

ZAKI ASLAN | Regional Director, ICCROM-Sharjah, UAE

Address: Dubai/ Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Telephone: +971.5.6666.4321

Email: aslan.zaki@gmail.com

Professional profile

I'm the founding Director of ICCROM's Regional Office in the United Arab Emirates, an international inter-governmental body that works to conserve cultural heritage world-wide. I am a specialist in cultural heritage conservation management, directed ICCROM's cultural heritage programmes in the MENA Region since 2003, and managed extra-budgetary fund amounting to circa four million USD yearly since then. I have provided technical and strategic advice to ICCROM's Member States on heritage protection, conservation, governance, education and implementation of field projects at historic sites and museums.

Being a specialist in the areas of protection of urban and architectural conservation, museum design, preventive conservation, and post-conflict reconstruction, I led a twelve-member team who worked in these fields addressing: capacity building, field projects, resource mobilisation, think-tank and leadership initiatives. In addition, I effectively implemented concrete actions ranging from devising cultural heritage strategic directions and convening international fora to assisting in projects execution and publishing professional guidance in the field.

Career summary

February 2012 - Present **ICCROM (The International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property), UAE Office**
Director of ICCROM-Sharjah Regional Centre for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage in the Arab Region, and Representative of ICCROM for the Arab States

Established ICCROM's Office in the UAE as a regional entity, and managed legal, financial, physical and functional requirements with the UAE authorities. Drafted strategic directions to the board and planned and managed the centre's implementation of approved programmes and budget. Worked on resource mobilisation to diversify funding sources, on visibility and outreach actions, as well as on educational, advocacy, research, capacity building, communication, and field projects for sites and museums in the Arab region.

Key responsibilities

- Led more than twelve major capacity building leadership activities and strategic meetings in the field of protection of cultural heritage in times of conflict (risk management and first-aid to cultural heritage in times of crisis) with UNESCO, ALECSO, US Government, EU, British Council, benefiting countries such as Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Egypt, Lebanon, Sudan, and Libya.
- Organised meetings, workshops, and training activities on cultural heritage conservation and management, especially on first-aid to cultural heritage in times of crisis implemented by the centre.
- Convened strategic think-tank meetings in the fields of protection of cultural heritage, including regional needs in times of conflict, resulting in the "Sharjah Initiative" (2012) and the "Sharjah Statement" (2014), which were adopted in resolutions issued by the Ministerial Meetings of Culture in the Arab States.
- Convened three international meetings on post-war reconstruction at Louvre-Lens Museum in partnership with the *Institut du Monde Arabe (Tourcoing)*, and at ICCROM in Rome and in Sharjah, resulting in key publications of proceedings with the participation of key international organisations and experts working in the field.
- Convened policy meetings addressing higher education in the Arab States, and the legal and

institutional frameworks in the Arab Region, as well as an Arab Forum for Cultural Heritage in the UAE, under the Patronage of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohamed Al Qasimi of Sharjah.

- Convened a strategic international meeting for Libyan Cultural Heritage with UNESCO that resulted in a strategic action plan, followed by contributions that ICCROM made to selective projects in partnership with the Prince Claus Fund.
- Helped prepare a full report of accreditation for a post-graduate programme in the field of cultural heritage management and protection launched in partnership with the University of Sharjah, UAE, in 2019.
- Managed more than twenty publications in the field of cultural heritage (in several languages), including practical manuals and didactic material on risk management, rapid documentation and assessment, evacuation of museum collections, and post-conflict reconstruction for historic cities.
- Oversaw all the stages for the launch of the newly established centre and instated the organisation's programme and budget for a smooth running of the Centre, within a framework of a six-year planning cycle.
- Worked on the recruitment of staff, facilities requirements, and all office and team management.
- Represented the organisation at several international conferences and gave speeches on relevant subjects, such as "Heritage in Peril" in New York, and ALIPH Launch Conference on Protecting Cultural Heritage in Abu Dhabi in 2016, as well as several meetings at the International Criminal Court (ICC), UNESCO, INTERPOL, and events such as New York Times' "Art for Tomorrow" in Doha, and the Cultural Summit in the UAE in 2017.
- Have contributed frequently to ICCROM's senior management meetings and statutory meetings, and devised draft policies related to partnerships and outreach and others.
- Managed an Awards Programme for good conservation practices in the Arab World, and for promoting cultural heritage for the young.
- Managed grants to field projects for museums, libraries, and historic buildings and sites from various donors.

