



**The Report on the State of Culture  
in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2021:  
Culture in Public Spaces**

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Ministry of Culture

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## Message from the Minister

The Ministry of Culture has not ceased—in this its fourth year—to support and foster cultural revival in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the generous support of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and the Crown Prince HRH Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, may God preserve them both. Their commitment to the cultural sector is reflected in the three significant aims of Vision 2030: social vitality, the contribution of culture to economic flourishing, and raising the ceiling of national ambition.

With this report on the cultural scene in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, we seek to demonstrate in an academically rigorous fashion how the efforts of the last four years have started to crystallize and emerge with greater clarity. Diverse government initiatives, policies, and decrees have begun to transform the cultural sector into a fertile environment for creativity and development, fostering the emergence of promising figures of outstanding talent across culture sectors, supported by a notable spike in investment.

Notwithstanding the digitalization of culture imposed on us by the stark reality of the pandemic last year, the cultural expression has—with God's blessing—resumed its upward trajectory at an increased pace and with greater vigor than before. This is evident from the concerted effort of our many partners in the cultural sphere, with whose collaboration we have prepared this report. This collaboration sphere extended far beyond the eleven Saudi cultural commissions: more than 150 partners contributed data to the report, ranging from various ministries and government foundations to organizations in the private and non-profit sectors. This is not to mention the major contribution of individual creatives and persons interested in cultural affairs in the Kingdom.

For this reason, this third iteration of the report focuses broadly on culture. The report thus comprises five sections: Management and Conservation, Creativity and Production, Cultural Participation, Knowledge and Skills, and the Creative Economy. The report sheds light on the major challenges confronting the cultural sector, in the belief that healthy growth is impossible without a serious attempt to address them, allowing us to proceed towards a brighter future.



Prince Badr bin Abdullah  
bin Mohammed bin Farhan Al Saud  
Minister of Culture





# Acknowledgements

The number of contributing entities that provided quantitative and qualitative data nearly doubled this year, magnifying the significance of the report's second edition by broadening its view of the different cultural fields and by helping develop many new performance indicators. These contributing entities included ministries and government agencies, various civil institutions, and companies and organizations from the private sector. Their continued cooperation and the expansion of participating actors in the Kingdom is much anticipated for continually improving the quality, efficiency, and accuracy of the report, which derives its fundamental value from the accumulation of knowledge every year. Finally, we would like to extend our sincere thanks and gratitude to all of the entities that have participated alongside us to share in the report's success. The success of the report is indebted to them for their fruitful cooperation, proactive contribution, and dedicated role in the growing cultural movement during a time of ongoing economic and social development in the Kingdom.



# Executive Summary



# Executive Summary

- Management and Conservation
- Creativity and Production
- Cultural Participation
- Knowledge and Skills
- Creative Economy
- Culture in Public Space







## Executive Summary

While navigating pandemic-related uncertainty, the year 2021 nevertheless witnessed a return to public cultural activity. The easing of restrictions on public activities reached its peak in mid-October with the allowance to operate at full capacity in facilities and entertainment and cultural events. This gradual development constituted the most prominent features of the state of culture in the Kingdom during the year, as the improvement in public health -with the provision of the COVID-19 vaccinations- was reflected in the levels of activity and participation in a number of cultural sectors, as outlined in the chapters of the Report. For example, theatrical performances rebounded during the year to reach pre-pandemic levels. The same can be said about the level of participation in art exhibitions, performances, and cinemas. These apparent signs of recovery were the direct consequence of lifting the state of emergency. Still, they also left equally potent longer-term effects, with the impelling need to digitize culture at large being a prime case in hand. However, what was available digitally did not compensate for the importance of the availability of cultural facilities and opportunities for public cultural participation, which, as the Report data indicates in various sections, differed in their geographical accessibility and in the extent to which they attracted different groups of society.

In addition to the signs of recovery from the pandemic, some distinct general features - monitored by the Report on the state of culture for the year 2021- have emerged. These features can be identified as four major developments or trends that are linked to more than cultural dimension, namely:

- 1) The growth of domestic cultural tourism, both in terms of unprecedented rates amounting to 10 and a half million trips taken in the first 10 months of 2021 – thereby exceeding the total number for 2019 of about 8.5 over a 12-month period – or the rise in the market share of domestic cultural tourism. It is likely that the proclivity of domestic tourists to participate in cultural activities has risen, as participation in cultural activities increased from 18% to 20%. However, the positive reality of participation levels does not necessarily reflect even participation distribution.
- 2) The impact of income level on cultural participation - as examined by the 2021 Report - which coincides with what was recorded by the last two editions of the Reports on the State of Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- 3) The remarkable expansion in opportunities to support and enable culture and creativity, such as grants and support funds, art and literary residencies, cultural competitions, incubators, and business accelerators, which falls under the broader context represented by the fourth feature.
- 4) The continuation of the organizational developments of culture in the Kingdom, that included the launch of the strategies of cultural commissions and the issuance of rules and regulations to raise the organizational and professional levels of the cultural sector.





## Management and Conservation

The year 2021 was an extension of the regulatory and organizational developments witnessed in 2020. The transfer and regulation of powers— e.g., the amendment of Article III of the Law of Antiquities, Museums and Urban Heritage Act—and the issuance of guides and executive regulations for the decisions issued in 2020 represented the most prominent organizational developments documented in the Management and Conservation Chapter. In total, 22 decisions and regulations were issued and/or approved in the course of the year to organize the various cultural sectors or other related sectors. Natural heritage and the management of its resources had the largest share of these decisions, including the approval of the seven executive regulations of the Environment Law that was issued by a Royal Decree in 1441 AH/ 2020 AD, such as the Executive Regulation for the Protected Areas and the Executive Regulation of Vegetation Cover Development and Combating Desertification. As part of the institutional efforts to serve the Arabic language, new projects were launched in the fields of translation, Arabic language teaching, and technical language projects, including the Tarjim initiative, the Contemporary Arabic Language Corpus, Arabic and Computing, the Academic Accreditation for Arabic Language Teaching Centers and Programs for Non-Native Speakers. Academic research activity in the field of the Arabic language also witnessed a growth of 65% between 2019 and 2021.

The efforts to preserve and conserve heritage have resulted in the announcement of six important archaeological discoveries and an increase in the number of archaeological survey projects, which reached 23 projects in 2021. The year also witnessed the launch of several initiatives to document the cultural heritage in the Kingdom, including various sectors, such as music and the performing arts. Other projects and attempts to archive Saudi creative productions have been announced as well, such as the National Film Archive and Theatrical Archive, to which 74 text plays were added during the year. In 2021, new elements of Saudi heritage were also inscribed on international heritage lists, namely: Farasan Island, the first Saudi reserve to be registered in the Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB), the Hema Cultural Site in Najran, which was inscribed on the UNESCO's World Heritage List, and the city of Buraydah, which was added in the field of culinary art to the network UNESCO Creative Cities, and finally, the inscription of Arabic Calligraphy on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. As for the sustainable management of heritage resources and its contribution to development, two major projects were announced: the Historic Jeddah Revival project and the Saudi Green project. Moreover, the year witnessed a significant increase in the number of reserves and their area, which amounted to 322,418.58 km<sup>2</sup>, resulting in an increase in the percentage of terrestrial protected areas in the Kingdom from 4.27% in 2019 to 15.65% in 2021, exceeding the global average of terrestrial protected areas.

The infrastructure of the cultural sectors posed a challenge, especially with the return to normal life after the pandemic. The development of cultural facilities remained limited during the year, except for cinemas, which increased by 63.63% between 2020 and 2021, and creative complexes, as two of which have been opened, Jax District in Diriyah and Hayy Jameel in Jeddah. The total number of cultural facilities in the Kingdom is estimated to be: 304 museums, 85 public libraries affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, 262 theaters, 75 galleries and exhibition halls, 54 cinemas, and 20 literary coffee shops.

An indication of the development of the supportive and empowering environment of culture and creativity was the increase and diversity in support programs, and an increase in the number of their beneficiaries. The establishment of the Cultural Development Fund at the beginning of the year was the most prominent of these developments. Other support programs were launched, including the Children's and Young Adult Literature Accelerator, Fashion Incubator, as well as the six artistic residencies and the writing retreats. The Report records 17 major cultural competitions held during the year that included different sectors, and had 164 winners, who received prizes totaling approximately 4,836,250 riyals.



## Creativity and Production

Indicators of recovery from the decline in production during the COVID-19 pandemic were the most prominent characteristic of cultural production during the year, particularly in sectors that depend on in-person attendance, such as theater and the performing arts – a sector that unprecedentedly offered an optionality to consumers as a result of regulatory developments, and the multiplicity of involved entities and private theater troupes that organized more than 46 locals, as opposed to imported, theatrical performances, as indicated in the Report. The visual arts sector also made a comeback, with the return of private art galleries activity at a rate of almost double. The Report documents more than 275 in-person exhibitions held by artistic institutions and commercial art galleries during the year. Galleries alone organized 121 exhibitions, at a rate of approximately 7 exhibitions per gallery, which is nearly double the 2020 figures. Moreover, the total number of art participations was more than 1,033 participations, almost equally divided between female and male artists. The return of in-person events and the organization of film festivals further enhanced the production activities, as film festivals played a pivotal role in this period, and the number of classified films increased to 24, compared to 21 films in the previous year. The number of local films participating in the Red Sea International Film Festival and the Saudi Film Festival reached 185 short and feature films, which indicates an increase in the actual production numbers in the sector.

In books and publications sector, the year's figures show a slight increase over previous years. The number of titles registered at King Fahad National Library reached 9,042 titles, compared to 8,497 titles last year. Publication trends in recent years indicate that nearly two-thirds of published books were in the fields of literature, Shariah sciences, and education. In addition, growth in publishing was evidenced, albeit to a limited extent, in fields such as philosophy, art, design, architecture, fashion design, and culinary arts. In literary publishing, the novel continued to lead the literary genres with 155 works of fiction, followed by works of poetry. On the other hand, theater and drama genre witnessed a relative recovery with 14 publications – of both plays and drama studies — after an absence or a very limited presence in previous years. Translation projects are supported by the Tarjim initiative, which resulted in 336 translated works, as well as through special electronic cultural platforms, of which the Report classifies nearly 1,168 articles translated into Arabic in various fields, including philosophy, literature, and the arts, in addition to 64 books and a number of periodicals.

A tendency to draw on heritage for inspiration has appeared as a direction of production in many sectors, including the fashion sector, as reflected in the issuance of the Fashion Guide for the Saudi Cup, and the architecture sector, which witnessed the launch of the King Salman Charter for Architecture and Urbanism, a charter aimed at laying down the principles of authenticity, continuity, and human centrality, the possibility of living, in addition to innovation and environmental sustainability as strategic foundations for architecture in the Kingdom. The textile crafts, which include carpet weaving and the traditional Al Sadu weaving, had the highest number of craftspeople registered on the craft register: 4,429 male and female craftspeople.

In relation to cultural creativity, the National Cultural Awards initiative was the most comprehensive initiative to offer prizes to winners in all cultural sectors, in addition to offering the Youth Culture Award and the Cultural Personality of the Year Award. In addition to this initiative, local awards supported innovators and stimulated production. These include the Saudi Film Festival awards and the Yusr Award offered by the Red Sea International Film Festival in the film sector, the Saudi Universities Theater Festival in the theater and performing arts sector, as well as other awards, such as the Riyadh International Book Fair Awards, or Excellence Awards offered by public institutions. At the international level, Saudi writers and authors won prizes in several competitions in poetry, fiction, criticism, and literary translation. The Report documents 13 of such awards, including 6 regional literary prizes. Additionally, 17 entities working in Saudi Arabia won prizes for excellence in competitions of a promotional or touristic nature in categories such as architecture, design, and the culinary arts.





## Cultural Participation

As attendance indicators suggest, signs of recovery appeared with variations in all cultural sectors, as they were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic differently. The most significant evidence of this recovery can be seen in the growth in domestic cultural tourism - contrary to inbound cultural tourism - as well as in the rate of visits to cinemas, with the growth in ticket sales over the last four years averaging 199%. The cultural festivals and events sector also witnessed a remarkable growth in terms of the number of events, attendance, and dissemination. However, this does not mean that the COVID-19 pandemic has not had an impact on participation, as the 2021 Cultural Participation Survey supports the idea that there were some changes in the patterns of behavior related to cultural participation. Of the respondents to the Survey, 26.3% reported that their visits to festivals and events decreased for health reasons, compared to 6% of those who reported an increase in their participation in such events. Moreover, the Cultural Participation Survey, in its third wave, shows a slight decrease in the percentage of those who want to continue attending virtual events compared to 2020; nevertheless, it continued to reflect a positive view of virtual participation as an option for attending events and exhibitions for the majority of the sample as 62% of the survey sample expressed their desire to see the continuation of this method of participation. In the indicators of the diversity of social groups participating in culture, the Survey reveals approximately equal levels of participation between males and females, which may reflect the expansion of women's participation in cultural sectors. The Survey also shows that young people are more interested in culture compared to older-aged groups, which coincides with the previous editions of the Report. Additionally, it confirms the disparity between individuals of different educational and economic levels in their participation in the cultural field, as participation decreases with low-income groups and those with lower educational levels, posing a challenge to the cultural sector and its ability to reach different social groups.

Social integration indicators related to the civil cultural institutions' sector and cultural volunteering activities showed that 2021 witnessed a significant increase in the establishment of non-profit organizations by 58 non-profit organizations. This growth is a direct reflection of the developments in the organization of the sector under the umbrella of the strategy of the Ministry of Culture for the non-profit sector in the first quarter of the year. This development in the non-profit organization sector was not only quantitative but included an expansion in the diversity of the sector's activities to cover a wider range of cultural sectors. During 2021, organizations specializing in fashion, museums, and music were established, and the geographic coverage of their work expanded. And while there were non-profit cultural organizations registered in only six regions, in 2021, non-profit cultural organizations were established in Al-Bahah, Al-Jawf, Madinah, and Asir provinces, however, the coverage has yet to reach all regions of the Kingdom. At the level of voluntary participation in cultural activities, the number of volunteers in non-profit organizations reached 946 during 2021, while the total number of volunteers for 2021 in fields related to culture in the National Volunteer Portal stood at 28,555 male and female volunteers. The multiplicity of environmental initiatives in 2021 was reflected in the multiplicity of volunteer opportunities in environmental activities, which amounted to 2,174 volunteer opportunities, bringing the number of volunteers to more than 15,000 volunteers, thereby could enhancing awareness and care for the natural heritage.







## Knowledge and Skills

The acceleration in the development of the educational system for culture was a main feature during the years 2020 and 2021. Efforts were concentrated on this acceleration to enhance the presence of culture in formal education at all levels, starting with the updated curricula for the various educational stages and the launch of teacher rehabilitation programs in several fields, including the arts. This acceleration accompanied the establishment of the Ministry of Culture, which gave the transformation a comprehensive institutional framework. It was also recently manifested in a partnership that started with the signing of two memoranda of understanding by the Ministry of Culture with the Ministry of Education and the Technical & Vocational Training Corporation launched at the beginning of 2020.

The Report documents a number of developments in 2021 in public education programs introduced to enhance the presence of culture: the development of new academic materials that are culturally and artistically orientated, such as critical thinking at the intermediate and secondary levels, in addition to teaching English starting with first grade, in conjunction with the development and revision of curricula such as Arabic and art education at all levels in order to improve educational outcomes, and their alignment with university programs and the labor market.

Similarly, during the past years, higher education witnessed a new phase of growing interest of culture. Its most prominent features are the Cultural Scholarship Program that was launched in early 2020, in addition to the expansion of cultural and artistic disciplines offered by universities, such as the two academic programs of filmmaking and animation and photography recently offered by the College of Design and Arts at Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University. According to the data available for the years 2019–2021, academic programs related to culture and arts in the higher education institutions in the Kingdom reached approximately 853 programs, with language sciences being the highest. Most of these programs are concentrated in public universities and in major provinces like Makkah and Riyadh, as both account for more than half of the total number of cultural and artistic programs.

In line with these developments in higher education in the Kingdom, the Report monitors an additional feature of the growing demand witnessed by the cultural sectors, for example, the increase in the numbers of applicants to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program to enroll in a discipline related to culture and arts. The increase in the number of applicants reached 132% from 2019–2021, with a significant increase in the number of applicants for majors in the fields of tourism, hospitality, arts, visual production, and culinary arts. Despite the higher percentage of male applicants compared to female applicants, the numbers of those accepted into these programs reveal a high percentage of females were admitted to study in one of the programs and disciplines related to culture and arts, which is also reflected in the Cultural Scholarship Program's figures for 2021, in which the percentage of female representation reached 65.7%. In addition to these figures, the 2021 Cultural Participation Survey presents a promising picture of a positive change in the perceptions and attitude of society toward cultural and artistic disciplines.

The cultural and artistic training sector also witnessed regulatory developments, the most recent of which was the signing of an agreement by the Ministry of Culture in the second quarter of 2021 with the Technical & Vocational Training Corporation to reorganize the regulatory procedures for issuing licenses and accreditation for training institutions and programs by the Ministry in cooperation with the Technical & Vocational Training Corporation via the platform "Abde`a," which will facilitate the issuance of training licenses to institutions. The year 2021 also witnessed an increase in the number of bodies offering training courses with a cultural and artistic component, with the emergence of modern training institutes and institutions, all of which contributed to the provision of training programs in areas where they were previously available only in a limited scope. These include filmmaking, visual arts, and theater and performing arts, promising a bright future of cultural training and the demand for it in the Kingdom.





## Creative Economy

The Creative Economy chapter is concerned with measuring the economic impact of culture and creative industries through quantitative and qualitative metrics to assess the extent to which cultural sectors contribute to the national economy across various pillars. This chapter reviews the number of cultural enterprises, the rate of family spending on cultural goods and activities, and the determinants of demand by leveraging available national data.

The number of cultural enterprises reached more than 36,000 by the end of 2021, almost half of which are active in design and creative services, followed by books and the press at 22%, then institutions working in audiovisual media at 10.56%. Considering that the creative economy is more associated with cities, these activities are concentrated in the areas where major cities are located, with 38% concentrated in Riyadh Province and 26% in Makkah Province. As for industrial activities related to culture, in which creative activity emerges in the production processes, there are 396 factories that operate in the furniture industry, 156 in the clothing industry, and 113 in the textile industry.

With respect to consumption and spending on culture indicators, the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2018), which is the latest available statistics, showed that household spending on the entertainment and culture category is 2.8% of total monthly expenditure. Further, sales operations at points of sale for entertainment and the latest culture indicate a similar level; in 2021, it was 2.97% of the total point of sale operations, with a value of 14.1 billion riyals.

In the past five years, some sectors have achieved a steady growth in sales that continued even during the pandemic, specifically in emerging sectors such as film that have high growth rates, as the value of cinema tickets sold in 2021 amounted to 206,162,822 riyals for 412 films, compared to 7,621,055.06 riyals in 2018 for 123 films.

In addition, domestic tourism continued to grow despite the restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic; the data of cultural tourism indicators presented a general trend of growth from 2017 until the end of October 2021. Despite the relative stagnation in the years 2018 and 2020, the total number of domestic tourism trips that include cultural activities grew during the period by 18%, or 4.5% annually on average. According to the same pattern, the market share for the number of tourists participating in cultural activities out of the total number of tourists has shown a steady growth for domestic tourists. In contrast, the market share of inbound cultural tourism decreased from 29% in 2019 to only 17% in the first 10 months of 2021, and its rates decreased significantly as the total numbers of inbound tourists decreased as a direct result of the pandemic.

The demand for cultural activities and products is influenced by various social factors, such as age, income, and gender. The Cultural Participation Survey: Third Wave in 2021, shows that interest in attending theatrical performances, concerts, and cinemas decreases in older age groups, while interest in heritage-related activities increases as age progresses. Regarding the media of consuming cultural goods and services, the survey proves the paper book to be the preferred reading method for the majority of the sample. It also reveals a correlation between age and the use or preference for digital broadcast media for film and music, with 35% of the 18–25 age group listening to music through digital services. In relation to digital broadcasting, 9% of which through a paid subscription, while only 5% of those over the age of 50 use this media, and only 1% of this group pay for these services.





