated by Louk de la Rive Box with opportunity for the audience to ask questions (5 minutes presentation work- 10 minutes Q & A with moderator- 5 Minutes questions from audience).
- Ms. Pimpim de Azevedo: Heritage preservation in Leh and Sikkim, India
  - Mr. Abdelhamid Salah : setting up 'first aid' teams in Egypt
  - Mr. Abdelkader Haidara: Evacuation of the manuscripts from Timbouctou, Mali
- 17.15-17.20 Closing remarks by Louk de la Rive Box
- 17.20-18:30 Reception
- [end public programme]