

Media Update-2

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UNESCO

PRESS RELEASE

UNESCO ResiliArt Debate on Impact of Covid-19 on Creative Arts & Crafts in Pakistan

ResiliArt is a global movement, initiated by UNESCO at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The movement is built around a series of virtual debates with experienced professionals in the creative and cultural industries, to raise awareness of the devastating impact of this global health crisis on arts and culture around the world.

The second session of ResiliArt Pakistan was held on 8 July 2020, and focused on the impact of COVID-19 on creative arts, crafts, publishing, cultural events, and tourism in Pakistan. Moderated by Moneeza Hashmi, the panel included professionals from both public and private institutions, including Salima Hashmi – Artist, Educationist and Chairperson Faiz Foundation Trust; Kamran Lashari – Director General, Walled City Lahore Authority; Zulfiqar Ali Zulfi – Director Arts & Culture, Lahore Arts Council; Waqas Malik – Program Manager, Punjab Tourism for Economic Growth Project; Tanya Sani – Director Art & Culture, Punjab Council of the Arts; Ayesha Noorani – Founder Member Daachi Foundation; and Ali Kamran from Sang-e-Meel Publications.

Director UNESCO Pakistan, Patricia McPhillips opened the discussion and spoke of how the diverse heritage of Pakistan provides a fertile base for cultural and creative industries, with great potential for sustainable and responsible tourism. She highlighted some of the work UNESCO is doing in Pakistan at present, and expressed her hope that the ResiliArt debates will help policymakers to better understand the needs of artists at this time, assess the viability of ongoing relief efforts, and also provide valuable guidance into devising the way forward.

The ensuing discussion highlighted how art educators need to rethink teaching methods in this era of online teaching, where collaborative studio work is not possible. Panelists outlined how art councils are making music and art classes available online, and offering platforms for young artists to sell their work online. It was emphasized that there is a need to establish mechanisms to empower artisans and craftspeople to use technology to bring their work to a wider audience. On a lighter note, the panelists shared how forced confinement has allowed many artists, musicians, and writers to push the limits of their creativity and explore their craft in new ways. The session concluded with the call to action to explore, innovate, and experiment with new ideas to support the vulnerable arts community in Pakistan.

The event was streamed live on the UNESCO Pakistan Facebook page.