## Culture in Public Space

The theme of the Report on the State of Culture in the Kingdom for 2021, which is Culture in the Public Space, is inextricably entwined to levels of attendance at cultural events in open spaces and public places, whether examined generally over time or in relation to the post-pandemic reality in particular. When monitoring open spaces available for cultural activities and events - based on the Urban Observatory's data for 2019 - a relative disparity appears between the various regions in the Kingdom as far as numbers of these spaces are concerned, as they are largely concentrated in the central, eastern, and western regions, and they tend to decrease when looking at the edges of the country. The total number of open spaces is estimated as: 209 in urban centers, 484 festival grounds, 3,627 children's playgrounds, 1,642 town squares, and 5,661 public gardens.

The Cultural Participation Survey presented a picture of the relationship between people and open spaces in cities, and the probability of their participation in the events held there, while considering various factors affecting this participation. One of the most remarkable findings of the Survey was the approximately similar percentages of regular visits to open spaces, at 47%, and cultural participation, at 54%. In other words, those who visited open spaces regularly have participated in at least one cultural activity during the year, which confirms the vital correlation between open spaces and cultural participation.

Cultural presence in public and open spaces can take different forms, some of which depend on the interaction between people, places, and culture, while other forms depend on the physical and aesthetic dimensions of culture reflected in the form of the place. In general, the regional distribution of such cultural manifestations is largely centralized. For example, the King Abdulaziz Public Library's Mobile Learning Resources organized 90 tours during the year in six public gardens in the city of Riyadh, benefiting 39,512 visitors. In 2021, several initiatives were launched that contributed to enhancing the cultural presence in the public space, the most prominent of which are: "Literature Everywhere" initiative, which includes 30 digital platforms or posters that present literary content in public places in the regions of Riyadh and the Eastern Province; "The Literary Partner" initiative, which are literary coffee shops that host evenings and various cultural activities; and "Cinema Al-Hara" initiative, which aimed to facilitate the access of different groups of society to the cinema in open spaces in the neighborhoods in Jeddah. Some events were also held on the city streets, such as Basta (Riyadh Market) and the Al-Suwailem Street event. The importance of these initiatives and events is indicative of the return of culture to the public space after the pandemic.

To highlight the artistic and aesthetic presence in urban spaces, prominent art exhibitions were held during the year, for example, Noor Riyadh, in which more than 30 artists participated. The artists' works were exhibited in 13 spaces within the city of Riyadh. "The Year of Arabic Calligraphy" initiative also brought to light the aesthetics of Arabic calligraphy and its arts in the public space through the murals event that began in public spaces in Riyadh, Diriyah, Jeddah, and Al-Khobar. The year 2021 also witnessed an expansion of murals to 10 regions in the Kingdom.



The background features a large, stylized Arabic calligraphic design in shades of gray. The design consists of several concentric, flowing lines that form a circular or semi-circular shape, reminiscent of a traditional Islamic geometric pattern or a calligraphic flourish. The lines are thick and have a hand-drawn, organic feel. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on cultural heritage.

# **Culture in Public Spaces**



**The Report  
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2021**





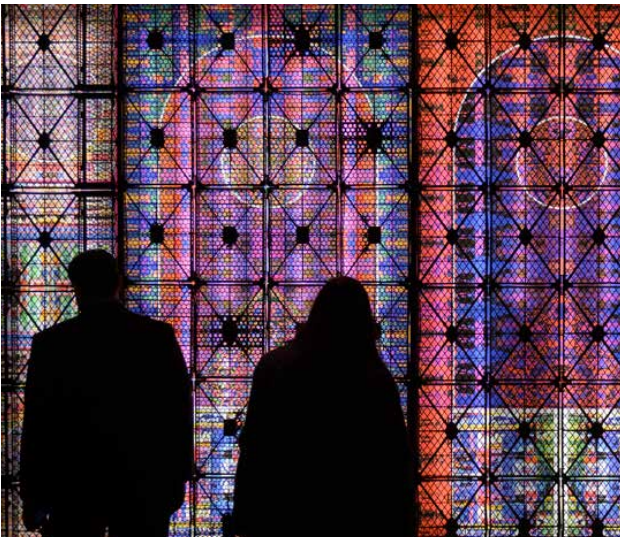
## Introduction

In a Post-COVID19 pandemic world, cultural activities and practices are returning to public life following multiple waves of shutdowns and precautionary measures that largely restricted public manifestation of culture to the virtual realm. The resumption of public cultural activity, however, is not simply a return to the way things were before 2020. While the cultural sector has overcome many of the temporary pandemic-induced disruptions, questions remain about the long-term effects, the opportunities gained, and the lessons learned from the extraordinary time of the pandemic. The 2021 Report on the State of Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia addresses some of these questions by identifying features and trends of the cultural sector in 2021. Within such broader concern for post-pandemic recovery, the report also highlights the theme of Culture in the Public Space shifting from and complementing the theme of Digitalization of Culture addressed in the 2020 report.

The 2021 report continues what the two previous State of Culture reports (2019/2020) began. It seeks to provide a systematic reading of the state of culture that highlights challenges and documents achievements. However, the 2021 report introduces key improvements by adopting a thematic structure that reflects the dimensions of the cultural domain

at large in its various sub-sectors rather than addressing developments in each sub-sector (e.g. films or museums) separately. Therefore, each chapter of the report now deals with wide horizontal segments of the cultural field and their manifestations in the sub-sectors. These dimensions are:

1. **Management and Conservation:** This dimension concerns the state of heritage conservation and the support of creativity, whether using sustainable development of cultural heritage or through the availability of infrastructure, facilities, and open spaces for cultural activities. The dimension focuses on culture's institutional aspect, including entities, ecosystem, and support programs.
2. **Creativity and Production:** This dimension is based on two stages of the cultural cycle. It provides measures for trends and volumes of cultural production in various fields. Additionally, it includes assessing the state of creativity through a review of local and international cultural awards as a measure of creative excellence.
3. **Cultural Participation:** This dimension evaluates the extent to which the cultural field includes various social groups. Three sets of indicators measure the dimension: (1) the rates of cultural events attendance and visits to cultural sites and facilities, (2) accessibility and the level of diversity of the cultural audience, and (3) the state of the collective forms of participation represented in the non-profit sector and volunteering.
4. **Knowledge and Skills:** This dimension concerns the trends of cultural education, training in the Kingdom, the degree of the educational systems' readiness, and the ability to transmit cultural knowledge and skills. It also aims to build competencies in all educational and training levels, whether in primary education, specialized cultural qualification, or non-formal education.
5. **Creative Economy:** This chapter looks at the economic dimension of culture, or what is known as the cultural industries, through a review and analysis of available relevant data and economic indicators, such as those related to the composition of cultural enterprises, cultural tourism, and levels of household spending on culture.





In this way, each chapter of the report is concerned with the state of one of these dimensions during the year across cultural sub-sectors. This allows comparisons to be made, with more focused analysis and elucidation of general patterns. The new structure of the report also provides greater integration of cultural indicators into the analysis provided in the chapters.

In addition to addressing these five dimensions of culture, the report dedicates a sixth chapter to highlighting the main conclusions and to addressing the theme of the report Culture in the Public Space. Public spaces are defined as those open spaces made available for use by all members of society, while the presence of culture in them is defined to include practicing cultural activities, organizing events, as well as cultural and aesthetic elements that give public space its identity.

The state of culture in the Kingdom was marked by a gradual recovery in 2021. While most of the year was not spared the direct effects of the waves of the Covid-19 pandemic well into the fourth quarter, the availability of vaccines allowed for an incremental opening up in the cultural sector, culminating with allowing for full capacity use at facilities and entertainment and cultural events by Mid-October. This improvement was reflected in the levels of activity and participation in several cultural venues. As chapters of the report show, theatrical and performing art performances rebounded during the year to reach pre-pandemic levels of participation. Similar trends of recovery can be also seen in attendance to art exhibitions and movie theatres. The key indication for rebound was the growth of domestic cultural tourism, whose figure did not merely grow as an outcome of an overall recovery in the tourism sector. The proportion of domestic tourist trips that include cultural activities has grown, supporting the assumption that the demand for culture has risen to levels higher than those enjoyed before the pandemic.

Such signs of recovery are a direct outcome of the easing of exceptional restrictions. Beyond the temporariness of the situation, the year 2020 seems to have left long-term effects, such as the pandemic's stimulation of the availability of the virtual option sometimes in parallel with in-person events. However, the availability of the digital does not substitute for cultural facilities and physical spaces for cultural participation. The data of the report indicate the uneven geographical distribution of such infrastructure. In the midst

of all of these positive indicators showing a broadening of activity and participation, chapters of the report show that there are challenges in widening access to different social groups based on income and education.

The report did not stop at considering the effects of Covid-19. Although the choice of the title "Culture in the Public Space" has to do with tracking indicators of recovery from the pandemic and the return of manifestations of culture to public life, the theme of the report expresses a genuine interest in the spatial dimension of culture due to the vital link of the cultural field to its ability to shape daily life in public spaces. The report supports that there is a relationship between being in open public spaces and cultural participation. The third wave of the Cultural Participation Survey for the year 2021 shows that there is a relationship between the frequency to visit open spaces and the likelihood of cultural participation. In other words, practicing cultural activities increased among those who regularly visit open spaces. The report also reviews various forms of cultural presence in public and open spaces, comparing activities that depend upon interaction among people, place, and culture with those related to the aesthetic and physical dimensions of culture in the form of the place from a digital banner that presents literary content in public places to film experiences that try to reach the various segments of society in open spaces, and to initiatives that give an aesthetic and artistic character to urban spaces, such as the Noor Riyadh initiative and the Arabic Calligraphy initiative.

The cultural field in the Kingdom is still in a dynamic state of continuous organizational development. Several Cultural Commissions' strategies were announced in 2021. Issuance of regulations to raise the level of organization and professionalism of the cultural sector was also active. Some sectors are still in the throes of completing the initial bulwarks of systems and facilities, while some concurrent regulatory developments have begun to bear fruit. This is reflected in the remarkable expansion of opportunities for the support and subsidies for culture and creativity, in the form of grants, art residencies, cultural competitions, incubators, and cultural business accelerators. There is still a long way to establish and develop a strong cultural infrastructure for motivating cultural practitioners and artists to ever-increasing horizons, and provide more opportunities for interaction with culture to all segments of society.



## Management and Conservation



# Management and Conservation

- Arabic Language Service
- Heritage Conservation and Sustainable Management
- Cultural Facilities and Infrastructure
- Empowerment and Organizational Frameworks





This chapter describes the cultural landscape of the Kingdom in all its facets. The main elements highlighted herein include the efforts in the area of cultural preservation, infrastructure, as well as organizational and supportive frameworks. In this chapter, conservation is understood as the entirety of practices of cultural preservation, and documentation and sustainable development of heritage. As for the administrative aspect, it is measured by the availability of cultural facilities and creative spaces, as well as the development of organizational policies and programs to support culture and creativity. There is also a section dedicated to highlighting the institutional efforts in serving the Arabic language.

The progress in 2021 can be tracked through the four elements. There were many major decisions and executive regulations that were issued to organize the cultural and linguistic fields. Significant projects have been announced to develop and sustain the cultural and natural heritage, including the Historic Jeddah Revival Project and the Saudi Green Initiative Project. As regards its international presence, new sites and items in the Kingdom were inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List and Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and a number of Saudi cities have been distinguished in terms of creativity, heritage, and tourism. Although the development of the cultural facilities was limited, one cannot overlook the increase in the number and size of nature reserves, national parks and art complexes. There was also a notable increase across various empowerment initiatives and in the number of corresponding beneficiaries. This substantive uptick is a clear indicator of development in the stimulating and supportive environment of culture and creativity.

## Arabic Language Service

This section is devoted to language service that is understood as simultaneously an incubator for culture, and as an integral part of cultural identity. To this end, in this section, we monitor and review academic research efforts in the field of language and the system of programs and projects related to language and translation. We also measure language teaching indicators for non-native speakers and reviews policies and regulations related to the Arabic language. In 2021, the language field has witnessed a significant advancement this year across two levels: academic production in Arabic language studies and organizational policies.

### The Effectiveness of Scientific Research Activities in the Linguistic Field

#### Conferences and Events

Despite the return of in-person activities, virtual conferences and events continue to dominate quantitative metrics. These included the Third Makkah International Conference on Arabic Language and Literature: The Arabic language and civilized communication, a virtual conference with 13 scientific sessions in which issues of linguistic weakness, Arabization challenges, Arabic literature and criticism, teaching Arabic to native



speakers and others, Arabic language and technology, among other issues.<sup>(1)</sup> The Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission, in cooperation with the Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature, also held a virtual international symposium on Arabic calligraphy, in which nine research papers were presented over two days. The topics of discussion were about the history of Arabic calligraphy, the aesthetics of Arabic calligraphy and its arts, as well as about manuscripts, inscriptions, and

architecture.<sup>(2)</sup> The World Arabic Language Day, which was celebrated on December 18, 2021, was based on the theme "Arabic Language, a Bridge Between Civilizations." Institutions and universities have contributed to celebrating this day through scientific events and fora on the role of language in intercultural communication, both in-person and virtual. Some of the titles presented in these events referred to institutional efforts to preserve the Arabic language.<sup>(3)</sup>

**Table 1:** Models of conferences and scientific seminars specialized in the Arabic language that were held in 2021

Conference or seminar	Type	Organizing entity
Arabic language and digital transformation	In-person International Conference	Endowment for the language of the Qur'an at King Abdulaziz University
The Third Makkah International Conference on Arabic Language and Literature: Arabic Language and Civilizational Communication	Virtual International Conference	The Arabic Language Complex in Makkah, and Knowledge Enrichment for Conferences & Research
International Symposium on Arabic Calligraphy	Virtual International Symposium	The Ministry of Culture in cooperation with the Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature
The Arabic language and the uses of artificial intelligence	Virtual seminar	King Abdulaziz Public Library in cooperation with the Center for Research Excellence in Arabic Language at King Abdulaziz University
The meeting line of the two Holy Revelations	In-person meeting	King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives (Darah)

**Table 2:** Scientific symposia organized by universities in the field of Arabic language during 2021<sup>(4)</sup>

Name of University	Number of Scientific Symposia in the Field of Arabic Language
Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University	15
King Saud University	7
Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University	6
King Abdulaziz University	6
University of Taibah	8
Taif University	6
Tabuk university	5
Hail University	2
Al Qassim university	2
Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University	4
King Khalid University	11
Shaqra University	4
Dar Al-Hekma University	2

### Publications and Academic Research

A survey of research papers published in peer-reviewed journals in the Kingdom during the period of 2019-2021 revealed that a total of 523 research papers in 19 journals were published, including specialized journals in Arabic language and literature and human sciences journals.<sup>(5)</sup> The survey also aimed to monitor research trends and topics in the linguistic field by measuring keywords and subject matter in the abstracts and titles of published research. It is important to note here that a single paper may address one or more topics. The most important results of the survey were the increase in the rate of publication and production related to Arabic language research, with 232 scientific papers published in 2021, as compared to 150 scientific papers in 2020. This increase could have been conditioned by the growing interest of universities in the standards of university ranking and academic quality – of which the production of research and its impact factor are among the most important parameters. It was also noted that there are research topics that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as studying the impact of the pandemic on the language of literature and poetry, and its impact on distance teaching of the Arabic language.

However, these studies are very limited in number; in 2021, only one research paper on the impact of the pandemic on Saudi poetry was published in The Journal of Arab Studies, followed by three further papers on distance learning of the Arabic language in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The issue of language digitization and corpus linguistics has also witnessed a relative decline, as the percentage of scientific papers that discussed this topic amounted to 2.16% of the total papers published in 2021, compared to 5.7% in 2019, and this may be due to the celebration of the World Arabic Language Day in 2019, on the theme "Arabic Language and Artificial Intelligence."

Children's literature, digital literature, translation and Arabization were among the least researched and studied topics in 2019 - 2021. By contrast, the topics of syntax and morphology, Arabic literature, linguistic heritage, and Saudi literature excelled (see Figure 2). Figure 3 shows the extent of the rise and fall in the percentages of published research papers according to the topics, which are generally close in proportion and do not indicate a radical change that can be monitored. The survey also measured the level of international presence of journals, and the rate of international participation as represented by the number contributors from institutions and universities outside the Kingdom. The results showed that three journals issued by the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Center for Planning and Language Policies, as well as the journal issued by the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, are more globally acknowledged than the journals of Saudi universities (see Figure 4).

Figure 1: The number of scientific papers on the Arabic language published in scientific journals in the Kingdom during the 2019–2021 period

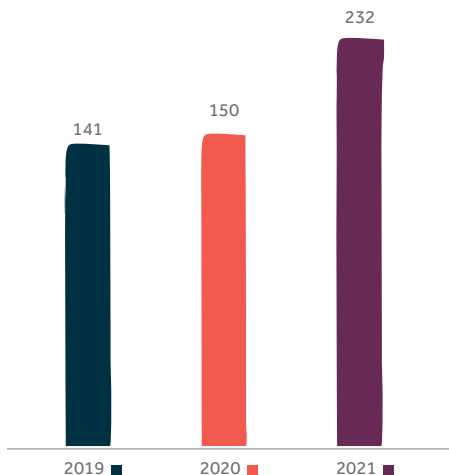


Figure 2: Number of papers published in scientific journals in the Kingdom during the 2019-2021 period, by topic





Figure 3: Percentage distribution of research papers published each year by the topics covered in the years 2019-2021

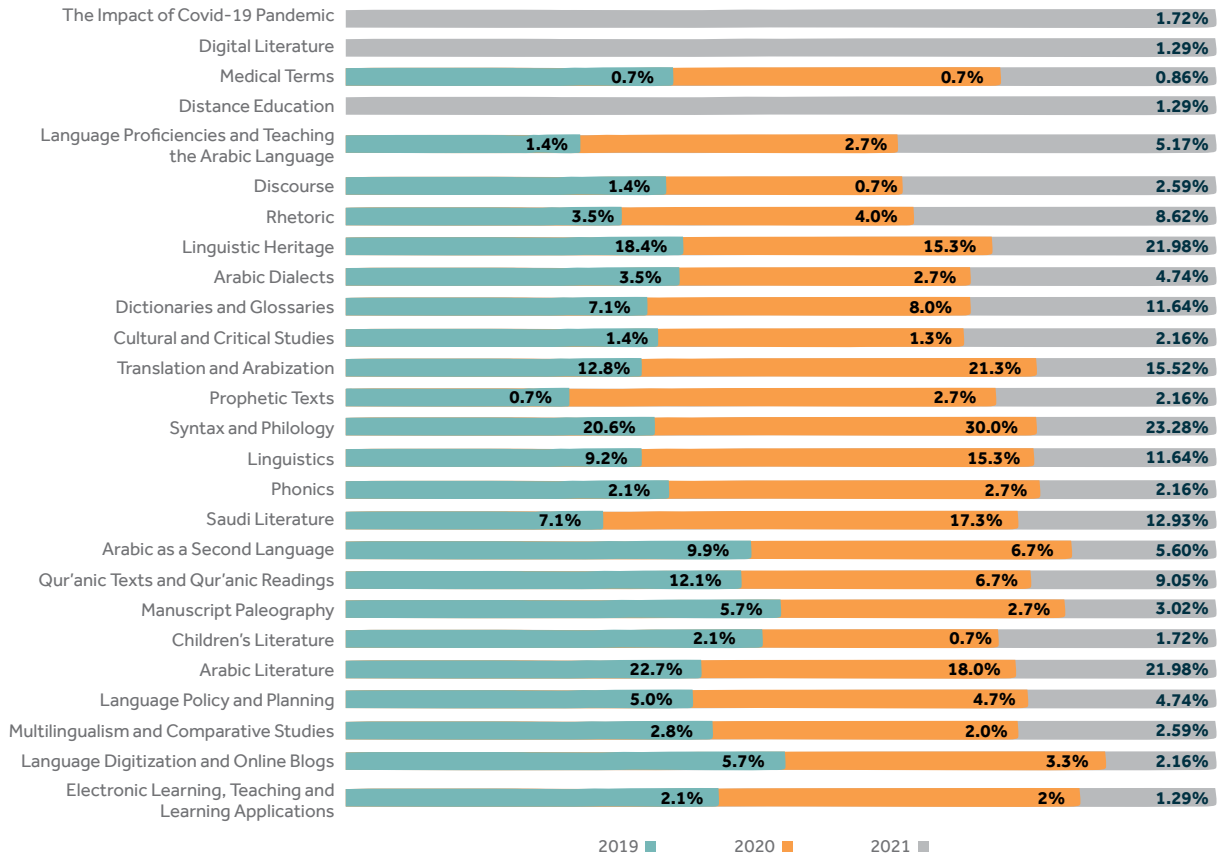
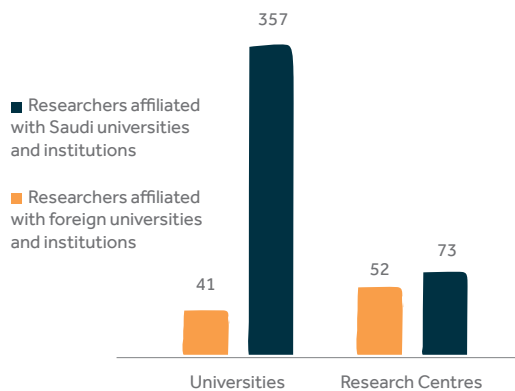


