
National Committee Activity: 2023 Annual Reports

Blue Shield International 2024

Around the World



- Last report: 30 National Committees
- In 2023,
 - » The Accreditation Committee particularly accompanied Armenia, Croatia, Italy, Sweden, and Ukraine.
 - » Two Nominated Representatives were approved in Ukraine and Sweden.
 - » Two new national committees were approved in Croatia and Italy
- The Accreditation Committee are currently supporting 8 committees under construction.
- (Map is Sept 2024 and includes Italy, Armenia, and Sweden, all now registered.)

Staffing and Funding

- Paid staffing numbers remain extremely low.
- Funding is from membership, grants and donations, event ticket sales and merchandise sales.
- 15 Committees declared some form of income or support, ranging from:
 - € 91.57
 - € 120 5338 (membership, training, grants, and sales).
- ISSUES: Covid still impacts funding; not all committees have a bank account; volunteer capacity is limited.

Co-ordination and Partnerships...

- A few words of thanks

- To the representatives of Blue Shield Committees in Germany, Senegal, Austria and Lebanon for serving as elected representatives on the Blue Shield Board in 2023;
- To representatives from Blue Shield Netherlands and Blue Shield Türkiye for serving as the Auditing Committee;
- Blue Shield Netherlands for their ongoing assistance in enabling our registered postal address at the National Archives of the Netherlands;
- Those from the national committees who give their time on the Blue Shield Countering Trafficking Working Group;
- National Committees of ICOM, ICOMOS, IFLA, ICA.

Coordination

- 2 new National Committees approved in Croatia and Italy
- Development of and support for major national and international networks for disaster preparedness and response
- MoUs and partnership agreements with governments and key civil emergency agencies
- The development of new platforms and networks for partnership working with dozens of heritage, religious, and emergency response organisations, and academics.
- Coordination of hundreds of volunteers
- Support for Blue Shield International, and partnerships and support between national committees.



BLUE SHIELD
Croatia



BLUE SHIELD
Italy

... Within Blue Shield e.g.,

- Austrian National Committee worked in partnership with the (then Under Construction) Armenian National Committee,
- Blue Shield Senegal working with Mali, Niger and Cameroon to share expertise, and join efforts to design training.
- The new Blue Shield Croatian Committee reached out to their neighbours and met with the North Macedonian and Austrian Committees to explore synergies and share expertise.
- Blue Shield Slovakia was prominently featured at a Blue Shield Czechia event; Blue Shield Iceland attended an event run by Blue Shield France, etc.
- The US National Committee have worked with Georgia, sharing knowledge on intangible heritage protection for internally displaced communities
- Blue Shield Germany supported Blue Shield Belgium in collecting emergency supplies.



Field day in the Gegharkunik province, Joint International Workshop on Armenian Cultural Heritage © Blue Shield Austria & Blue Shield Armenia (Under Construction).

**We are stronger and more
successful together.**

... Nationally and Internationally

Huge list of partners in armed forces, government, NGOs, IOs, Museums/Galleries/Libraries/Archives, various branches of UNESCO, and many others!

Examples include:

- **Blue Shield Belgium** coordinate > 200 volunteers via their website ready for the next disaster.
- **Blue Shield Curacao** joined efforts with the Caribbean Branch of the International Council on Archives (CARBICA) to launch a regional Caribbean Cultural Emergency Response (CER) Hub, in which all heritage sectors participate, including **Blue Shield Guatemala**.
- The **Georgian National Committee** of the Blue Shield hosted the official Launch of the Heritage Platform, together with ICOMOS Georgia and the National Trust of Georgia.
- The uniformed sector are critical partners: e.g., **Blue Shield France** have signed formal agreements with various fire services
- **Blue Shield France, Australia, North Macedonia, and the UK** all work with their national Red Cross societies, collaborating on the Hague Convention as international humanitarian law, and on heritage protection as a humanitarian concern

Education, training, and capacity building

- Blue Shield National Committees delivered **more than 60 training courses and events** in 2023, **reaching hundreds of participants.**
- Running and supporting training for national and multi-national armed forces and peacekeepers
- Providing subject matter expertise to assist delivery of military and government exercises
- Training heritage professionals in multiple aspects of risk preparedness and emergency response
- Training, and training with, firefighters and other emergency responders
- Capacity building with internally displaced people and their children for intangible heritage protection
- Training in preventing illicit trafficking and heritage crime, and repatriation
- Development of new educational tools and techniques



Playmobile evacuation model,
2023 © Blue Shield France.