Key achievements

- Established a fully functional regional centre of ICCROM that has become a hub for cultural heritage conservation, especially addressing conservation of cultural heritage needs in the Arab states and, more recently, the protection of cultural heritage in times of crisis. The centre has implemented more than twenty activities and more than eight field projects in the past biennium. It also produced a body of knowledge with more than twenty titles last year. The centre benefited annually more than fifteen countries in the Arab region.
- Called for an internationally consolidated response to cultural heritage destruction, convened international meetings and delivered public and key-note speeches on the role of ICCROM and ICCROM-Sharjah in more than ten institutions world-wide in the past two years (e.g., Columbia University, New York; World Monument Fund, London; the Aga Khan Foundation, Ottawa; and Metropolitan Museum, New York; Smithsonian Institution – as part of a joint international course -, Washington D.C., Endangered Archaeology in the MENA Region of Oxford University, Tunis, and Authority of Culture, Bahrain). Currently, I am advisor to the Saudi Government in the heritage field, the ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiative (USA) for Syria, Iraq and Libya, and am actively involved in INTERPOL and UNESCO regional initiatives relevant to the field of cultural heritage at risk. Other steering and scientific committees include Terra 2022 and the UAE-funded Mosul Project.

Feb. 2003 – Dec. 2011

ICCROM (The International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property), Rome, Italy
Programme Manager, ICCROM-ATHAR (Conservation of Cultural Heritage in the Arab

Developed strategies with partners and beneficiary countries, and implemented the ICCROM-ATHAR Programme (Conservation of Cultural Heritage in the Arab Region) from Rome, Italy, for ten years. In addition, I oversaw budget and financial reports and coordinated stakeholders meetings. With the aim of sustaining the work of the programme, I worked closely with member states and partners to support the activities and achieve concrete results. I also endeavour to advocate for the protection of cultural heritage in the MENA region on sustainable basis. Advocated and made visible the benefits and enhanced donor and partners relations; consequently, the UAE offered to host the centre for the benefit of the region as a

whole.

Key responsibilities

- Responsible for planning and managing all programme activities of the ICCROM-ATHAR Programme, and for implementing field projects in the Arab Region.
- Managed and implemented strategic activities in response to regional priority needs aimed at the protection, conservation and management of cultural heritage properties in the Arab States.
- Managed leadership capacity building and field projects, including scientific preparations, providing technical expertise, monitoring and evaluation, and supervising the work of a professional team.
- Worked closely with various partners, including UNESCO and the Getty Conservation Institute, in various joint activities (e.g. training, international assistance, project evaluations, periodic reporting, etc.).
- Participated in scientific and advisory committees in the cultural heritage field (e.g., jury member in international architectural competitions with the International Union of Architects, several scientific conferences on cultural heritage world-wide, Terra Conferences; Architectural Heritage Conferences in Saudi Arabia and Dubai).
- Worked closely with World Heritage partners to train professionals and experts in all procedures related to World Heritage conservation and management, as well as having participated in joint monitoring missions for World Heritage.

Key achievements/projects

- Concrete results and projects (with more than 300 trained professionals constituting a large network) helped make the ICCROM-ATHAR Programme visible and contributed to efforts to sustain the programme in the region closer to the field. Several field projects were also implemented (e.g., Lebanon, UAE); alumni of participants and network became more active to improve the state of protection at various sites and museums on the ground. The programme was sustained by establishing an office in Sharjah, UAE.