Figure 4: The percentage of international participation in refereed scientific journals in the Kingdom during the 2019-2021 period



International Center for Arabic Language Service—is the most prominent policy and organizational decision related to the Arabic language in 2021. Under this regulation, the Center became specialized in setting national linguistic policies and decisions. The Center is now organizationally linked to the King Salman International Complex for the Arabic Language, to which some of the Center’s specialties have been transferred. The Center also plays the role of reference in building language planning programs, language standards and policies, and working to implement them.<sup>(6)</sup> Specialists believe that the organization of the Center served to fill the gap in the local linguistic field, which required the presence of a competent authority to develop policies and regulations using systematic and methodical means.<sup>(7)</sup>

### Language Policy Updates

The Council of Ministries’ approval of the organization of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Center for Planning and Language Policies—the former King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz

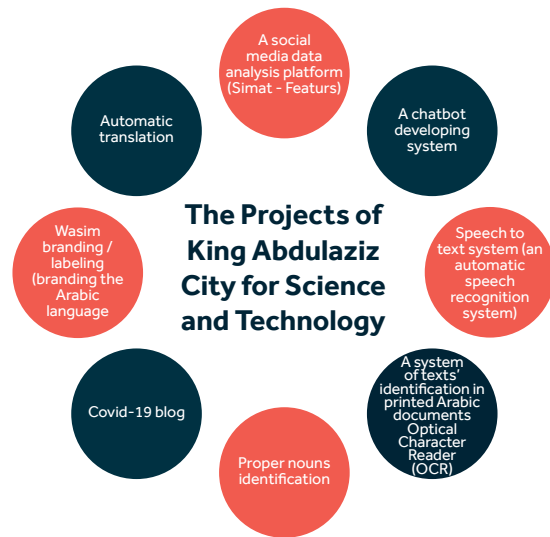
### The System of Language Services, Programs and Projects

Despite the rapid growth of technological developments, there were few major developments in technical projects related to the Arabic language during 2021, with the exception of some

partnerships between language institutions and centers and technology companies, which may indicate future growth. These partnerships include a memorandum of understanding between the King Salman International Complex for the Arabic Language and the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority (SDAIA)<sup>(8)</sup>, and another with THIQAH Company<sup>(9)</sup> to cooperate in the areas of artificial intelligence to serve the language and to develop tools, technologies and data related to the Arabic language. The Complex is expected to start working on a number of language projects during 2022, including: "Arabic and Computing" and "Contemporary Arabic Language Corpus," which are projects that the Complex completed this year in planning.<sup>(10)</sup> The King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) has eight active technical projects in the field of the Arabic language and is subject to continuous development and revision (see Figure 5).<sup>(11)</sup> The previous issue of the Report on the State of Culture referred to the challenges faced by language technological projects, including low investment and limited direct returns in this field.<sup>(12)</sup>

The linguistic field is looking forward to new projects aimed at serving the Arabic language in several fields, including, among others, education and training, translation and Arabization projects. The Ministry of Culture inaugurated the strategy of the Prince Mohammed bin Salman International Center for Arabic Calligraphy (Dar Al-Qalam) at the closing ceremony of the initiative of the 2021 Year of Arabic Calligraphy. And announced ten major programs for the Center, including research, archiving, education, the permanent Museum of Arabic Calligraphy, and other programs.<sup>(13)</sup>

Figure 5: Active technological projects related to the Arabic language at the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology



**Translation Projects**

The most prominent institutional project in the translation sector in 2021 was the Tarjim Initiative, which was launched by the Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission in 2020. This initiative included a project for translating academic journals and a translation grant project for Saudi publishing houses. The initiative resulted in the translation of 336 different works from and into Arabic.<sup>(14)</sup> Saudi universities also contributed to enriching Arabic content through translation and Arabization centers. For example, the Saudi





Centre for Digital Content of the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives (Darrah), cooperated with the departments of languages and translation in universities through the “ Wiki-Downen” project to translate articles in the free international encyclopedia (Wikipedia). Starting with the translation of 317 articles by Taibah University<sup>(15)</sup> during 2021, a total of 50 scientific and medical articles were translated for the project in cooperation with King Khalid University<sup>(16)</sup>, and 31 further articles were translated in cooperation with Jeddah University.<sup>(17)</sup> It should be noted that there are approximately 24 translation and Arabization centers, or units, at Saudi universities,<sup>(18)</sup> the most recent of which was the Translation and Arabization Center at Umm Al-Qura University.<sup>(19)</sup>

The publication of glossaries and dictionaries is no less important than translating texts, as they are important references for translators, contribute to enriching specialized Arabic content, and establish and unify Arabic terminology. In 2021, several bilingual, multilingual, and monolingual glossaries and dictionaries were published. Most noteworthy examples include the publication of the electronic glossary of technical terms prepared by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, to which a thousand technical terms were added during 2021, as well as the Arabic dictionary of intellectual property issued by the Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property, which contains 250 terms on intellectual property both in Arabic and English.<sup>(20)</sup>

**Table 3:** Examples of translation projects and initiatives during 2021

Project or initiative	Type	Organizing entity
“Tarjim” initiative: Academic journal translation project <sup>(21)</sup>	Project	Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission
“Madd” to translate books <sup>(22)</sup>	Project	Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature in cooperation with Ithra
Book translation <sup>(23)</sup>	Initiative	King Saud University with the support of the Ministry of Education (institutional funding)
Athra project for translating books, second and third editions <sup>(24)</sup>	Project	Athra
Translation Forum <sup>(25)</sup>	Forum	Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission
Mobin initiative to enrich Arabic language content on Wikipedia <sup>(26)</sup>	Competition	Endowment for the language of the Qur’an at King Abdulaziz University
The translation ambassadors track in the seventh session of iRead competition <sup>(27)</sup>	Competition	King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture Ithra
Translation competition between universities in the Kingdom <sup>(28)</sup>	Competition	Prince Sultan University

**Table 4:** Titles of glossaries and dictionaries published during 2021

Glossary or dictionary title	Publisher
Glossary of terms: English-Arabic	Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu
(Technical glossary (electronic glossary	Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
Arabic Dictionary of Intellectual Property: In both Arabic and English	Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property
Glossary of linguistic terms: Arabic – English – Farsi	King Saud University Publishing House
Glossary of ISO specification terms: Arabic - English - French – Spanish	Dar Al-Ashab for Publishing and Distribution
Children’s literature glossary	Kadi and Ramadi Publishing House
Security Dictionary	Tawba Library
Dictionary of human resources, finance and business	Tashkeel Publishing House

### Arabic Language Institutes for Non-Native Speakers

One of the most prominent developments that occurred during 2021 in the field of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers was the launch of the project Academic Accreditation for Arabic Language Teaching Centers and Programs for Non-Native Speakers. Through this project, the National Center for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation (NCAAA) in the Education and Training Evaluation Commission will start providing institutional and program accreditation for these centers, with a view to achieving quality standards in teaching Arabic.<sup>(29)</sup> There are 16 institutes and units in the Kingdom's universities for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers,<sup>(30)</sup> and five institutes outside the Kingdom are affiliated with the Imam Mohammad Bin Saud Islamic University.<sup>(31)</sup> In addition to the Arabic for All program based in Riyadh, a new addition to these institutes was the opening of the Al-Ula Languages Institute in November, which provides training in five languages, including Arabic for non-native speakers (see Figure 6).<sup>(32)</sup>

Figure 6: Number of institutes and programs for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers in the Kingdom <sup>(33)</sup>

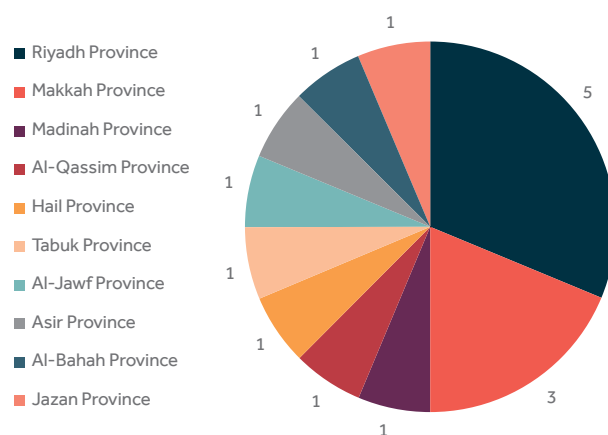


Table 5: Number of students enrolled in institutes of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers in some universities in the year 2021 <sup>(34)</sup>

The University	Number of institutes or units for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers	Number of students enrolled
Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University	6	2598 <sup>(35)</sup>
Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University	1	106
King Abdulaziz University	1	24
Al Qassim university	1	331
Saudi Electronic University	Arabic online program	3600
Tabuk university	1	135
Al-Jawf University	1	33

## Heritage Conservation and Sustainable Management

### Documentation and Inventory Lists

The year 2021 was marked by the development in the practices of documenting and inventorying heritage in the Kingdom, which stemmed from the institutional arrangements that began with the establishment of the Heritage Commission in 2020, followed by the subsequent approval of the organization of the Commission's authority in 2021. Thus, the Commission organizes and manages national records of antiquities, urban heritage, and industrial heritage as a part of continuous efforts of inventory and

documentation. One of the results of this progress has been the trend towards centralization in documenting heritage elements at the national level, although other institutions concerned with heritage are also continuing their efforts in coordination with the Ministry of Culture through projects and initiatives for archiving and documenting intangible cultural heritage.

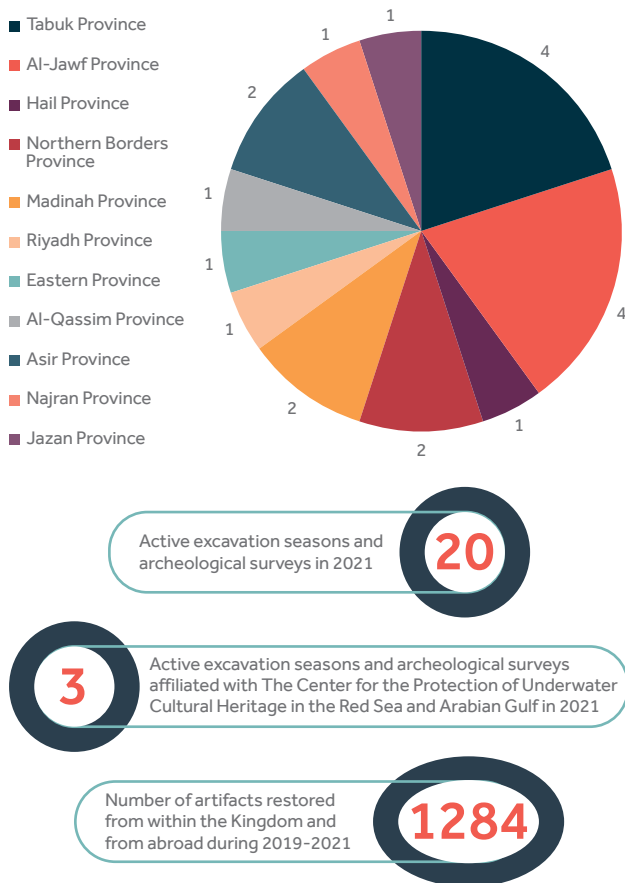
### Excavations, Archaeological Surveys and Discoveries

The number of surveys, excavations, and archaeological discoveries in 2021 reflects the growing interests in the antiquities sector and the cultural heritage sectors in general. During 2021, six important archaeological discoveries were announced, five of which were located in the north of the Kingdom and one in the Madinah Province. The first of these

was the discovery of archaeological sites in Al-Naseem, Al-Nafud Desert, Hail Province - the first dated Acheulean site in the Kingdom, which is more than 350,000 years old, and there is environmental evidence indicating the presence of a lake and deep fresh water in the region. This discovery was made in cooperation between the Heritage Commission and the German Max Planck Institute within the "Green Arabia" project.<sup>(36)</sup> In Hail Province, rock inscriptions dating back to the sixth century BC which belong to the Babylonian King Nabonidus were also discovered. A Sumerian text containing approximately 26 lines was found, consisting of the longest written text discovered in the Kingdom so far.<sup>(37)</sup> The Commission also announced that some antiquities and fossils which were more than 7,000 years old had been found in the Umm Jirsan Cave in Harrat Khaybar in Madinah.<sup>(38)</sup> The latest archaeological discoveries announced in 2021 were made at the Qariyya site in Tabuk Province, which is one of the largest documented settlements in the Arabian Peninsula, and its history - according to the latest excavations at the site - dates back to the Early Bronze Age.<sup>(39)</sup> Two scientific papers

were also published in September 2021, the first of which identified five human migrations from Africa to the Arabian Peninsula, which began approximately 400,000 years ago, according to recent archaeological discoveries in the north of the Kingdom.<sup>(40)</sup> The other study argued that the Camel Site in Al-Jawf Province is one of the oldest sites in the world of carvings of real-size models of animals.<sup>(41)</sup> In 2021, the number of archaeological survey missions and excavation seasons reached 20 projects, compared to 13 missions in 2020.<sup>(42)</sup> Of note, 55% of the active missions in 2021 were concentrated in the northern regions of the Kingdom (see Figure 7), which explains the increase in archaeological discoveries in the north of the Kingdom as compared to the rest of the regions. The Center for the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage in the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf has completed three projects in the regions of Madinah and Tabuk,<sup>(43)</sup> which are the first surveys and excavation projects for the Center since the Heritage Commission that announced its establishment in 2020.<sup>(44)</sup>

**Figure 7: Archaeological survey projects and active excavation seasons during 2021<sup>(45)</sup>**



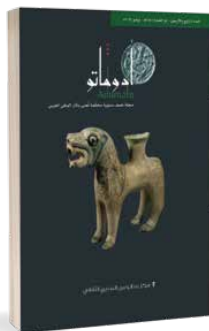
**Heritage-Related Research and Knowledge Production**

Despite the active contribution of universities and institutions involved in the study of heritage to the scientific and knowledge production on the archeology and heritage of the Kingdom, the specialized journals in the field of heritage are limited in number as compared to the number of centers, institutions and research chairs in the same field. This year, the 43rd issue of the Adumatu Journal, one of the scientific journals specialized in studying the antiquities of the Arab world, was published by the Abdulrahman Al-Sudairy Cultural Center. The first issue of this journal appeared in in 2000. The publication of the Al-Darah Refereed Journal was also continued by the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives (Darah), which is concerned with publishing scientific research on the heritage and history of the Kingdom, and the heritage of the Arab and Islamic world. In 2021, the Al-Darah journal was included in the Arab Citations Index (ARCI), which enhances the journal's presence in the global research community.<sup>(46)</sup> On the other hand, the publication of ATLAL, the Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology, stopped last year, and the Heritage Commission made electronic copies of its 30 issues available on the Commission's website.<sup>(47)</sup>



**Table 6:** Examples of the most prominent scientific conferences and seminars specialized in heritage and natural heritage for the year 2021

Conference or seminar	Type	Organizing entity
Archaeological finds <sup>(48)</sup>	Forum (Virtual)	Heritage Commission
Mosque: Innovation in Object, Form and Function <sup>(49)</sup>	In-person International Conference	King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra) in cooperation with the Abdullatif Al Fozan Award for Mosque Architecture
The use of artificial intelligence in archeology and the development of human history <sup>(50)</sup>	Seminar (virtual)	King Abdulaziz Foundation
Tapline: The developmental and cultural dimension <sup>(51)</sup>	Seminar (virtual)	Dar Al Uloom Library in cooperation with the Heritage Commission
The Ninth International Symposium on the Studies of the History of the Arabian Peninsula <sup>(52)</sup>	International Symposium (both in-person and virtual)	King Salman Center for Studies of History of Arabian Peninsula
The Environment and Biodiversity in the Red Sea <sup>(53)</sup>	Conference (virtual)	Tabuk University in cooperation with the Saudi Biological Society
Rooting the historical culture (Al-Sadu and Al-Ardah) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia <sup>(54)</sup>	Seminar (in-person)	Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University



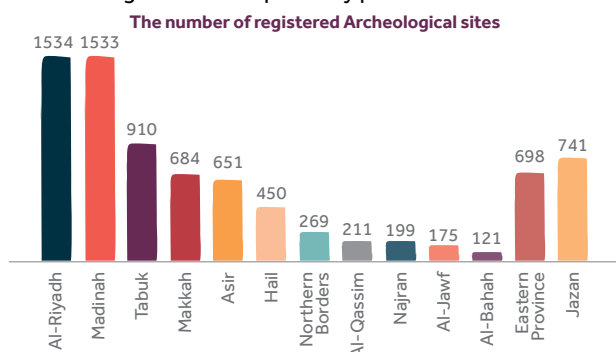


### National Heritage Lists

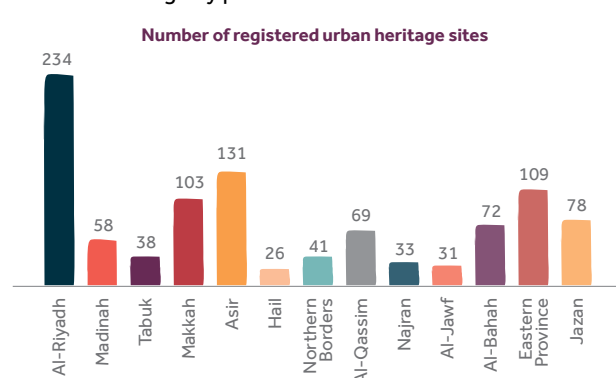
As part of continued institutional efforts to document heritage sites, 2021 was the year of the organization of various national heritage records, of which notable examples include the National Register of Antiquities to inventory and register antiquities in their three classifications (movable and immovable monuments, historical sites, and folklore sites); the National Register of Urban Heritage that records everything related to urban heritage, including sites and buildings, documenting, protecting, following up and managing the urban heritage resources in the Kingdom; the National Register of Industrial Heritage, which is a relatively recent heritage. The Heritage Commission identified four criteria for its selection: historical, quantitative, value, and technical.<sup>(55)</sup> While there was no significant increase in the registered items in 2021, the Commission is working on listing the locations and items first. For example, 73 sites were selected for registration in the National Register of Industrial Heritage<sup>(56)</sup>, and the Tapline was registered as the first industrial heritage site.<sup>(57)</sup> The registered sites until 2021 are: 8176 archaeological sites in the National Register of Antiquities<sup>(58)</sup>, and 1,023 in the National Register of Urban Heritage.<sup>(59)</sup>



**Figure 8:** Number of archaeological sites registered in the National Register of Antiquities by province<sup>(60)</sup>



**Figure 9:** Number of sites registered in the National Register of Urban Heritage by province<sup>(61)</sup>



### International Heritage Lists

In 2021, new sites and elements were registered in the UNESCO Heritage List. A most notable of such registrations was that of Farasan Island as the first Saudi reserve to be registered in the Man and the Biosphere Program MAB, within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.<sup>(62)</sup> The Man and the Biosphere Program was established in 1971 and includes 727 protected areas around the world so far. These reserves seek to improve the interaction between humans and the environment and constitute important models for balance, environmental diversity and sustainable development.<sup>(63)</sup> The Hema cultural site in the Najran Province was also inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, thus making it the sixth Saudi site in the list.<sup>(64)</sup> The third of these lists is the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, on which the city of Buraydah was inscribed in the field of gastronomy art,<sup>(65)</sup> and was preceded by the city of Al-Ahsa in 2015 in the field of crafts and folklore.<sup>(66)</sup> This network was established in 2004 to extend bridges of cooperation between cities that are inspired by creativity as an important source of sustainable development, through seven creative areas: crafts, folk art, design, film, gastronomy, literature, media arts, and music.<sup>(67)</sup> At the end of the year, Arabic calligraphy was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in a joint file with 15 Arab countries and led by the Kingdom,<sup>(68)</sup> bringing the total number of Saudi elements in the List to nine, three of which were registered by the Kingdom individually, namely, Al-Qatt Al-Asiri art, Al-Mizmar dancing and Ardah.