Education, training, and capacity building

- Many cover aspects of disaster crisis management.
- Some are also training with their emergency responders, e.g. alongside firefighters
- While most focus on general risks from crisis, or specifically on disasters, many are increasingly turning to conflict-based risks, and training institutions
- Military cooperation remains challenging in many countries. in emergency evacuations Although some, such as the USA and Poland, are very success, North Macedonian National Committee ran *Danger to cultural heritage during military conflicts - conditions and protection measures*. When compared to their other events, they reported that:

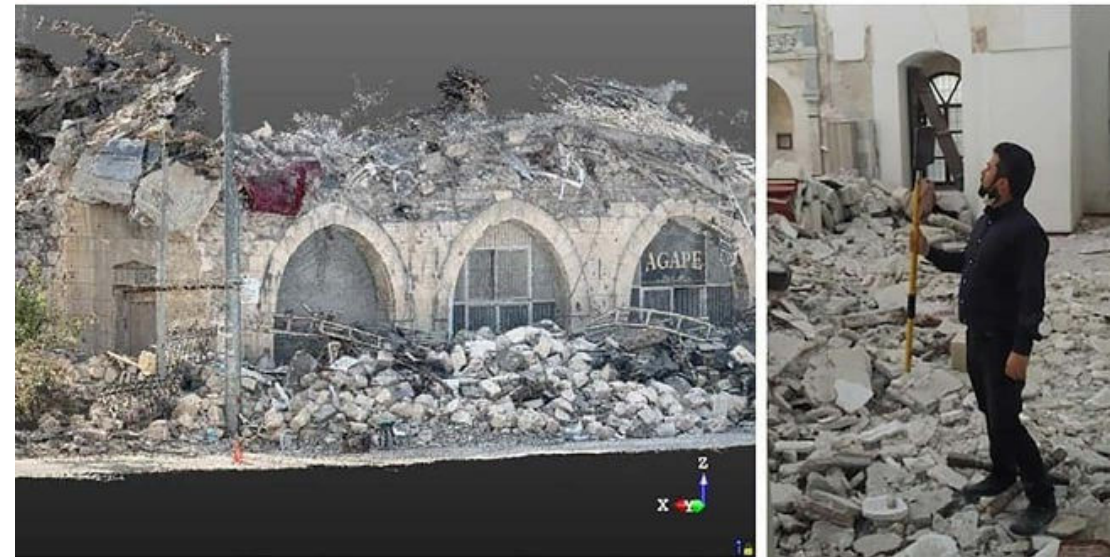
The number of participants from cultural institutions was disappointingly small, which shows that colleagues from the field of culture are very interested in the aspects of popularizing cultural heritage, but not in elaborating the aspects of cultural heritage protection.



Playmobile evacuation model,
2023 © Blue Shield France.

Protection, Response, and Stability / Long-term support

- Accreditation as registered emergency responders and points of contact in disasters
- Active promotion of the 1954 Hague Convention and support for application of Blue Shield distinctive emblems
- Development of standards, toolkits, and risk plans at institutional and government level for disaster preparedness
- Development of tools and emergency supply depots for emergency response
- Development of new website resource packs in different languages and expansion of existing ones
- Emergency response to fires, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, a volcano, and support for Ukraine and others (advice and materials) across 3 continents.
- Many committees are also providing support abroad: France, Denmark, Germany, and Czechia are all providing support to Ukraine; Austria is support Armenia
- Repatriation of looted objects
- Partners in 8 research projects, and publication of articles



Protection, Response, and Stability / Long-term support

- Congratulations go to Blue Shield France, who obtained Type A civil protection approval, "*Protection of property or cultural heritage under the ORSEC*" on 2 June 2023, via a decree from the French Ministry of the Interior.
- The association's operational arm (Organisation de Réponse à l'Urgence, ORU) is now nationally recognized as a structure contributing to emergency relief (in this case concerning heritage).



Training deployable Operational Managers to protect heritage in crisis © Blue Shield France.

Protection, Response, and Stability / Long-term support

- National Committees have **responded to crises around the world** including
- Earthquakes and volcanic eruption in Iceland
- The earthquake in Türkiye
- Fires and flooding in France, Belgium and Netherlands
- Fire resulting from civil unrest in Senegal
- Conflict in Cameroon
- Intangible heritage protection of displaced people in Georgia

Networking is key to response

- Many national committees are involved in national or regional cultural protection committees, and in partnerships with private and national response organisations.
- Some also maintain their own volunteer response networks



Hamady Gaye of BS Senegal coordinates archival rescue work, June 1-2, 2023 © BS Senegal

Advocacy, Legal Implementation, and Policy

- **Successful advocacy** supported the inclusion of cultural heritage in the Curacao National Crisis Plan; adoption of approval of Law 31980 for post-disaster reconstruction of heritage in Perú; and the development of the National Cultural Policy in Australia (published Jan 2024).
- **Organised or co-organised 36 events and 2 museum exhibitions**
- **Gave 100 awareness-raising talks and lectures** at conferences, workshops, and seminars, including invited Ministerial and government briefings
- **Reached thousands of attendees**, including heritage professionals; governments and traditional chiefs; lawyers; humanitarian workers; armed forces and others in the uniformed sector, such as firefighters, police, and borders and customs officials; and those living in or near cultural heritage sites.
- Provision of **significant legal counsel**, including national Hague Convention implementation Committees, written submissions to governments, national consultations, and commentaries on draft legislation – as well as direct meetings with government Ministers



Blue Shield Mali meet the Minister of Crafts, Culture, Hospitality Industry and Tourism. © Blue Shield Mali.

Congratulations to all our national
committees on a very successful 2023