

Call for Papers: ICOM-CC Session at the ICOM General Conference, Shanghai, November 7-12, 2010, **Conservation in a Changing World**

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TITLE: Cultural heritage conservation as a medium of social integrity after political, social and economic disruption in Iraqi Kurdistan

ABSTRACT:

This paper will demonstrate how conservation can promote economic sustainability, social integrity and cultural diversity, using the example of partnerships initiated by the Kurdish Textile Museum (KTM), established in the citadel at Erbil, Iraq. The museum serves as a catalyst to preserve the tangible and intangible heritage of Iraqi Kurdistan, which has suffered from political, economic, social and military disruption. Textile-related work provided women from the nomadic communities of Iraqi Kurdistan with opportunities for income-generation, social status and autonomy. Partners in the conservation initiatives include: the remaining elderly weavers and felt-makers and their young trainees; representatives of national authorities and international agencies; and, the KTM which has collected hundreds of garments, textiles and related artefacts (e.g. looms). The rationale for the conservation is political, economic and cultural, thus responding to the partners' different objectives. The regional and national authorities want to preserve and rehabilitate the citadel site of Erbil; the international partners want to collaborate with the Kurdish authorities through the medium of culture and using conservation as a tool. The paper will show the recent re-storage of the textile collections at KTM and initiatives for knowledge transfer from elders to young women (e.g. dyeing, felting, spinning and weaving). (wordcount 199)

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