Figure 10: Saudi sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List<sup>(69)</sup>

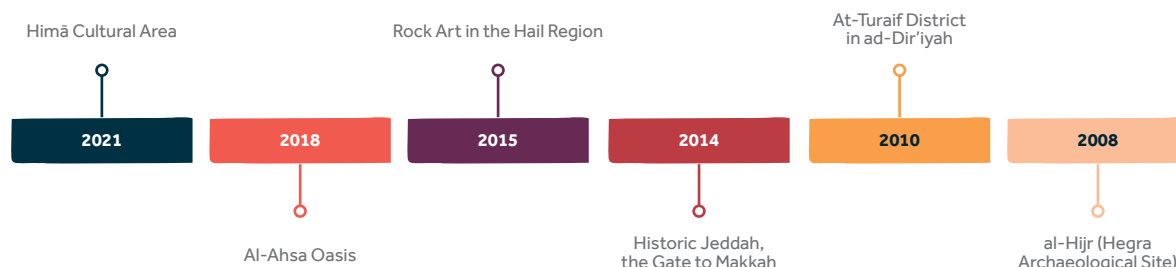


Table 7: Ethnic elements registered in UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity<sup>(70)</sup>

Item	Year	Nations registered
Arabic calligraphy <sup>(71)</sup>	2021	Saudi Arabia in partnership with Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Sudan, Tunis, the Emirates, and Yemen
Traditional weaving of Al Sadu	2020	Saudi Arabia in partnership with Kuwait
Date Palm	2019	Saudi Arabia in partnership with Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Sudan, Tunis, the Emirates, and Yemen
Al-Qatt Al-Asiri	2017	Saudi Arabia
Almezmar, drumming and dancing with sticks	2016	Saudi Arabia
Alardah Alnajdiyah, dance, drumming, and poetry in Saudi Arabia	2015	Saudi Arabia
Arabic coffee	2015	Saudi Arabia in partnership with the Emirates, Oman and Qatar
Majlis, a cultural and social space	2015	Saudi Arabia in partnership with the Emirates, Oman and Qatar
Falconry	2010 <sup>(72)</sup>	Saudi Arabia in partnership with Germany, Austria, Belgium, the Emirates, Spain, France, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Mongolia, Pakistan, Portugal, Qatar, Syria, Korea, and the Czech Republic

**Documenting Cultural Heritage**

Driven by the interest in the documentation of intangible cultural heritage in the Kingdom, in 2021, numerous heritage-related institutions have launched new initiatives; similarly, the scope of sectors has also widened to cover documentation of musical and performance arts heritage. For example, the Diriyah Gate Development Authority launched “The Oral History of the Saudi Ardah” as part of the Diriyah Oral History Documentation Project. Since the beginning of this project in 2020, more than 200 hours of video and audio have been recorded <sup>(73)</sup>. The Music Commission, the Theater and Performing Arts Commission and the Heritage Commission - in cooperation with the Saudi Heritage Preservation Society (We Are Our Heritage) - are working on several projects to list and document heritage, including the art of Majrur in Hejaz (folk dance and music),

as well as documenting the different kinds of folk music and performing arts in the region of Asir. The Society is also working - in cooperation with the Heritage Commission - on the preparation of files for nominating Khawlani coffee, as well as the Camel Hida (the singing of camel herders to their flocks) to be inscribed on the UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity List<sup>(74)</sup>. On the academic institutional level, work continues on the “Oral Heritage Preservation” project at Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University, of which the first stage began in 2019, with the aim of collecting, recording and documenting narrated and oral folk tales. Collection, registration, and classification forms were approved during this stage for the year 2021<sup>(75)</sup>. In 2021, there were also new documentary publications, including the Music Commission’s publication of a booklet entitled “Saudi Melodies” containing 22 melodies and

harmonies from well-known Saudi songs.<sup>(76)</sup> The King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives (Darrah) continues to work on the digital version of The National Historical Atlas of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the translation of the Dictionary of Literature and Writers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia into English. Its first edition was published in 2013.<sup>(77)</sup> Also, the Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission announced, at year end, the project of developing “The Encyclopedia of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia” in cooperation with the King Abdulaziz Public Library. The Commission is set to develop the encyclopedia’s website and produce two thousand printed copies of it after the update.<sup>(78)</sup>

### Archiving Creative Production

The Theater and Performing Arts Commission is working on “The Theatre Archive” project, which aims to archive plays and drama studies related to Saudi theater. To date, a total of 74 plays have been archived in written form; in addition, the archive also contains visual displays and photographs of some of the plays.<sup>(79)</sup> In June 2021, the Misk Art Institute announced the initiative - “The Art Library” - for issuing a series of books, an average of four books annually, each of which reviews art works by Saudi and Arab artists, and also contains articles and artistic reviews. The library aims to be a historical record of art.<sup>(80)</sup> Specialists believe that institutional efforts to archive Saudi creative production remain limited, referring to some initiatives related to archiving creative arts in the Kingdom, as they look forward to these initiatives developing and turning into national registries soon.<sup>(81)</sup> The first national archive for creative audiovisual production, the National Film Archive, was announced in the Film Commission’s strategy to develop the film sector in the Kingdom, which was launched at the end of 2021.<sup>(82)</sup> The National Film Archive aims to preserve, digitize and catalog Saudi film production as part of an effort to protect and preserve the country’s audiovisual heritage.

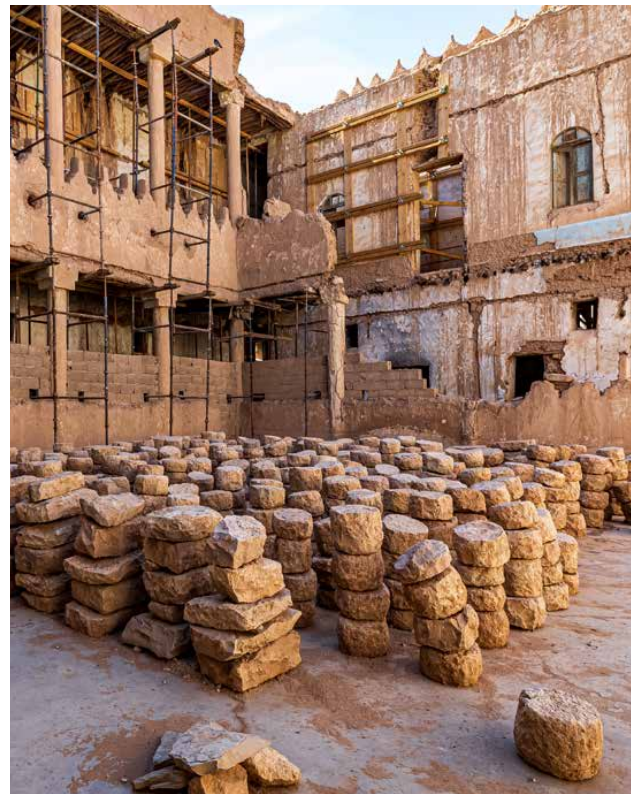
## Protection and Sustainable Management

Along with preservation and documentation practices, the conservation of heritage also includes efforts for the sustainable management of heritage resources and their contribution to growth and development. The importance of linking heritage to sustainable development lies in twofold: The sustainability of heritage is, in essence, a goal that demands the protection of heritage and its transmission to future generations; It is also a means through which the contribution of heritage to sustainable development is realized.<sup>(83)</sup> By means of these two principles, the chapter

measures the number of protected archaeological sites, heritage sites and natural parks open for visitors, as well as the percentage increase in tourist visits to these places in 2021. However, the most notable development was the increase in the percentage of protected areas in the Kingdom, which approaches that of the international commitment set by the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity.

### Protecting Natural and Cultural Heritage

To date, there are now a total number of 1700<sup>(84)</sup> protected archaeological sites in the Kingdom; all these sites are supervised by the Heritage Commission under the amendment issued in 2021 to the Law of Antiquities, Museums and Urban Heritage.<sup>(85)</sup> As part of the joint effort to protect heritage and develop the natural and cultural environment in sites of heritage significance, the Royal Commission for Al-Ula and UNESCO signed a partnership agreement that extends for the next five years. The agreement aims to enhance joint cooperation and strives to achieve sustainable growth, developing Al-Ula’s natural and cultural environment in such a way as to make it the “largest live museum in the world.” It is expected that through this partnership, many initiatives and projects will be launched in the realms of heritage protection and documentation, education, nature, and the creative arts.<sup>(86)</sup>





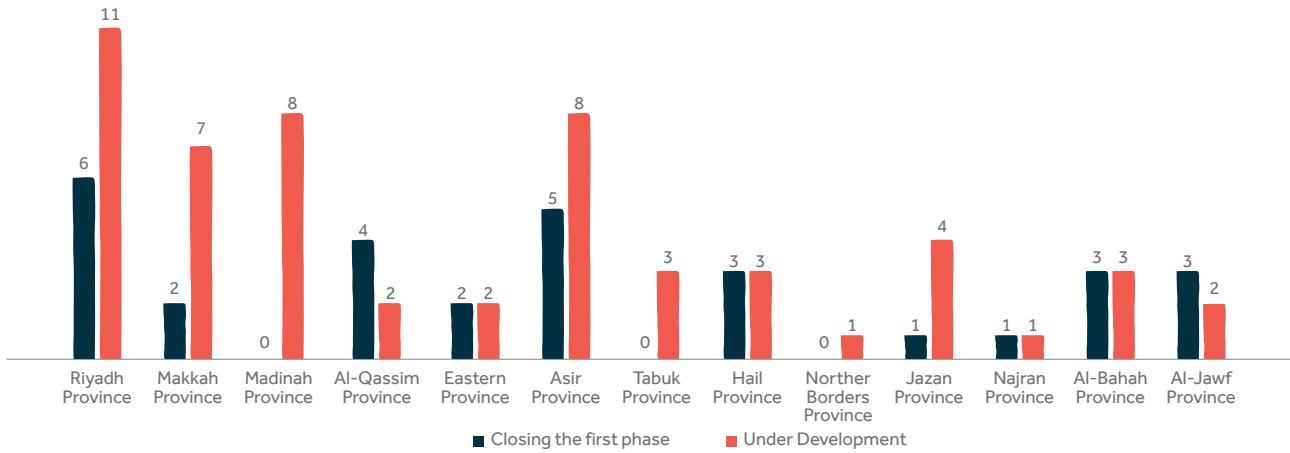
**Sustainable Management of Cultural Heritage**

Following an initiative launched by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) during the Tourism Revitalization Summit convened in Riyadh in May 2021, Rijal Alma'a Village was added to the "List of Best Tourism Villages, which made it emerge as one of the most important tourist heritage areas.<sup>(87)</sup> In its first edition, the list includes 44 tourist villages chosen from among 174 villages registered. These villages have been chosen pursuant to nine evaluation criteria, including preservation of cultural assets and tourism-sustained growth.<sup>(88)</sup>

The government institutions concerned with heritage preservation and management, particularly the Heritage Commission, work on restoring and rehabilitating archaeological and heritage sites, then preparing them for tourism and visitation, in an effective cycle that achieves heritage preservation and investment in sustainable development. In 2021, the number of heritage sites open for visitation within the Kingdom's various areas has reached 110<sup>(89)</sup>, including forts, palaces, archaeological sites and historical mosques. It is worth mentioning that a whole

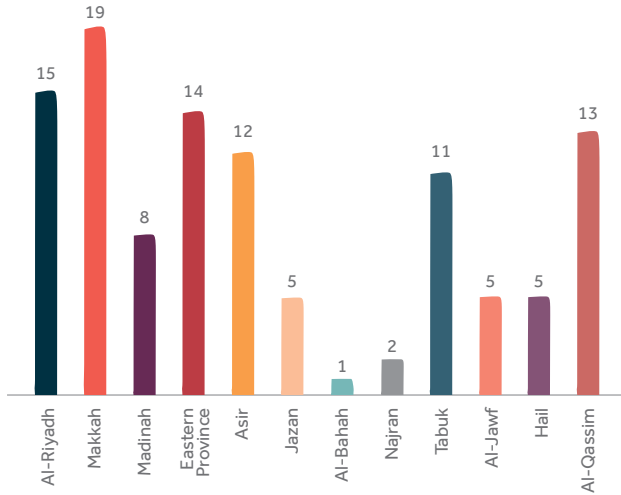
archaeological area might be classified and registered as one site. The heritage sites in an area will be counted as a single site, despite the existence of numerous sites for visitation within that area. Work has also begun on ten projects to preserve and restore a number of heritage sites and areas during 2021, including the "Structural Strengthening of a Number of Dilapidated Buildings" project and the "Framework Agreement for Urgent Intervention to Protect Heritage Buildings," both of which include a number of sites. The rehabilitation and restoration of thirty mosques was completed within the Prince Mohammed bin Salman Project for the Development of Historical Mosques, which began in 2018, with the first phase completed in early 2020.<sup>(90)</sup> In 2022, work was planned to begin on 11 new projects during the coming year.<sup>(91)</sup> However, the most notable sustainable heritage site development project is the "Historic Jeddah Revival" project, announced by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Defense, in September 2012, aimed at restoring historical heritage sites and investing in the cultural value of historic Jeddah in order to attract tourists, artists and entrepreneurs.<sup>(92)</sup>

**Figure 11: The progress of Prince Mohammed bin Salman's project to develop historical mosques in 2021<sup>(93)</sup>**



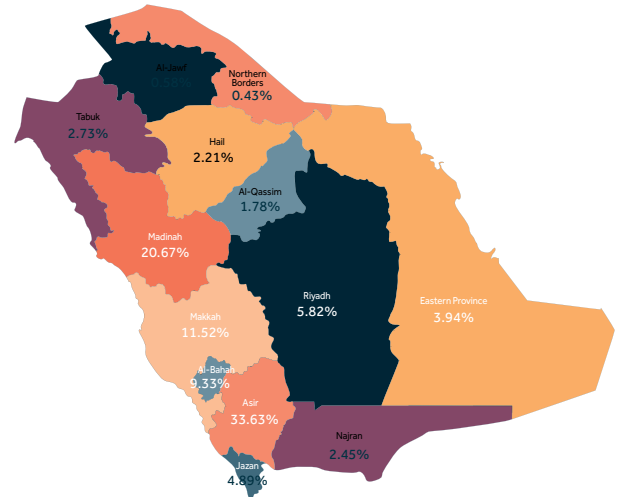


**Figure 12:** Number of heritage and archaeological sites open for visitation and their distribution by province<sup>(94)</sup>



While the chapter “Cultural Participation” discuss in detail the indicators of cultural tourism - comparing the various trips with cultural activities, it is important to point out here that these percentages measure the level of sustainable development for the various heritage sites in the Kingdom. From January to the end of October 2021, domestic tourism trips with heritage-related cultural activities (i.e., trips to antiquities sites, forts, and archaeological and historical areas) increased to 9.4% as compared with 5.9% in 2019.<sup>(95)</sup> Unsurprisingly, the destination of 33.63% of these trips, the largest percentage in the Kingdom, was the Asir Province, followed by Madinah Province, then Makkah with a 20.67% and 11.52% respectively<sup>(96)</sup>, though the greatest number of heritage sites open for visitation are registered in Makkah Province, while Asir Province comes in fifth and Madinah seventh, as illustrated in Figure 12.

**Figure 13:** Percentage of domestic tourism trips that included heritage-related activities in 2021 (during the period from January until October)<sup>(97)</sup>



**Sustainable Management of Natural Heritage**

The most notable environmental initiative in 2021 was the “Saudi Green” initiative announced by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman in March 2021. This initiative aimed at combating climate change and developing ground vegetation by planting 10 billion trees and increasing the percentage of protected areas within the Kingdom to more than 20%.<sup>(98)</sup> The year also witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the National Center for Vegetation Cover through the Center’s Vegetation Development Foundation (Murouj) together with the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority (SDAIA). One of its main objectives was to provide the SDAIA’s Ihsan platform for the display of forestation and vegetation campaigns.<sup>(99)</sup> The importance of the memorandum lies in the expansion



of digital infrastructure investment in order to protect and sustain natural heritage.

Furthermore, after the adoption of the Executive Regulation for the Protected Areas of the Environment Law, the natural heritage sector recorded an increase in the number and area of reserves, as well as the organization of the powers of the National Center for Wildlife, with the number of protected areas in the Kingdom amounting to 22, for a total area of 322,481.58 km<sup>2</sup>, compared to 85,393.45 km<sup>2</sup> in 2020.<sup>(100)</sup> The National Center for Wildlife supervises ten of these, while the remaining twelve reserves fall under the management and organization of the Council of Royal Reserves and the Royal Commission for Al-Ula<sup>(101)</sup>. This increase in the number and area of protected areas is deeply significant given that it reflects the strides made in the realm of preservation and sustainable development – the percentage of protected areas increased throughout the Kingdom in 2021 to 15.56<sup>(102)</sup>, bringing the Kingdom close to achieving the goal of “protecting 17% of terrestrial and inland water”, a commitment it made in the Convention on Biological Diversity of 2001.<sup>(103)</sup> This percentage also exceeded the global average for protected areas, which is 14.6%.