March - July 2009 Price Waterhouse Coopers PwC, Governance Services, Dubai Office ***Consultant in Cultural Heritage Management (Sabbatical leave).***

- Provided advice as lead expert on Cultural Heritage Management to the Saudi Government's Commission for Tourism and Heritage (SCTA) and developed strategic plan for the Heritage and Museums Sector.
- Undertook research work on partnerships and Integrated Cultural Heritage Management.
- Presented a study for a comprehensive new structure to manage cultural heritage assets in Saudi Arabia.

Dec. 2001- Jan. 2003 Project Consultant, Cultural Heritage Conservation and Management

- ICCROM consultant for the UNESCO Youth Heritage Education Project for World Heritage Sites in the Arab States
- UNESCO consultant for evaluation of heritage management needs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and for capacity building projects in the fields of heritage conservation and management.
- Consultant in conservation, management and design briefing for site conservation and management projects with an EU-funded project in Jordan (preparation of a conservation plan at the World Heritage Site of Umm Ar-Rassas, Jordan with SECA, *La Société d'Éco-Aménagement*, Montpellier, France)

Oct.1994- Dec. 2001 Establishment of a Conservation and Restoration Centre in Petra - A joint German Technical Co-operation (GTZ) and Department of Antiquities of Jordan project, Amman, Jordan. *Project Manager (Chief Counterpart) of the Jordanian- German*

- Project short and long-term management, monitoring, and assessment based on result-based management methods.

- Worked in a multidisciplinary team of professionals and consultants in the planning and management of preservation work of the World Heritage Site of Petra.
- Documentation, technical research, and monitoring the project cycle throughout the duration of the project.

1993- April 1994 **CRM Project: Cultural Resources Management Project- A joint American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan project.**
Heritage Planner and Manager

- Worked as a specialist in the development of sustainable procedures for the management of archaeological heritage in Jordan (Policies, planning, legislation).
- Worked on enhancing co-ordination procedures between development and government agencies, international and funding bodies to implement integrated heritage conservation policies in Jordan, utilising the Jordan Database Information System- JADIS- for effective heritage management.

1991 **SIMPA: *La Société Immobilière du Patrimoine Architectural de Montréal***
Researcher

- Worked on developing a conservation plan on nineteenth century structures to be integrated in the Historic and Archaeological Museum in Old Montreal.

Education & qualifications

- **Ph.D. (Cultural Heritage Conservation and Management)** –
University College London, University of London, United Kingdom – 2007
- **M.Sc. A. (Aménagement), Heritage Conservation and Planning (*Conservation de l'environnement bâti*)**
Université de Montréal, Montreal, Canada – 1991
- **B.Sc. (Architecture)** –
University of Jordan – 1988

Languages

- English, Fluent (Speaking, Writing and Reading)
- Arabic, Fluent (Speaking, Writing and Reading)
- French, Fluent (Speaking, Writing and Reading)
- Italian, (Speaking and Reading)
- German, Basic Understanding

Affiliations and Awards

- Honorary Senior Lecturer, University College London, UK
- Adjunct Professor, American University of Sharjah, UAE
- Recipient of Fulbright and DAAD Scholarships.
- Vice-President, ICOMOS-UAE
- Supervised and examined Master's and PhD theses at Leuven University, Belgium, and the University of Nova Crocia in Venice, Italy.

References

- Available upon request

• Selected publications:

Aslan, Z. et al. (ed.), 2020. Proceedings of the First Arab Forum for Cultural Heritage: A regional vision to Preserve and Promote Cultural Heritage, Sharjah, UAE, 6 – 8 February 2018. ICCROM, Sharjah

Aslan, Z. et al., 2019. Readings in the Conservation of Mosaics (Arabic). ICCROM & the Getty Foundation, Sharjah

Aslan, Z. et al. (ed.), 2018. Protective Shelters for Archaeological Sites, Proceedings of a Symposium, Herculaneum, Italy, 23-27 September 2013. British School at Rome

Aslan, Z. (ed.), 2016. Selected Readings from ATHAR Programme (Issues in the conservation and management of cultural heritage in the Arab Region), vol.1 (English & Arabic), ICCROM and Sharjah Government.