Figure 14: Percentage of protected areas in select countries<sup>(104)</sup>

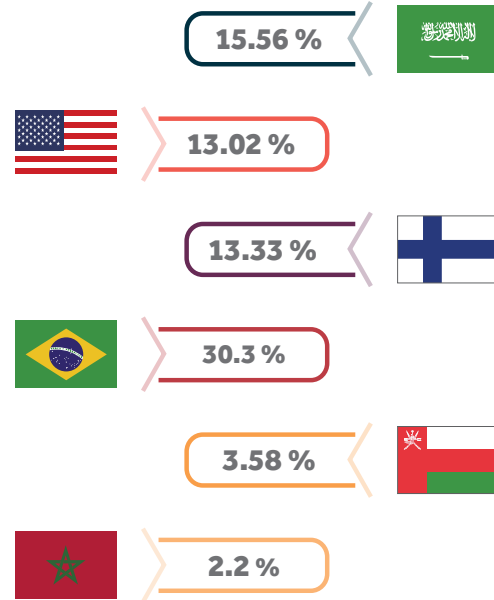


Table 8: Number and area of reserves in the Kingdom in 2021<sup>(105)</sup>

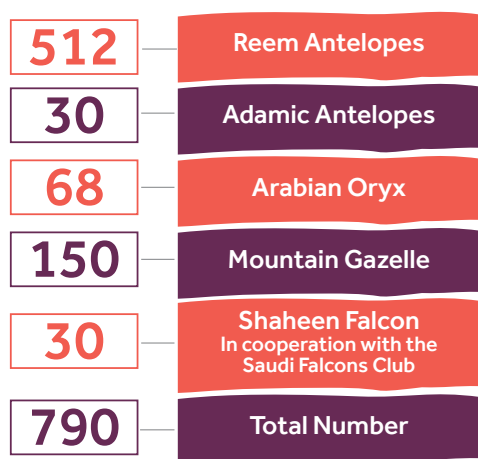
Reserves	Number	Terrestrial Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Marine Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Total in km <sup>2</sup>	% of Total Area of the Kingdom
National Wildlife Center Reserves	10	26,276.55	7,433.03	33,709.58	1.50%
Royal Reserves	7	272,322	3,875	276,197	12.32%
Reserves of the Royal Commission for Al-Ula Governorate	5	12,575	-	12,575	0.56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>311,173.55</b>	<b>11,308.03</b>	<b>322,481.58</b>	<b>14.38%</b>



**Table 9:** Number and area of proposed reserves under the National Wildlife Center<sup>(106)</sup>

Type	Number of Reserves	Total Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Percentage of Total Terrestrial Area of KSA	% of the Kingdom's Economic Marine Area
Protected Terrestrial Areas	13	66,214	3.3107%	-
Protected Marine Areas	9	40,947	-	16.9091%

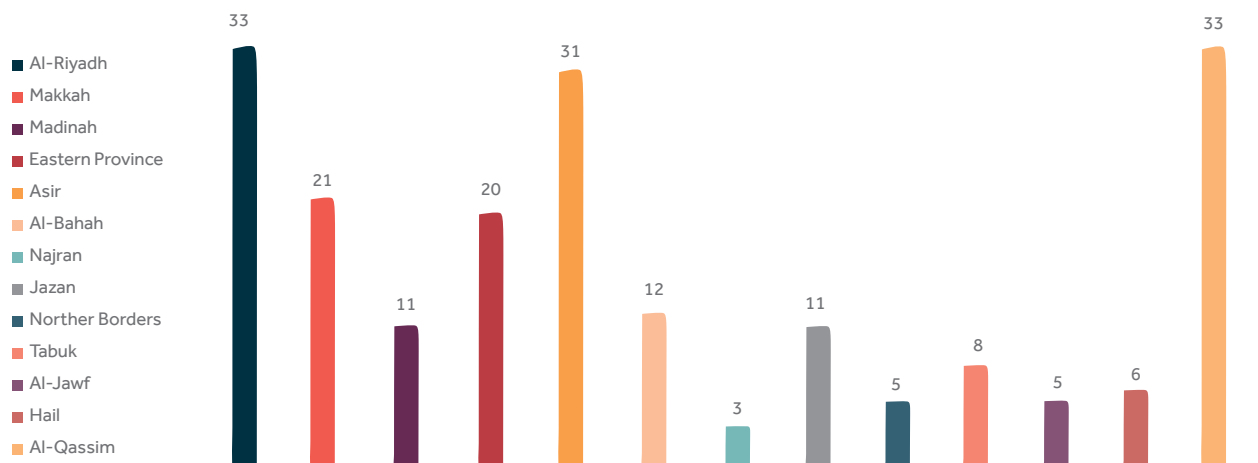
**Figure 15:** Reintroduced wildlife within the National Program for wildlife reintroduction<sup>(107)</sup>



Furthermore, the National Center for Vegetation Cover works towards increasing the number of national parks, wild areas and forests in the Kingdom, to develop, invest, and sustain them, and to encourage ecotourism in them, as stipulated in the Environment Law issued by Royal Decree in 1441 AH/2020.<sup>(108)</sup> As a result, the number of national parks

increased to 199 in 2021, with Riyadh Province, Al-Qassim and Asir leading the Kingdom's other regions in terms of the number of national parks. Al-Qassim Province is also well known ever since Ghada Parks in Unaizah made the Guinness World Records as the largest saxaul botanical garden in the world.<sup>(109)</sup>

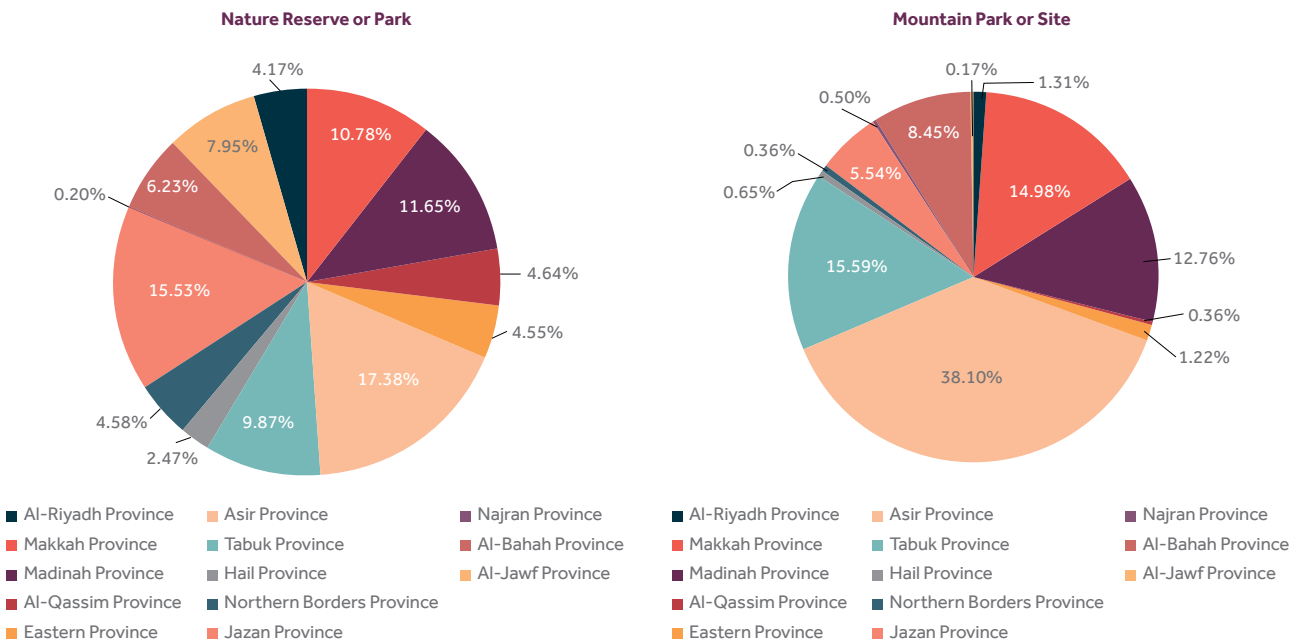
**Figure 16:** Number of national parks in areas of the Kingdom<sup>(110)</sup>



From January to October 2021, the percentage of domestic tourism trips that included a visit to a reserve or a natural park of total domestic tourism trips reached 1.7%, while the proportion of domestic tourist trips with visits to mountain area and resort amounted to 3.4 % of total domestic tourism trips, which showed an upward increase in the percentage of domestic tourist trips that included visits to reserves, natural parks, or mountain areas for the year 2019, amounting to 0.7% and 2.5% respectively.<sup>(111)</sup> The remaining restrictions on international travel as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

may be a reason for the increase in these percentages due to the rise in domestic tourism numbers in general. It can be also attributed to the growing interest in developing parks and reserves and investing them in ecotourism, and to the efforts of the Tourism Development Fund approved by the Council of Ministries in 2020.<sup>(112)</sup> Whereas the provinces of Asir, Jazan, and Madinah were the primary destinations for domestic tourists visiting reserves and nature parks (see Figure 17). Asir, Tabuk and Makkah had higher percentages of visitors to mountainous areas and park (see Figure18).

Figures 17 and 18: Percentage of domestic tourism trips with a visit to nature reserves, parks or mountain areas and resorts of the total domestic tourism trips (during the period from January 2021 to October 2021)<sup>(113)</sup>



## Cultural Facilities and Infrastructure

Various cultural sectors are based on an infrastructure that enables the practice and production of culture, including various cultural facilities and creative complexes. In 2021, with the exception of the opening of a number of cinemas and private museums, the developments of cultural facilities remained limited, with some art galleries even being forced to close due to pandemic-related challenges. On the other hand, 2021 saw the opening of two pioneering creative complexes were opened during the year: Jax District in Diriyah, and Hayy Jameel in Jeddah. Some cultural commissions that launched their strategic plans this year also pointed to the issue of limited infrastructure and

proposed several initiatives to improve these facilities in the near future.

### Multipurpose Cultural Centers

Cultural centers are defined as entities premised on the spread and development of culture, art, and creatives. They include a plethora of cultural facilities, such as libraries, museums, and even theaters.<sup>(114)</sup> As compared to the number of cultural facilities such as libraries and museums, the amount of cultural centers and their distribution in the regions of the Kingdom remain limited. However, these cultural centers play an important role in organizing cultural activities and events.



Table 10: Examples of multipurpose cultural centers in the Kingdom

Center	City
King Fahd Cultural Center	Riyadh
The Culture Palace	Riyadh
Hamad Al-Jaser Cultural Center	Riyadh
Saud Al-Babtain Charitable Center for Heritage and Culture	Riyadh
King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies	Riyadh
Dar Al-Rahmaniyah	Al Ghat
King Abdulaziz Cultural Center	Jeddah
King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra)	Dhahran
Madinah Cultural Center	Madinah
Maraya	Al-Ula
King Khaled Urban Center	Buraydah
The Buraydah Cultural Center	Buraydah
Prince Sultan Urban Center	Al-Mudhannab
Saleh Bin Saleh Social Center	Unaizah
King Fahd Cultural Center	Al-Muftaha
King Abdulaziz Urban Center	Al-Bahah
The Cultural Center in Jazan	Jazan
The Najran Cultural Center	Najran
Prince Sultan Urban Center	Tabuk
Abdulrahman Al-Sudairy Cultural Center	Sakaka
King Abdullah Cultural Center	Sakaka
The Al-Jawf Cultural Center	Sakaka
The Hail Cultural Center	Hail



**Literary Clubs**

Literary clubs, of which there are 16, are important cultural centers that organize many cultural events and activities and have contributed to literary and cultural productions in the Kingdom since the establishment of the first one in 1975. Literary clubs include several facilities, the most important of which are libraries, where the club's publications and others are available, as well as theaters, art spaces and training halls. However, it should be pointed out that the space and capacity of these facilities range from relatively limited to medium, as most theaters in literary clubs are not used exclusively for theatrical performances, but also host other cultural activities.

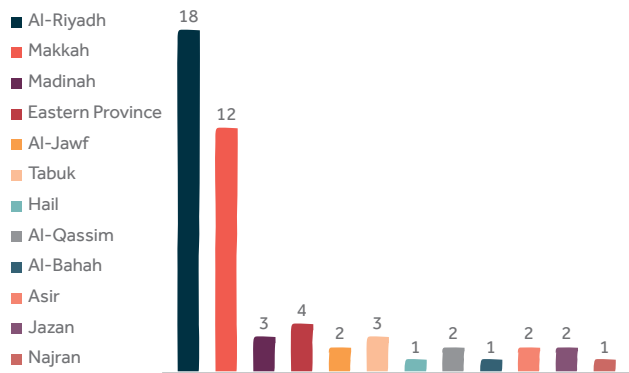
**Museums**

In 2021, the infrastructure of the museum sector did not witness significant developments, with the exception of the opening of a limited number of private museums. Compared to 2020, the number of private museums decreased by about 30, which can be attributed to two reasons: the first being that the regulatory changes in the issuance of licenses<sup>(115)</sup>—by means of which the Museums Commission aims to bring the quality of museums in the Kingdom up to global standards—and the second being the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on private museum owners.<sup>(116)</sup> In 2021, the total number of museums has reached 304, and that includes museums of various types, purposes and capacities<sup>(117)</sup>, of which 236 are private museums.<sup>(118)</sup> There are 51 public museums<sup>(119)</sup>, with at least one public museum in every province of the Kingdom except for the northern border area. Some Saudi universities also contain museums, the number of which is estimated at 17.<sup>(120)</sup> Although Asir Province boasts 51 private museums, it has no more than two public museums. The disparity is less in Riyadh Province, where the number of public museums is 19—the highest number of public museums in all provinces of the Kingdom— compared to 48 private museums, second only to Asir Province in terms of private museums. The digital infrastructure for museums is still in its early stages, with some museums providing virtual tours of their halls in order to adapt to the pandemic conditions. These include the Saudi National Museum, the Masmak Museum and the Al-Faisal

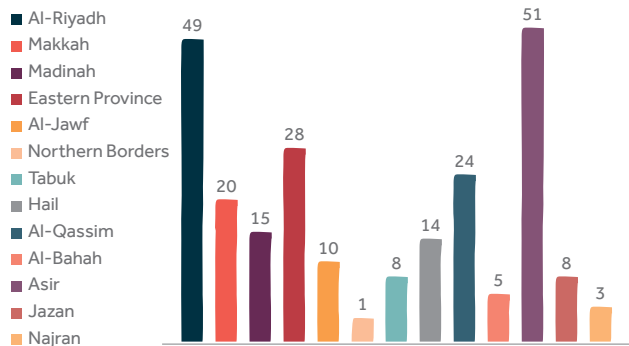
Museum for Arab-Islamic Art.<sup>(121)</sup> The return to in-person visits and activities in 2021 may be a reason for the limited development of digital museums.<sup>(122)</sup>

In general, the number of museums in the Kingdom appears limited if compared to other countries such as Britain and Japan, for instance, where the number of museums is 47.9 and 45.3 per one million people, respectively<sup>(123)</sup>, while in the Kingdom there are only 8.6 museums per one million people. But the numbers in the Kingdom appear more promising when compared to the numbers of museums in other Arab countries. For example, in Egypt, the Emirates and Morocco, there are 0.9, 1.3, and 1.2 museums per one million people, respectively<sup>(124)</sup> (see Figure 21).

**Figure 19:** Number of public museums in the Kingdom and their distribution by province <sup>(125)</sup>



**Figure 20:** Number of private museums in the Kingdom and their distribution by province <sup>(126)</sup>



**Figure 21:** Number of museums per one million people in some countries during 2021 <sup>(127)</sup>



## Libraries

Libraries play a significant role of cultural and scientific bodies that function to preserve knowledge and making its sources available to people. Libraries in the Kingdom are classified as: national, public<sup>(128)</sup>, specialized, private,<sup>(129)</sup> endowed, university, and school libraries. It is difficult to count the total number of libraries in the Kingdom due to the lack of a unified and comprehensive database of libraries, which is what the Libraries Commission is working to achieve within the initiatives launched by the Commission this year. The Commission has also announced other initiatives to develop the library sector, including building a public digital library, and automating public libraries.<sup>(130)</sup> There are 86 public libraries under the management of the Ministry of Culture, 35% of which are concentrated in Riyadh Province. Specialists and experts have pointed to this centralization in the distribution of libraries in the regions of the Kingdom, and to other challenges faced by the library sector, including weak digital development of libraries.<sup>(131)</sup> In an attempt to overcome these challenges, libraries offer programs, exhibitions and



cultural activities to attract visitors and beneficiaries<sup>(132)</sup>, or to transfer libraries to them, as in the mobile library projects of King Abdulaziz Public Library and Ithra Library, for example.<sup>(133)</sup>

Figure 22: Distribution of Ministry of Culture's public libraries in regions of the Kingdom<sup>(134)</sup>

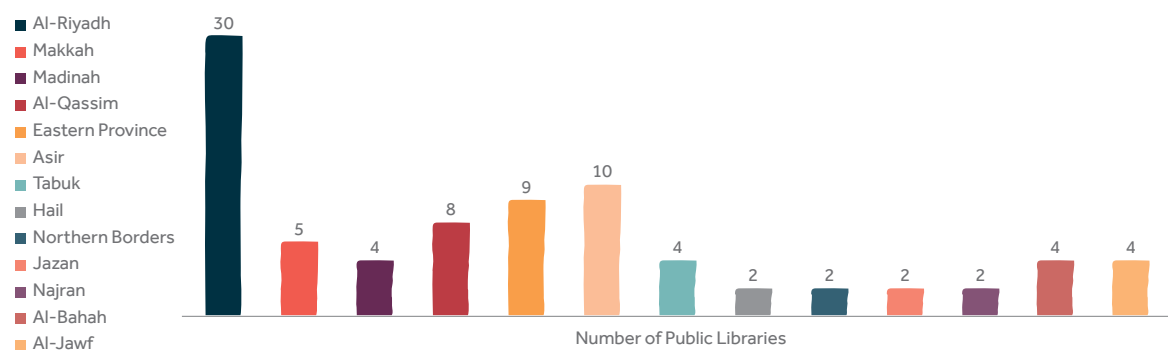


Table 11: The number of holdings in select libraries in the Kingdom

Library	Province	Number of books	Number of audio-visual materials	Number of manuscripts
King Fahd National Library <sup>(135)</sup>	Riyadh	509,180	5,807	5,500
King Abdulaziz Endowment Library Complex <sup>(136)</sup>	Madinah	120,000	-	150,000
King Abdulaziz Public Library <sup>(137)</sup>	Riyadh	1,688,255	717	7645
King Fahd Public Library in Jeddah <sup>(138)</sup>	Makkah	104,762	7,870	-
Ithra' Library <sup>(139)</sup>	Eastern Province	260,000	30,000	-
King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies Library <sup>(140)</sup>	Riyadh	189,140	20,306	28,594



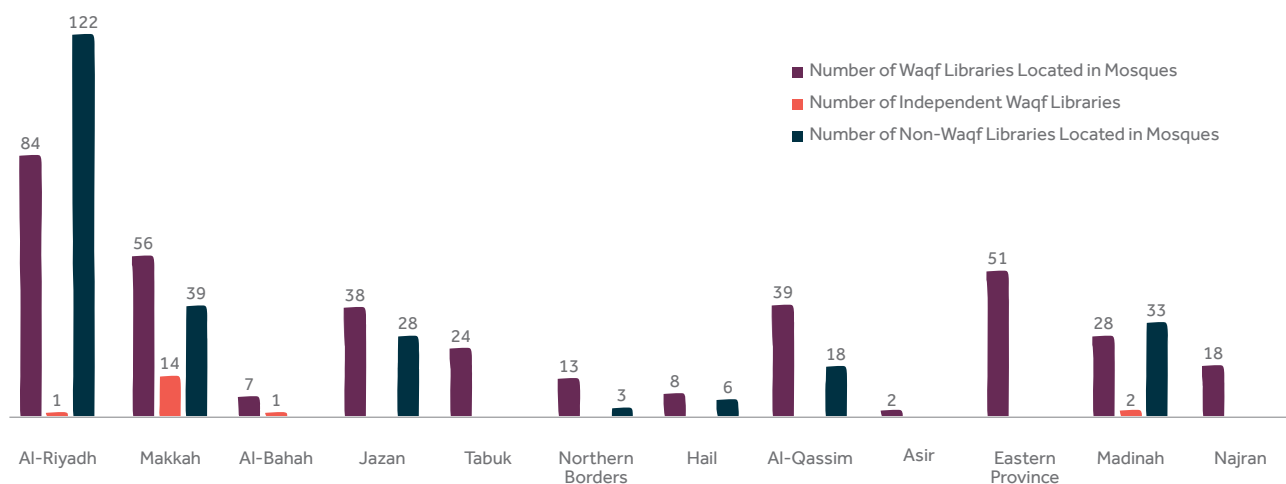
Library	Province	Number of books	Number of audio-visual materials	Number of manuscripts
Library of the General Secretariat of the Arab Gulf State Cooperation Council <sup>(141)</sup>	Riyadh	44,600	1,002	-
Suleiman Al Rajhi Public Library <sup>(142)</sup>	Al-Qassim	27,000	-	3
Educator Saleh bin Saleh Social Center Library <sup>(143)</sup>	Al-Qassim	60,000	-	30
Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman Social Center Library <sup>(144)</sup>	Al-Qassim	36,000	138	-
Dar Al Uloom Library <sup>(145)</sup>	Al-Jawf	159,681	3,045	-
Dar Al-Rahmaniyah Library in Ghat <sup>(146)</sup>	Riyadh	17,728	820	-
Institute of Public Administration Library <sup>(147)</sup>	Riyadh	355,876	-	-
Imam Ibn Al Qayyim Public Library <sup>(148)</sup>	Riyadh	202,302	-	-

**Endowed Libraries**

After the establishment in 2016 of the King Abdulaziz Complex for Endowment Libraries in Madinah, King Abdulaziz Library’s holdings—including endowed libraries, rare collections and manuscripts—were transferred to it, where the collections are preserved and managed. The Complex has 35 endowed libraries and a special section for restoring documents and manuscripts. The Complex has issued several book series, including: Historic Copies of the Holy Quran, The History of Endowed Libraries, and Rare Printings.<sup>(149)</sup> There are many other endowed libraries in the Kingdom, including 386 endowed libraries within mosques, which are managed by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah, and Guidance.



**Figure 23:** Number of endowed libraries under the supervision of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah, and Guidance<sup>(150)</sup>



**University Libraries**

Most of Saudi Arabia’s 41 public and private universities and their branches have one or more university libraries. Some universities designate one separate library for male students and another for female students, in addition to smaller libraries attached to different colleges. Some of the most prominent university libraries in the Kingdom which receive non-affiliated visitors are the King Salman Central

Library at King Saud University, the Prince Sultan Library for Science and Knowledge at Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, the Central Library at Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University, and the King Abdullah University Library at Umm al-Qura University. Some university libraries also provide digital services pertaining specifically to the university, or through the Saudi Digital Library.

**Table 12:** The number of library holdings at some universities in the Kingdom<sup>(151)</sup>

University	Number of books	Number of audio-visual materials	Number of manuscripts
Libraries of Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University	264,964	14,200	9,200
The Central Library of Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University	341,259	-	87
Central Library at King Abdulaziz University	759,540	670	2,407
The Central Library of Taibah University	243,887	-	15
The Central Library of Qassim University	281,420	478	35
The Central Library of Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University	339,175	2,000	-
The Central Library at King Khalid University	2,475	-	-
Prince Mishaal bin Abdullah Central Library at Najran University	27,086	-	-
The Central Library at the University of Hail	150,544	-	-
The Central Library at Al-Jawf University	58,044	-	-
The Central Library at Prince Sultan University	104,520	2,088	-
The Central Library of Dar Al-Hekma University	43,299	-	-
The Central Library at the University of Prince Muqrin	5,944	27	-

**Digitization of Manuscripts**

In 2021, one of the most notable trends in the library sector this year was the completion of the first phase of the Digitization and Access to Manuscripts project. In 2020, the Libraries Commission announced this project and its goal of creating a unified platform for manuscript preservation.<sup>(152)</sup> Consequently, in 2021, in collaboration with several libraries in the Kingdom, the Commission had completed the

digitizing of 324 manuscripts and has made them available on the Commission’s website.<sup>(153)</sup> Several libraries are also working on digitizing their original manuscripts, including the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives Library, which has 6,894 original manuscripts, all of which are digitized.<sup>(154)</sup> Another example is the libraries of the Great Mosque and The Prophet’s Mosque in Mecca and Medina, as they have 8,149 manuscripts, 94% of which are digitized.<sup>(155)</sup>

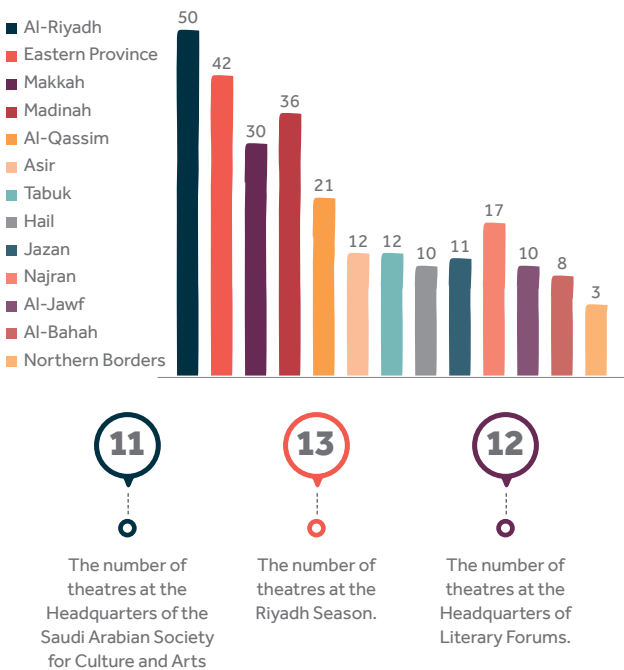
**Figure 24:** Percentage of manuscripts digitized in select libraries of the Kingdom<sup>(156)</sup>



## Theaters

As of 2021, the number of theaters in the Kingdom was estimated to amount to 262.<sup>(157)</sup> Of note, however, this number, which includes theaters, stages and other spaces available for theatrical performances, varies from one source to another, since a definition of “theater” based on characterizations and specifications has yet to be standardized. Therefore, many of these theaters lack necessary fixtures, such as sound and lighting equipment, which would make them incapable of properly hosting plays and other theatrical performances, although they are available for other uses and purposes, such as hosting fora, lectures, official events, and the like. This is the case, for example, with respect to theaters affiliated with universities, literary clubs, and municipalities. The largest theaters in the Kingdom are concentrated in major cities, such as the Mohammed Abdo Theater, the Abu Bakr Salem Theater at Riyadh Boulevard City, and the King Fahd Cultural Center Theater. These theatres have seating capacities of 18,000, 7,000 and 3,000, respectively.<sup>(158)</sup>

Figures 25 and 26: Numbers of theaters in the Kingdom by province <sup>(159)</sup>

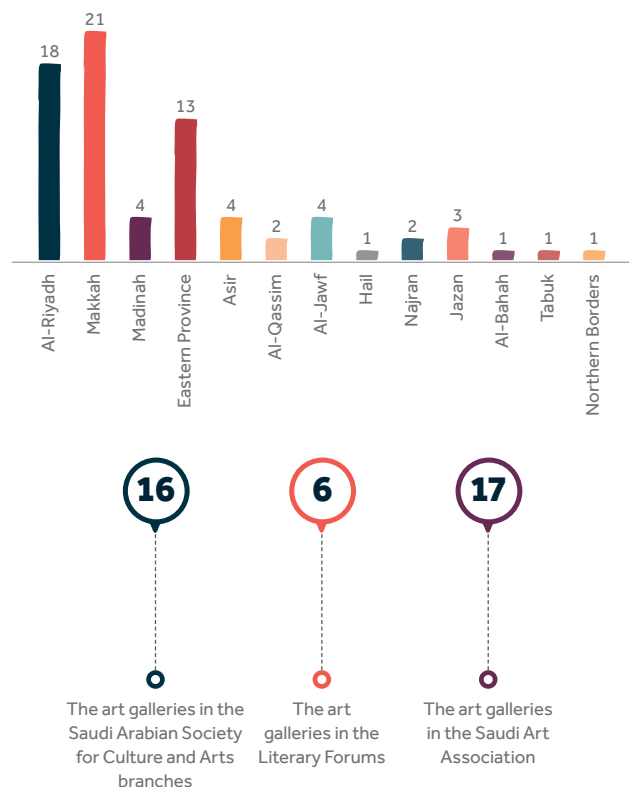


## Galleries

In 2021, there was a remarkable development in infrastructure in the visual arts sector. For one thing, this development was represented by the opening of Jax District

in Diriyah, which contains 12 galleries, and hosted one of the most prominent art exhibitions held in 2021, the Diriyah Biennale.<sup>(160)</sup> A number of commercial art galleries were also opened this year, such as the Lakum Artspace,<sup>(161)</sup> a branch of Al-waqieia Art Gallery in Riyadh,<sup>(162)</sup> and other two art spaces in Jeddah.<sup>(163)</sup> Other galleries, by contrast, were forced to close due to the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The total number of art galleries and art spaces in the Kingdom is estimated at 75.<sup>(164)</sup> It includes commercial art galleries, exhibition spaces within the branches of the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts, the Saudi Art Association, the literary clubs, and galleries affiliated with cultural and artistic institutions such as Misk Arts, Ithra Center, and Jameel Art. It is difficult to determine the exact number of galleries and art spaces in view of the absence of a unified and comprehensive database, in addition to the fact that a number of artistic works and exhibitions are temporary in nature, or displayed in public spaces such as exhibitions of the Tuwaiq International Sculpture Symposium, Noor Riyadh, Arabic calligraphy murals (calligrafitti) and others (see the chapter “Culture in Public Space: Trends and Features”).<sup>(165)</sup>

Figures 27 and 28: Number of galleries and art spaces in the Kingdom

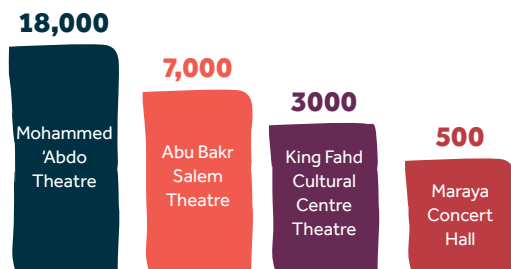




## Concert halls

In 2021, the music sector lacks specialized infrastructure such as concert halls and opera houses since concerts are often held in theaters where other types of performances and events are hosted, such as the Mohammed Abdo Theater, the Abu Bakr Salem Theater in Riyadh City Boulevard, and the Maraya Concert Hall in Al-Ula. These three theaters are the venues where most concerts for the year 2021 took place.<sup>(166)</sup> In addition, there are concerts held in open spaces, such as those in Formula 1 in Jeddah and Riyadh Oasis, which are discussed in the report in the context of the presence of culture and art in the public space.<sup>(167)</sup>

Figure 29: The capacity of some concert theaters<sup>(168) (169)</sup>



## Cinemas

The film sector is one of the fastest growing cultural sub-sectors in the Kingdom in terms of infrastructure development and facility proliferation. This became particularly pronounced since the establishment of the first cinema in the Kingdom three years ago and due to the rapid expansion across various cities and regions. Despite the temporary closure of cinemas due to the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and again in 2021, new cinemas continued to open. The year witnessed the opening of cinemas for the first time in Taif,<sup>(170)</sup> Qassim,<sup>(171)</sup> and elsewhere, as well as the opening of the Kingdom's largest cinema to date on Riyadh Boulevard.<sup>(172)</sup> The total number of cinemas now is 54<sup>(173)</sup>, compared to 33 last year.<sup>(174)</sup> Although this figure is still limited compared to other countries, the growth rate in the number of cinemas in the Kingdom surpassed 63.63% between 2020 and 2021. This is a very high growth rate, especially when one considers the effects of the pandemic that coincided with a decrease in the number of cinemas in some leading countries in the film industry, such as the United States, where the number of cinemas decreased by 1.28% between 2019 and 2020.<sup>(175)</sup> This huge growth in the number of cinemas in the Kingdom may be attributed to the newness of the sector and, consequently, the lack of supply vs. demand.



Figure 30: Growth in the number of cinemas in the Kingdom between 2019 and 2021

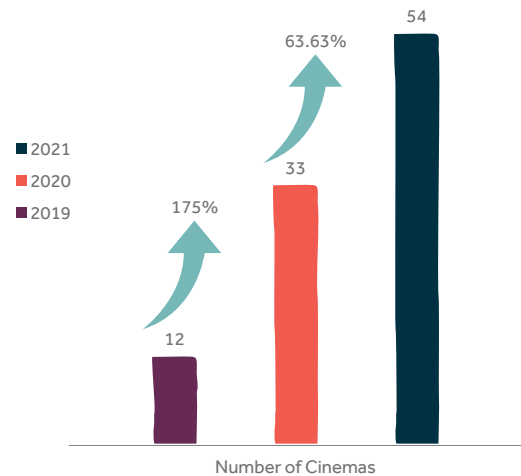


Figure 31: Growth in the number of screens in the Kingdom during 2019-2021<sup>(176) (177)</sup>

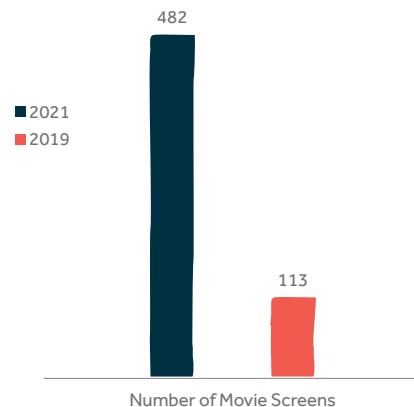


Figure 32: The number of cinemas in the Kingdom in 2021<sup>(178)</sup>

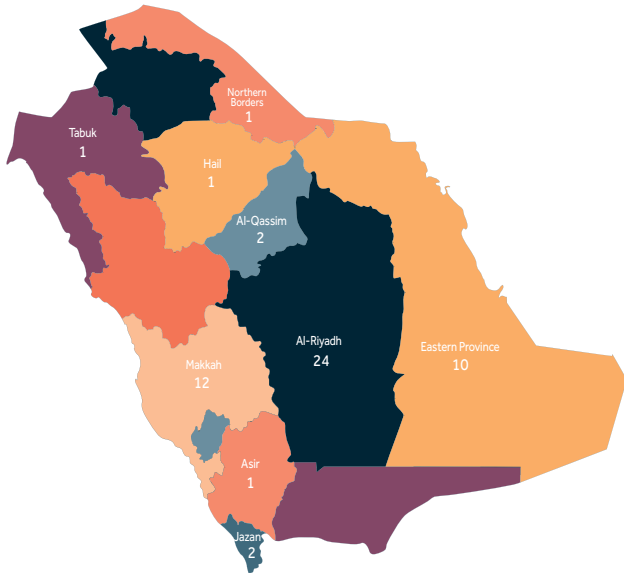


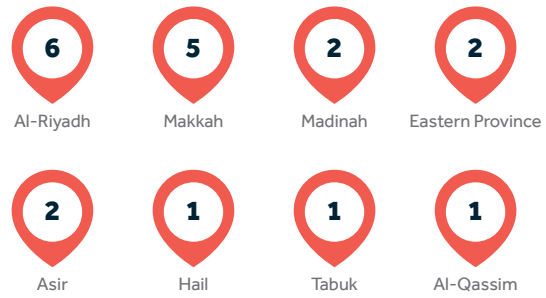
Figure 33: Number of screens per one million people in some countries<sup>(179)</sup>



### Literary Coffee Shops

The initiative undertaken by the Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission (the Literary Partner) is an important source of support for literary and cultural coffee shops in the Kingdom, and one form of the partnership between the Commission and various cultural facilities, its purpose being to incentivize such facilities to play their role in development. Most of these literary coffee shops have bookshops and host literary and cultural events. The Commission has designated a prize of SAR 100,000 for the best coffee shop as a literary partner. Applications for the program were open between August and November 2021. The evaluation of those applications was based on specific criteria, including space, location, management, design, etc.<sup>(180)</sup> Of the twenty literary coffee shops registered this year, six are located in Riyadh province, and make up 30% of the total number of coffee shops registered in the program, followed by Makkah province, which has five literary coffee shops, or 25% of those registered in the program.

Figure 34: The number of literary coffee shops registered in the Literary Partner Program for the year 2021 and their distribution by province<sup>(181)</sup>



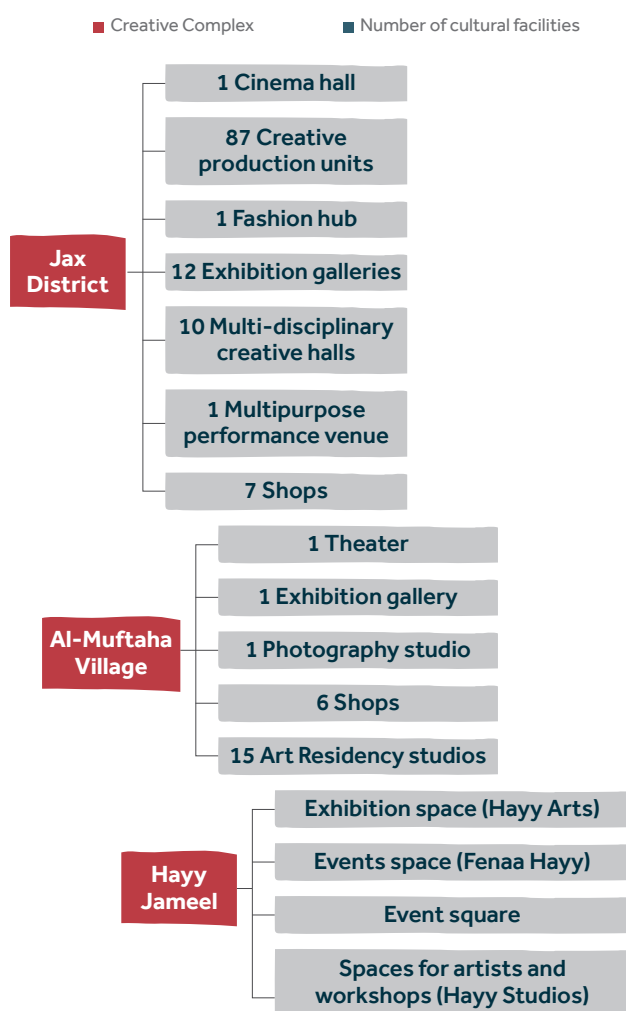
### Creative Complexes

While most cultural facilities are, by their nature, places for displaying, participating, and consuming cultural products, it is important to review the enabling environment of such production process in terms of space and infrastructure. Despite the stagnation observed by cultural facilities this year, the map of creative complexes is entirely different. At one time, Al Muftaha village was nearly the only beacon on the horizon of creative complexes. However, the Ministry of Culture then opened the Jax District in Diriyah, which was an industrial area containing 98 warehouses with an area of more than 83,000 m<sup>2</sup> which were converted into 140 different units, including art studios, exhibitions, platforms, training halls, and more. Closer to the end of 2021, Hayy Jameel in Jeddah, which contains spaces for artists, galleries, and venues for



events was opened after completing its development, and the Royal Commission for Al-Ula inaugurated the village of Al-Jadidah to be a new creative destination with its art spaces, exhibitions, and heritage sites.<sup>(182)</sup> As for Al-Muftaha village in Abha, it has been undergoing development since being transferred to the authority of the Ministry of Culture in 2019.<sup>(183)</sup>

**Figure 35:** Numbers of cultural facilities in creative complexes<sup>(184)</sup>



## Empowerment and Organizational Frameworks

The cultural scene in the Kingdom functions within organizational frameworks and regulations that serve to manage everything of relevance to the cultural sectors in their various dimensions. Whereas the most

prominent organizational development of 2020 was the establishment of cultural commissions affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, 2021 brought a continuation of that step, as well as more organization and transfer of powers. For example, one of the most major regulatory decisions issued during 2021 was the amendment of Article Three of the Antiquities, Museums and Urban Heritage Act. Memoranda of understanding were also signed to develop and regulate cultural sectors and protect the rights of creatives. In the context of support and empowerment, approval was issued to establish the Cultural Development Fund at the beginning of 2021. Other support programs, such as the Fashion Incubator and the Children’s and Young Adult Literature Accelerator, were launched as well.

## Cultural Institutions and Organizational Frameworks

The Council of Ministers issued an approval to amend Article Three of the Antiquities, Museums and Urban Heritage Act issued by Royal Decree in 1436 AH/2014 CE, and to add a paragraph giving the Heritage Commission the powers needed to maintain and restore neglected heritage buildings for the purpose of preserving, maintaining and sustaining heritage.<sup>(185)</sup> The Council of Ministers also approved the transfer of powers pertaining to the Historic Jeddah Project Program from the (former) Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage to the Ministry of Culture.<sup>(186)</sup> These two decisions are among the most prominent national regulations related to the cultural sectors issued in 2021, their purpose being to regulate and organize the work of the cultural sectors and the powers of the concerned bodies and institutions. This year, the Council of Ministers also approved the Executive Regulation of Wildlife Hunting for the Environment Law that was issued by Royal Decree in 1441/2020, and the regulation entered into force as of January 2021. The regulation identifies and prohibits the hunting of endangered wild species such as the Arabian oryx, the Arabian leopard, and others. The regulation also prohibits “the hunting of 19 species of endemic birds in the Kingdom and endangered migratory birds”.<sup>(187)</sup> The Executive Regulation of Protected Areas<sup>(188)</sup> and the Executive Regulation of Vegetation Cover Development and Combating Desertification<sup>(189)</sup> of the Environment Law promulgated by Royal Decree in 1441 AH/2020 were also approved this year. The protection of the environment and natural heritage as well as the management of their resources have received significant attention at both regulatory and developmental levels (see Table 13).