Aslan, Z. & Sabik, A. (eds.) 2016 A guide to risk management for cultural heritage – Arabic edition (*Pedersoli, J. et al.*). ICCROM, Sharjah

Aslan, Z. 2014. Education and Professionalization for Heritage Conservation in the Arab Region: Review of Current Status and Strategic Directions. In: Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites 16 (2):117-130. Maney Publishing, London

Aslan, Z. & Ardemagni, M. 2007 (2nd Edition English & Arabic)
Introducing Young People to Heritage Site Management and Protection ICCROM, 2006. (A teacher's manual aimed at introducing heritage education in school curricula in the Arab Countries)- English and Arabic

Aslan, Z. 2007 The Design of Protective Structures for the Conservation and Presentation of Archaeological Sites in the Mediterranean. In: ICCROM Newsletter 33: 14-15, ICCROM, Rome

Aslan, Z. 2006 Training and education in the Arab Region: Regional context and international trends In: ICCROM Newsletter 32: 19, ICCROM, Rome

Aslan, Z. 2005 Management of living heritage places in the Arab region. In: ICCROM Newsletter 31: 12-13, ICCROM, Rome

Aslan, Z. 2001 Designing protective structures at archaeological sites: Criteria and methodology of a proposed structure for the site of Lot's Basilica, Jordan. In: Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites, vol.5, no.1 & 2: 73-85 (A special double issue devoted to invited papers presented at the colloquium on shelters in the Southwest held in Arizona by the Getty Conservation Institute and the US National Parks Service in January 2001)

Aslan, Z.
2000 Assessing the effectiveness of Protective Structures for the conservation and presentation of mosaic archaeological sites: A planning and design methodology. In: 7th International conference for the conservation of mosaics, Arles, France. Nov. 1999. ICCM: France

Aslan, Z. et al.
Methods and techniques applied in the recording and monitoring of monuments in Petra. In: Petra, the restoration of the rock-cut tomb facades. Kuelenthal, M. & Fischer, H. (eds.): 178- 183. Munich: Karl Lipp Verlag.

Aslan, Z. et al.
Condition assessment and execution plan for the protection of tomb 825. In: Petra, the restoration of the rock-cut tomb facades. Kuelenthal, M. & Fischer, H. (eds.): 209- 216. Munich: Karl Lipp Verlag.

Aslan, Z.

Petra (Jordanie) quand un grand site s'ouvre au tourisme mondial. In Accueil, gestion et aménagement dans les grands sites: colloque international d'ICOMOS France, et Ministère de l'aménagement du territoire et l'environnement, Arles, Mars 1999: 55- 62. Paris: ICOMOS France

Aslan Z.

1998 Protective Sheltering: Archaeological Site Presentation and Environmental Conservation. In: Proceedings of EURO-MED Workshop on Contribution of Science and Technology to the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Mediterranean Basin, Tunis, June 1997: EU

Aslan, Z.

1997 Conserving the Rock Facades of Petra. In: Proceedings of the International Conference on the Conservation of Stone, Berlin, Germany, 1996

Aslan, Z. et al.

1997 Architectural Investigation at the Facades of Petra with special reference to tomb 825. In ADAJ (Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan), Amman, 1997

Aslan, Z.

1997 Protective Structures for the conservation and presentation of archaeological sites. In: Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies, No. 3, Nov. 1997. (www.ucl/archaeology/conservation/jcms) UCL: London

Aslan.Z. et al.

1996 A methodology for the protection of the Petra Facades. In: ADAJ (Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan), Amman, 1996

Palumbo, G. &

Aslan, Z. 1993 Cultural Resources Management in Jordan: towards a comprehensive policy. In: Proceedings of Symposium on the Conservation in Jordan and the Arab World, Nov. 1993. University of Jordan: Amman

Aslan, Z.

1993 Architectural Conservation as an increasing modern preoccupation. In: Al-Nashra, Journal of the Association of Jordanian Architects No.4. Association of Jordanian Architects: Amman