**Table 13:** Rules and regulations related to cultural sectors or those that intersect with them, and which were adopted in 2021<sup>(190)</sup>

Resolutions and Regulations	Date
Cultural Development Fund Law	January 2021
Executive Regulations on Purebred Arabian horses	February 2021
Regulatory Arrangements of the National Committee on Education, Culture and Science <sup>(191)</sup>	March 2021
The Cultural Strategy of Gulf Cooperation Council States	March 2021
Regulatory Arrangements of the Royal Institute of Traditional Arts	April 2021
Regulating the National Center for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector	June 2021
Establishment of a Body called the Research, Development and Innovation Development Authority	June 2021
Transferring the powers related to the Historic Jeddah Project Program from the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (formerly) to the Ministry of Culture	June 2021
The Executive Regulation of Environmental Rehabilitation for Decrepit Sites and the Remediation of Polluted Sites	June 2021
Executive Regulation for the Development of Vegetation Cover and Combating Desertification	June 2021
Executive Regulation of Wildlife Hunting	July 2021
Executive Regulations to Prevent and Remediate Soil Pollution	July 2021
Executive Regulations for Protecting Aquatic Environments from Pollution	July 2021
Amending the Law on Antiquities, Museums and Urban Heritage Act	July 2021
Executive Regulations for the Law on Application of the Saudi Building Code	August 2021
Executive Regulations for the Environmental Law on Sustainable Management of the Marine and Coastal Environment	September 2021
Executive Regulations for Protected Areas	October 2021
Regulating the Council on Digital Content	October 2021
Classification List for Saudi Building Code Violations	October 2021
Regulation of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Center for Planning and Language Policies	November 2021
Establishment of the General Corporation for the Conservation of Coral Reefs and Turtles in the Red Sea	December 2021
Regulatory Arrangements for the Saudi Red Sea Authority	December 2021

Within the framework of the decisions and regulations issued by the Ministry of Culture to manage and regulate the various cultural sectors, the Ministry of Culture undertook in 2021 the publication of the "Guide to Acquiring Artworks in Government Buildings, Headquarters, and Offices" in fulfilment of the Supreme Order issued in 1441 AH/2020 CE, instructing governmental organizations and institutions to acquire national artworks and crafts.<sup>(192)</sup> This Guide includes a definition of national artwork, a classification of works of art and their types, steps and criteria for acquiring artistic works

and collections, and methods of displaying and preserving them.<sup>(193)</sup> The Guide stresses the importance of complying with "all laws and regulations pertaining to competition and the government procurement system" as well as adherence to "the intellectual property laws and regulations in force in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia".<sup>(194)</sup>

Furthermore, in the end of 2021, the Ministry of Culture and the Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property signed a memorandum of understanding to protect the intellectual

property of creatives and creative products in various cultural sectors.<sup>(195)</sup> The Authority is working on projects which are expected to be announced next year, including: preparing a performance and ownership regulation, and developing policies in the field of intellectual property to manage cultural intellectual assets.<sup>(196)</sup> Together with the Saudi Film Festival, the Authority also signed a work program which aims to strengthen protection for intellectual property in the fields of film production and filmmaking.<sup>(197)</sup>

### Supporting Culture and Creativity

Cultural institutions and bodies in the Kingdom offer a plethora of programs to support the various sectors of culture in pursuit of sustained empowerment to creatives, both male and female. These programs range from cultural competitions with monetary prizes, to incubators and accelerators for creative production, to support programs through training and development. The most prominent training support programs are the “Filmmakers” program offered by the Film Commission and programs to support and develop artisans at the Heritage Commission. Given that they are training programs, details on them are discussed in the chapter “Knowledge and Skills”. The Public Investment Fund has also launched several projects targeting the cultural and tourism sectors in the Kingdom, the most recent of which was the launch of the Soudah Development Company with investments worth more than SAR 11 billion.<sup>(198)</sup>

#### Support Funds and Programs

One of the most important regulatory decisions to support and empower the cultural sectors in the Kingdom was the establishment of the Cultural Development Fund by Royal Decree in early 2021. The Cultural Development Fund is organizationally linked to the National Development Fund,<sup>(199)</sup> and its policy is to focus on supporting 16 cultural sectors through a variety of programs and projects. The first of these was the Cultural Projects Incentive Program, which was launched in November of the same year in partnership with and funding from the Quality of Life Program, with allocations estimated at SAR 181 million.<sup>(200)</sup> The program provides support to private sector establishments and institutions and non-profit organizations operating in the various cultural sectors, in accordance with requirements and follow-up mechanisms set by the program. Through the Cultural Projects Incentive Program, the Fund is providing support for four projects this year in four different cultural sectors, and 75% of these projects are concentrated in the Riyadh region.<sup>(201)</sup>

**Table 14:** Projects supported by the Cultural Projects Incentive Program in 2021

Project	Sector	Province
Al-Mashtal	Architecture and Design	Riyadh
Kan Yama Kan	Literature, Publishing and Translation	Riyadh
National Talents Company	Music	Eastern Province
Huna	Culinary Arts	Riyadh

The film sector also benefited from a number of programs with targeted support. In the beginning of 2021, agreements were signed with the winners of the 2020 Daw' Competition,<sup>(202)</sup> for the production of 28 Saudi film projects, with financing of more than SAR 40 million.<sup>(203)</sup> Since its establishment in July 2020, the Red Sea Fund has also continued to provide support for film-making and film-production projects through three tracks—project development, production, and projects under implementation—with grants of approximately SAR 1.875 million per project.<sup>(204)</sup> A total of 97 projects have been supported by the Fund.<sup>(205)</sup> The visual arts sector has also received its share of allocated support, as the Misk Art Institute continues to provide the Misk Art Grant, which began last year. The total grant amount comes to SAR 1 million divided among this year's 10 grant recipients: seven female artists and three male artists.<sup>(206)</sup> Within the Tarjim initiative,



the Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission has implemented a translation grant project that targets Saudi publishing houses in order to support and empower Saudi translators. A total of 292 translation grants were awarded this year.<sup>(207)</sup> Grants could be applied for between October and December 2021 according to specific conditions and criteria announced by the Commission on the Tarjim program website.<sup>(208)</sup> In the end of 2021, the Commission announced the launch of the Digital Publishing Program as part of its efforts to support Saudi publishing houses, the first phase of which began with the "Book Digitization" project.<sup>(209)</sup>

### Cultural Competitions

In 2021, the third session of the Prince Abdullah Al-Faisal International Prize for Arabic Poetry was held in four

branches, with a total value of SAR 1 million. In its seventh session, the Saudi Film Festival presented the Golden Palm Awards with a total value of SAR 310,000. Competitions launched for the first time this year included the Yusr Awards and the Aqeeq Poetry Prize, its first session being titled "The poet Dia' Al-Din Rajab". While the chapter "Creativity and Production" discusses the trends of the winning entries in these cultural competitions, this chapter focuses on the total sums represented by the prizes and the number of individuals who benefitted from them, thus indicating the levels of support and empowerment being offered to creatives in the various cultural sectors. The report lists 17 major cultural competitions for this year encompassing several sectors, with 164 winners receiving prizes with a total value of approximately SAR 4,836,250.

**Table 15:** Examples of cultural competitions and the numbers of winners in 2021

Name of Competition	Sector	Organizer	Number of winners / beneficiaries	Total prizes
Prince Abdullah Al-Faisal International Prize for Arabic Poetry	Literature	Academy of Arabic Poetry	4	SAR 1 million <sup>(210)</sup>
Prince Abdullah Al-Faisal Competition in Arabic Poetry for University Undergraduates	Literature	Academy of Arabic Poetry	3	SAR 350,000 <sup>(211)</sup>
Prince Abdullah Al-Faisal competition in Arabic poetry for Secondary School Students	Literature	Academy of Arabic Poetry	2	SAR 150,000 <sup>(212)</sup>
Al-Aqeeq Poetry Prize	Literature	Madinah Literary Club	3	SAR 100,000 <sup>(213)</sup>
Philosophical Terms Competition	Literature	The Philosophy Society in cooperation with the Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission	21	SAR 70,000 <sup>(214)</sup>
Tuwaiq International Sculpture Forum	Visual Arts	Royal Commission for Riyadh City	20	SAR 750,000 <sup>(215)</sup>
The "Move Prove" Contest, Season Two	Visual Arts and Heritage	Saudi Heritage Preservation Society (We are our heritage)	6	SAR 165,000 <sup>(216)</sup>
Yusr Awards Competitions	Film	Red Sea Film Festival Foundation	12	Approx. SAR 1,068,750 <sup>(217)</sup>
Saudi Film Festival Awards	Film	SASCA in Dammam in cooperation with the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, Ithra, with the support of the Film Commission	10	SAR 310,000 <sup>(218)</sup>
Scenario Development Lab	Film	SASCA in Dammam in cooperation with the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, Ithra, with the support of the Film Commission	5	SAR 70,000 <sup>(219)</sup>



Name of Competition	Sector	Organizer	Number of winners / beneficiaries	Total prizes
Saudi Comedy Competition (Stand Up Comedy)	Theater and Performing Arts	Theater and Performing Arts Commission	3	70,000 SAR <sup>(220)</sup>
Saudi Cup Design Competition	Architecture and Design	Architecture and Design Commission	24 <sup>(222)</sup>	220,000 SAR <sup>(221)</sup>
Academic Competition for Public Library Design	Architecture and Design	Architecture and Design Commission	5 <sup>(224)</sup>	57,500 SAR <sup>(223)</sup>
Translation Challenge Contest	Translation	Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission	36	More than 200,000 SAR <sup>(225)</sup>
Sing for the Homeland Competition	Music	The General Entertainment Authority and the Music Commission	3	135,000 SAR <sup>(226)</sup>
Weavlnk Competition	Fashion	Fashion Commission	3	80,000 SAR <sup>(227)</sup>
Hackathon Competition - Fashion Incubator	Fashion	Fashion Commission	4	40,000 SAR <sup>(228)</sup>

#### Art and Literary Residency

After the suspension of art residencies in 2020 due to the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, many art residencies were launched this year and resulted in an increase in the number of enrolled artists, including a total of 74 male and female artists. The female artists consist of 54% versus 46% of male artists, as shown in the figure (36). At the end of last year, the first art residency in Al-Ula

was launched during the period from November 2021 to January 2022. The residency program for artists provides an opportunity to exchange experience and knowledge with a group of scientists as well as the local habitants, whereas the program focuses on the subject of "The Oasis Reborn".<sup>(229)</sup> In addition, the Misk Arts Institute launched four art residencies for this year, including the program of international residencies in cooperation with the Berlin





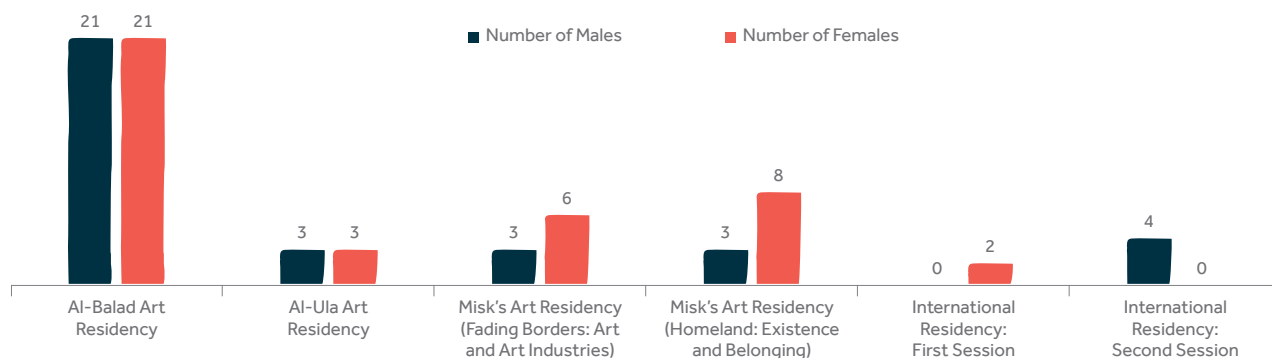
Art Institute. The total number of beneficiaries of Misk Institute’s four art residencies was 26 in 2021, compared to 7 in 2019.<sup>(230)</sup> As for the Al-Balad Art Residency, of which the first version was launched in 2020/2021, its programs went virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The literary

residencies continued this year, being organized by the Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission, after stopping the last year. The Commission launched the Writing Retreats Program in Soudah during September 2021, then in Al-Ula during November 2021.<sup>(231)</sup>

Table 16: Art residencies in the Kingdom during 2021 and the number of beneficiaries:

Program	Number of Beneficiaries	Province	Year	Body
Al-Balad Art Residency <sup>(232)</sup>	42	Jeddah/ Hypothetical	2020 - 2021	Ministry of Culture
Al-Ula Art Residency <sup>(233)</sup>	6	Al-Ula	2021 - 2022	The Royal Commission for Al-Ula Governorate and the French Agency for Al-Ula Development
Misk Residency/Fading Borders: Art and Art Industries <sup>(234)</sup>	9	Riyadh	2021	Misk Arts
Misk Residency (Homeland: Existence and Belonging) <sup>(235)</sup>	11	Riyadh	2021	Misk Art
International Residencies: First Session <sup>(236)</sup>	2	Berlin	2021	Misk Art in cooperation with Berlin Art Institute
International Residencies: Second Session <sup>(237)</sup>	4	Berlin	2021	Misk Art in cooperation with Berlin Art Institute

Figure 36: Number of beneficiaries of art residencies for 2021 by gender



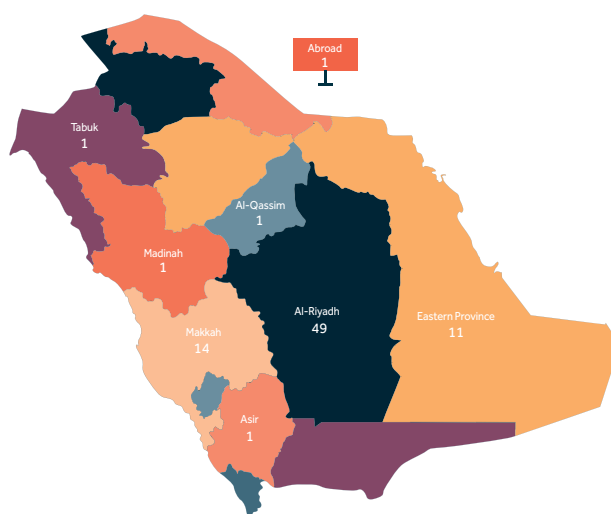
**Accelerators and Incubators**

In what deemed to be a major development for institutional support programs in 2021, the Literature, Publishing, and Translation Commission announced the launch of the first Children’s and Young Adult Literature Accelerator, targeting the empowerment of 10 startups specialized in children’s and young adults literature and polishing their talents in the areas of writing, drawing, and storytelling, in addition to providing guidance, training and discussion sessions, giving accessibility to a base of investors and experts, and providing financial grants of up to 75 thousand Saudi Riyals.<sup>(238)</sup> The training camp started at the start of 2022, with 56 male and female participants.<sup>(239)</sup>

In 2021, there were several incubators in the sectors of fashion, visual arts, and cooking, including the Fashion Incubator that was launched in collaboration between the Life Quality Program and the Fashion Commission in 2020 and consisted of three stages; the Hackathon, the Training Camp, and the Incubator. The latter aims to support startups by providing consultancy, developing projects and improving investment opportunities for these companies.<sup>(240)</sup> In addition, Art Jameel had launched three incubators in 2021, but they target individuals, not companies. For example, the Center launched Paused Mirror Incubator: Saudi Artists program, by assigning the artist Osama Asaeed to take photos for Saudi Artists in different cities of

the Kingdom.<sup>(241)</sup> Another one was the Food Lab Incubator, during the 2021/2022 period, and it offered a research program that included several researchers, artists, and writers from inside and outside the Kingdom to study food systems and their relationship with culture, place, and memory.<sup>(242)</sup>

**Figure 37:** Number of projects and companies that applied for the Children’s and Young Adult Literature Accelerator <sup>(243)</sup>





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# Creativity and Production



# 2

## Creativity and Production

- Cultural Production
- Cultural Creativity





Creativity and production are fundamental keys to culture – central tenets and key components of cultural activity. The creator, or cultural actor, enlivens and enriches the society. However, while intrinsically intertwined, creativity and cultural production are two distinct processes. Whereas creativity represents a unique artistic idea or style of work, cultural production is the process of converting this idea or style into a tangible product, such as a book, theatrical work, or transforming private visions into a film available to all. This chapter deals with both of these processes. The first part discusses cultural production from a quantitative perspective, with the aim of providing an overarching view of production. It monitors trends, content and interests of cultural actors with details according to region, city, gender, and age. It also provides analytical comparisons vis-à-vis regional and international production indices for a closer understanding of the situation. The second section deals with cultural creativity. It measures authorship and creativity by monitoring the most important awards obtained by Saudi creatives or entities through objective metrics within the cultural space on both the regional and international level.

## Cultural Production

During 2021, cultural production has recovered from the drop-off caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in those fields that require audience attendance, such as theater and performing arts. This area has shown considerable diversity because of organizational development and the number of actors and private theatrical troupes. Private art galleries have doubled attendance, while film festivals have been held that play a critical role during this period. This section also reviews the latest data on publishing and literature trends, which show the continual production of novels within the Kingdom. The section also shows indicators of interest in translation, whether through private publishing or initiatives to support translation. In architecture and design, The King Salman Charter for Architecture and Urbanism is a focal point of production. In general, Saudi heritage has inspired production in architecture, design, and fashion, especially through the Saudi Cup Festival and the accompanying dress code. Saudi heritage lives strong dress in carpet weaving and traditional Sadu embroidery (a traditional form of weaving practiced by Bedouin women in Saudi Arabia).

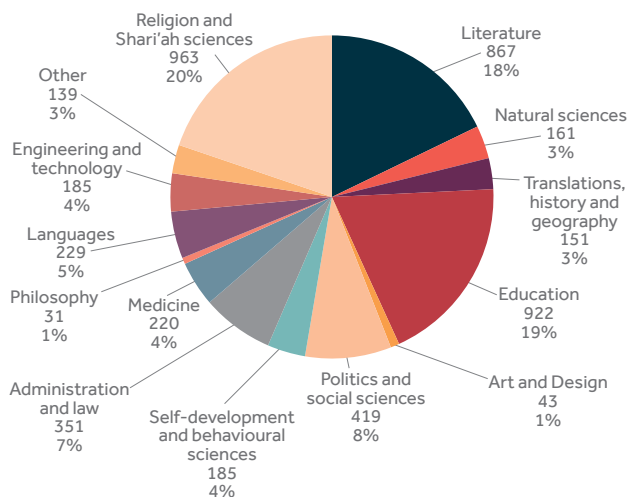
### Production in publishing

In 2021, a total of 9,042 titles were registered with the King Fahad National Library, which was comparable to the corresponding figure in 2020 (8,497). This comparison gives a preliminary indicator since the registration data does not reflect actual publications, but rather the publisher's intentions to publish the registered titles.<sup>(1)</sup> It would therefore be more beneficial to refer to statistics from previous years.



We have detailed data from 2019 that helps give a general picture of publishing trends in recent years. This data includes the classification of titles of the books published and registered that year. As shown in Figure 1, approximately two-thirds of what is published in the Kingdom is concentrated in the fields of literature, Shariah sciences, and education. This pattern of distribution is not surprising, given that the Shariah and educational sciences, apart from touching upon essential subjects, enjoy a firmly rooted institutional system and are supported by a wide range of enthusiasts and scholars. Within these broad categories, 922 books deal with education, covering a wide range of subjects, starting with the educational system, school administration, educational methods, as well as works on education in general. Within the field of Shariah sciences, 349 books were registered and published during the year on the subject of Islamic jurisprudence alone, followed by Quranic studies and the Hadith of the Prophet. Other noteworthy areas of publication, with over 200 books each, included social sciences (including various related fields of its arts), as well as administration and law, medical sciences, and languages, followed by psychology and self-development, natural sciences, engineering, and history.

Figure 1: Official 2019 registration statistics by key category



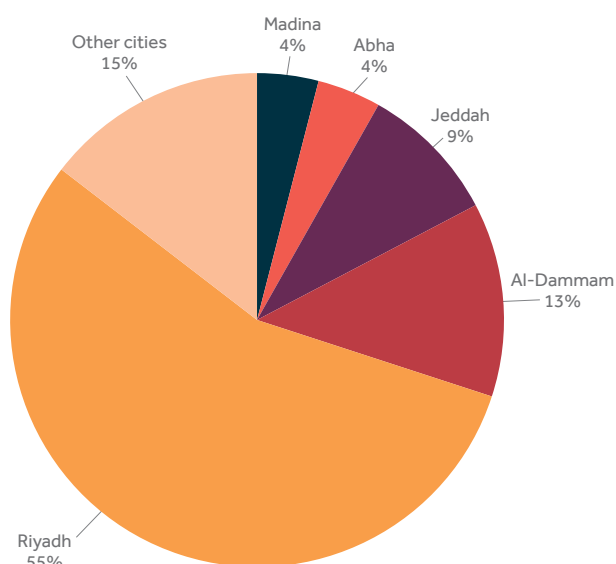
In addition to the general distribution of publication subjects, the data show other, more detailed information. One interesting detail is the presence of philosophical works, as 31 books were published and registered on philosophical topics in 2019. These included works on public speaking, ethics, logic, or the history of philosophy. These numbers are likely to grow because of the attention given to philosophy in education and the expansion of the space allocated to this field by educational institutions. Although impeded by limited publication numbers (only 43 publications), the other area witnessing growing official and societal interest is art, which covers works on architecture and design, fashion design, visual arts, and culinary arts. This level of publication can be regarded as limited given the wide range of fields it covers and is not reflective of public interest in this area. Publications include seven cookbooks and nine works on architecture, areas where antecedent reports on the state of culture identified a need to revitalize publishing and registration activity.

Figure 2: Official registration statistics for the year 2019, by subject



This overview of the distribution in book production by subject area provided above covers not only the publications of private publishing houses, but also self-published works and university and research center publications. As the data indicate, over half of these publications were published in Riyadh and other cities with publishers, including Dammam and Jeddah, followed by Abha and Madinah. In smaller cities, the bulk of publications were self-published, as opposed to large cities, where commercial sector activity is prominent, including publishing activity.

Figure 3: Official registration statistics for 2019, by city



Literary publishing

Despite a significant decline in 2021, literary production fluctuated at levels similar to those of recent years, with 576 literary works in various fields, as compared to 663 and 607 in 2020 and 2019, respectively. According to bibliographical statistics on literary publications compiled by researcher Khaled Al-Youssef, novels continued to spearhead literary publication in 2021, followed by poetic works, which was also the trend in recent years. However, what is unique in 2021 statistics is the revival of publishing in the theatrical sector, including theatrical history books, or theatrical documentation and criticism. In previous years, there had been little or no activity in this area, but in 2021, 14 books were published in this sector.<sup>(2)</sup>

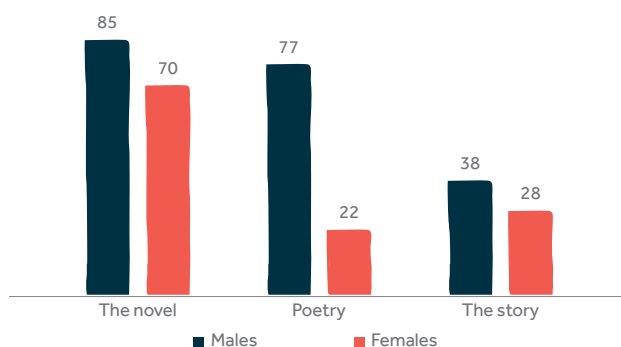
Table 1: Bibliography of literary publishing

Field	Year 2021 indicator	Year 2020 indicator	Year 2019 indicator
Arabic literature	24	18	6
Arabic literature—Bibliography	2	3	2
Arabic literature—History and criticism	25	17	24
Arabic literature—Translation and memoirs	9	22	5
Arabic literature—Translation and translated memoirs	2	–	–
Arabic literature—Translation and memoirs—History and criticism	1	2	2
Arabic literature—Travel literature	3	3	3
Arabic literature—Articles	12	14	–
Arabic literature—Articles (texts)	74	151	150
The novel—works	155	201	161

Field	Year 2021 indicator	Year 2020 indicator	Year 2019 indicator
The novel—Translated works	10	9	12
The novel—History and criticism	19	9	12
Arabic poetry—Works	99	100	103
Arabic poetry—Collected works	3	3	–
Arabic poetry—Children	1	2	–
Arabic poetry—Translated works	4	6	10
Arabic poetry—History and criticism	25	24	25
Short stories—Works	66	53	70
Short stories—Collected works	4	2	2
Short stories—Children	4	4	1
Short stories—Translations	6	2	2
Short stories—History and criticism	5	4	4
Arab theater	8	–	2
Arab theater—Translations	1	–	1
Arabic theater—History and criticism	5	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>607</b>

While male novelists comprised the majority of authors in 2020 literary publication statistics, 2021 witnessed similar production levels between the genders for novels and stories. This is a clear difference to poetry, with men having produced approximately 77.77% of works, and women, 22%. This difference in poetry publications is worth noting, as it is similar to attendance of ballad evenings, where the female attendance rate was 3% per evening, that is, half the rate of 6% recorded in 2021.<sup>(3)</sup>

Figure 4: Literary production levels by author's gender<sup>(4)</sup>





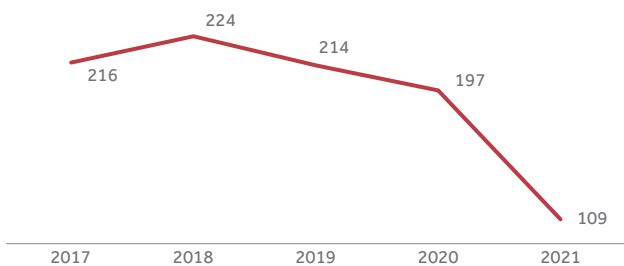
**Publishing in literary clubs**

In 2021, literary clubs published a total of 183 books through their 14 branches spread across the Kingdom. The Jawf Literally Club published the most—25 books—followed by Al-Bahah and the Northern Borders, with 23 books, and then Al-Taif, with 21 books. This ranking not only emphasizes the importance of the role of literary clubs, but it also underscores the importance of the clubs’ role in supporting regional writers, in particular in the light of the better opportunities for commercial publishing in cities such as Riyadh, Dammam, and Jeddah (see Figure 3). Works of poetry topped publications, with 53 collections of poetry (Divan), followed by criticism and literary studies, with 39 books. This also highlights the clubs’ contribution to bolstering the literary criticism movement in parallel to the creative movement. Stories came in the third position, with 28 collections of narrative works. Finally, with only three books, children’s literature did not account for a large proportion of publications in 2021.<sup>(5)</sup>

**Foreign publishing in decline**

One positive indicator for the domestic publishing sector was the marked decline in authors’ publishing their literary works through publishing houses outside the Kingdom, with 2021 figures approximately half their average in the previous four years. The 2021 figure would be even lower were the 23 books published under joint publishing agreements that some literary clubs concluded with Arab publishing houses outside the Kingdom excluded.<sup>(6)</sup> This decline coincides with the reorganization of the sector over the course of the previous two years, and the emergence of several initiatives to support and incentivize local publishers, which gave rise to several active local publishing houses. In general, these changes suggest a positive trend of the local publishing sector’s improving in terms of attractiveness and confidence in the local role of Saudi authors, which creates a close consonance between the sub-sector’s main drivers and the entities that propel this progress.

Figure 5: External five-year publication indicator (2017–2021).



**Translation projects and initiatives**

Data on literary publication point to the superiority of novels in the realm of literary translations, which is in keeping with the novel’s prominent place in literary publication in general.

However, the publication figures for literary works translated to and from Arabic are not commensurate with the recent initiatives to promote translation, as they have remained on the same level in recent years, with a dip as compared to 2019. It is likely that we will see growth in the levels of translation in general in all categories of work, given the output of the Tarjim initiative, which resulted in 336 translated works, 60 of which were translated from Arabic into other languages, and 276 translated into Arabic. This covered 13 different fields of knowledge and included 234 books. Overall, 42 academic periodicals were translated into Arabic.

Table 2. Output of the Tarjim initiative in 2021<sup>(7)</sup>

Output of Tarjim Initiative	Number
Total translated works	336
Works translated from Arabic	60
Works translated into Arabic	276
Foreign languages from which works were translated	7
Foreign languages into which works were translated	4
Fields in which there were translations	13
Academic periodicals translated into Arabic	42
Academic periodicals translated from Arabic into other languages	2
Books translated from other languages into Arabic	234
Books translated from Arabic into other languages	58





Infographic 1: Publication of translated literary titles<sup>(8)</sup>

	2019	2020	2021
Literary-Misc.	3	-	2
Novel	11	9	10
Biography	1	-	-
Poetry	11	6	4
Short story	4	2	6
Theater	1	-	1
Texts	3	4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>

Similarly to the observations reported in the previous two years' reports on the state of culture, in 2021, translation projects received increasing attention from private actors, specifically through private electronic cultural platforms, which rely on fully or partially translated articles and provide an opportunity for training and development for a large number of volunteers working with these platforms.<sup>(9)</sup> In 2021, a total of 1,168 articles were translated into Arabic from other languages this year in various fields, including philosophy, literature and arts, in addition to periodicals and approximately 64 books. This reflects remarkable growth in the activity of these platforms, which the previous two reports referred to as well.<sup>(10)</sup>

Table 3: Translated articles on major cultural platforms<sup>(11)</sup>

Platform	Area of specialization	Product
Traajim	Public Culture	98 articles
Athra	Culture and Arts	279 articles published and 9 books in press
Hikma	Philosophy, knowledge, and Arts	384 articles
Olemna	Public Culture and Education	182 articles
Mana	Philosophy and Arts	225 articles, 15 issues from two philosophical magazines, and 55 books

## Theater and performance productions

### Activity of theatrical teams

In 2019-2020, theater production by the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts branches declined, which could in part be attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector. However, statistics for the sector in 2021 suggest an additional explanation. While the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts was the main incubator for theater actors,<sup>(12)</sup> in light of the limited organizational frameworks for theater, the reorganization of the sector meant that theatrical troupes were registered independently, with the establishment of amateur clubs for stage actors.<sup>(13)</sup> Moreover, new principal organizers of theatrical activities came into existence, in particular the Theater and Performing Arts Commission and the General Entertainment Authority. There were also private theatrical troupes, and an increase in theatrical groups affiliated with Saudi universities.

Table 4: Theatrical performances in the branches of the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts

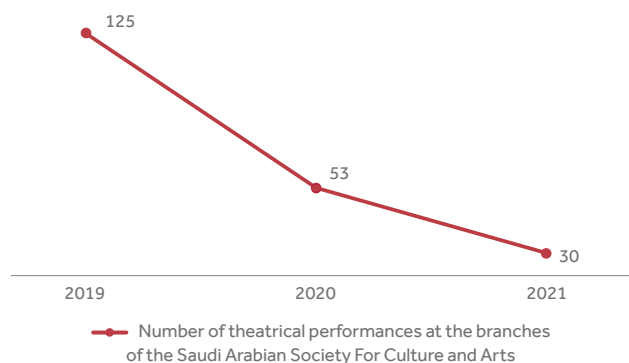
Branch	Number of performances in 2019	Number of performances in 2020	Number of performances in 2021
Riyadh	0	0	8
Jeddah	27	13	0
Al-Ahsa	9	0	5
Dammam	33	22	6
Taif	11	6	1
Abha	0	2	0
Al-Qassim	0	0	1
Madinah	12	2	1
Hail	9	2	0
Al-Bahah	3	2	0
Jazan	2	0	2
Tabuk	4	1	0
Najran	3	0	2
Al-Jawf	0	3	3
Arar	4	0	1
Bisha	8	0	0
<b>Total number</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>30</b>

The Eastern Province, through the branches of the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts in Al-Ahsa and Dammam, continues to lead the way in theatrical activity in terms of local shows produced and held by the theatrical troupes affiliated with the Society, with a total of 11 theatrical performances. The Society's Riyadh branch also resumed

its activity following a pause by putting on eight plays. This was achieved thanks to an innovative theatrical performance festival held on August 2–5, 2021. However, in recent years, theatrical activity has decreased noticeably at major branches, such as in Jeddah and Taif.



Figure 6: Number of theatrical performances in the branches of the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts in 2019–2021



### Variety of theater performances

In 2021, the number of players in the theater sector contributed to the diversity of theatrical performances in terms of the nature of the shows, the size of the audiences, and the target audiences. There were approximately 46 shows,<sup>(14)</sup> excluding imported shows that continue to be presented by a number of bodies, such as the General Entertainment Authority, the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture—Ithra, and others. Moreover, some performances took place in open spaces that allow audiences to interact with the actors, for example, the play *Queen Shakila* presented by the Royal Commission for Al-Ula, and *The Life of Al-Asha* presented by the Ministry of Culture as part of the dinner event held in Manfouha district, the birthplace of the poet Al-Asha, one of the seven “Mu’allaqat” poets from the pre-Islamic period. This play relives the stages of Al-Asha’s life in a series of interactive live shows.



**Table 5:** Theatrical performances held in open spaces in 2021<sup>(15)</sup>

Name of the play	Presented by	City	Theater	Date
Queen Shakila	Royal Commission for Al-Ula	Al-Ula	An open interactive live show in Al-Ula	Every weekend in March, in Arabic and English
Path of the Poets	Royal Commission for Al-Ula	Al-Ula	Live show in the old town of Al-Ula	May 13–19
The Life of Al-Asha	Ministry of Culture	Riyadh	An interactive live show as part of dinner events in Manfouha	December 23, 2021–January 5, 2022

This diversity contributes not only to increasing production, but also to expanding the circle of target audiences. While the branches of the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts and private theatrical groups have a broad area of experience that enables them to diversify between elite and public performances, the Ministry of Culture and the Theater and Performing Arts Commission presented plays

of a public cultural nature in the National Theater, such as *The Poetry Maker*, a play about the life of Al-Asha. Comedy or entertainment shows feature in the productions of the General Entertainment Authority, and are a hit with the public, as usual. In addition, a number of performances are geared towards children, such as the performances of *Baba Farhan*, *Open Sesame*, and *Field Guards*.

**Table 6:** Theatrical shows presented at the first Saudi Universities Festival in Jazan<sup>(16)</sup>

Name of play	Presenting university	Location	Festival Date
The Detainee	Jazan University	The University of Jazan Academic Theater	December 6–11
Lord of Candles	University of Tabuk	Theater of the Cultural Center of Jazan	December 6–11
Love Story	King Saud University	Mahaliya Academic Complex Theater at Jazan University	December 6–11
Wooden Legs Gallery	Imam Abd Al-Rahman Bin Faisal University	Theater of the Cultural Center of Jazan	December 6–11
A Homeland Cafe	Al-Bahah University	Theater of the Cultural Center of Jazan	December 6–11
The Chain	King Khalid University	Mahaliya Academic Complex Theater at Jazan University	December 6–11



Name of play	Presenting university	Location	Festival Date
It Equals One	University of Taibah	Theater of the Cultural Center of Jazan	December 6–11
Happy Dream	Al-Qassim University	Theater of the Cultural Center of Jazan	December 6–11
Who Among us is the Writer?	Taif University	Mahaliya Academic Complex Theater at Jazan University	December 6–11
The Human and the Other	King Abdul Aziz University	Theater of the Cultural Center of Jazan	December 6–11
From the Bottom	Northern Borders University	Mahaliya Academic Complex Theater at Jazan University	December 6–11

Another important milestone in the post-pandemic theater scene was the return of theater festivals and gatherings, which played an important role in the theater production cycle, be it through performances presented during the festivals, or through accompanying critique sessions and competitions. Events in 2021 included the first Saudi Universities Festival in Jazan,<sup>(17)</sup> the Ithra Short Play Contest held at the theater of the Energy Exhibition in Dhahran,<sup>(18)</sup> as well as The Innovative Theatrical Performances Festival organized by the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts in Riyadh.

**Table 7:** Theatrical performances presented as part of the Ithra Short Play Contest in 2021<sup>(19)</sup>

Name of the play	Performance date
The Station	August 5
Forever	August 5
The Blue One	August 5
Island of Wishes	August 6
Fall onto a Warm Text	August 6
The One with the Ears	August 6
The Orange Orchard	August 7
The Arab Gothic	August 7

Although live theatrical gatherings have returned, virtual theater, which sparked controversy among actors, ceased to operate after limited theatrical productions in 2020 that were an attempt to overcome the challenges posed by the absence of audiences because of public health precautionary measures.<sup>(20)</sup> It seems that the experience was merely an exceptional means of coping with exceptional circumstances, as virtual performances were missing from the 2021 calendar of events. However, despite the absence

of virtual shows, digital technologies continued to be employed, such as in the display of “Auditory Memoirs”, which featured recorded sound memoirs shown on computers and mobile phones used in the festival of innovative theatrical performances.

**Table 8:** Theatrical performances presented as part of the Innovative Theatrical Performances Festival<sup>(21)</sup>

Name of play	Performance date
Chaos	August 2
Wishes	August 3
Scream Without a Voice	August 3
Auditory Memoirs	August 3
A Crime that Did Not Happen	August 4
Fifth of Shawwal	August 5



### Theatrical publications and history projects

The recent live theatrical movement in 2021 coincided with the return of theatrical releases following a period of absence. While in 2020, no theatrical works were published,<sup>(22)</sup> 2021 was the year when 14 publications appeared, including theatrical texts, as well as documentary or research projects involving the study and analysis of Saudi theater. These included the works of the Taif Literary Club, such as the complete works of the theater by Fahd Rada Al-Harthy, which comprised 47 theatrical texts, the entirety of his theatrical works.<sup>(23)</sup>

Infographic 2. Some theatrical releases in 2021<sup>(24)</sup>



### Traditional Dance Performance and Social Attendance

It is very difficult to limit performance production, in light of its close association with the culture and heritage of society, where traditional dances with varying regional diversity are a form of expressing joy and celebrations at social occasions, such as marriages, holidays, festivals and national days. In addition to the social dimension, professional practices and public offerings can be monitored by a number of entities in the Kingdom. In 2021, the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts hosted 52 performances through its various branches<sup>(25)</sup>, 44 performances in 2020<sup>(26)</sup>, and the Theater and Performing Arts Commission recorded nearly 40 performances through the same body or registered associations,<sup>(27)</sup> such as the Dar Unayzah Heritage Organization, and participated in the



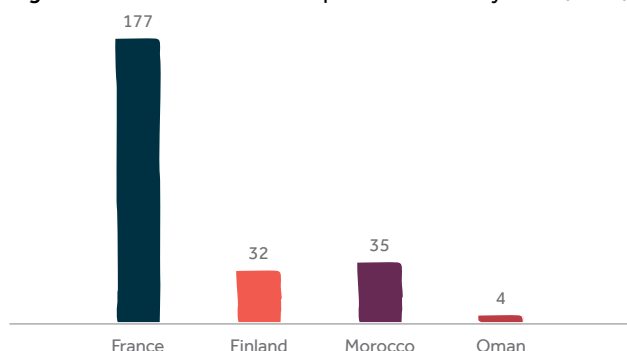
international fair Artigiano in Fiera, specializing in crafts, international cuisine and performing arts in Milan, Italy, by presenting 25 performances that represented different styles, e.g., Al-Arda, Al-Samri, Khbaiti, Mizmar, Al-Khatwa and Al-Yanbawy, through the popular Abbiyah troupe<sup>(28)</sup>.

### Audio-Visual Production

#### Films

In 2021, the number of rated Saudi films this year increased to 24 from 21 in 2020; of these 7 were commercial films, and the distribution was 50-50 between feature films and short films<sup>(29)</sup>. The rating figures do not reflect the actual number of production figures, as the post-production film cycle passes through the rating phase, then the glade, followed by screening in commercial theaters or cinemas.

Figure 7: Number of local films produced in one year<sup>(30)</sup> (2017)



At this stage marked by the acceleration in regulatory steps and initiatives to support production in the sector, film festivals play an indispensable role in stimulating the burgeoning yet significant progress of the Saudi film industry. This is evident in the Saudi Film Festival, which has a long legacy on the local scene, and the Red Sea International Film Festival, which was launched in 2019 and held for the first time in December 2021, forming part of the strides witnessed in this sector. The 2021 festival featured a total of 185 long and short Saudi films, which indicates that the actual production figures may be higher than those of classified films.

Table 9: Saudi Films participating in and screened at film festivals within the Kingdom.<sup>(31)</sup>

Festival	Number of Participating Saudi Films	Number of Saudi Screened Films
Red Sea International Film Festival	12 Long Films 84 Short Films	10 Long Films 17 Short Films
Saudi Film Festival	89 Films	57 Films

Furthermore, the Red Sea International Film Festival screened 10 feature films, 8 of which were produced in 2021. Suspense and drama films ranked the first in number, with three films per classification, while only one film was produced in both the horror and comedy categories, a noteworthy trend, based on the data obtained on production trends influenced by global production. The behavior of the receiving audience, and the average length of feature films displayed is approximately 88 minutes per film, representing producer or audience preferences.<sup>(32)</sup>

Table 10: Saudi Arabia’s feature films screened at the Red Sea International Film Festival

Film	Classification	Length	Producer
Rupture	Thriller	115 minutes	Hamzah Jamjoom
Soula	Drama	92 minutes	Salah Issaad
Junoon	Adventure, Horror, Suspense	90 minutes	Maan Abdul Rahman and Yasser Abdul Rahman
Fay’s Palette	Drama, Thriller	86 minutes	Anas Ba-Tahaf
Route Ten	Suspense	82 minutes	Omar Naim
Quareer	Drama	76 minutes	Nourah Al-Mowld, Ragheed Al-Nahdi, Ruba Khafaji, Noor Al-Ameer and Fatima Al-Hazmi
Kayan	Suspense	75 minutes	Hakeem Jomah
Champions	Comedy	93 minutes	The Spanish Director, Manuel Calvo

**Film festivals and production projects**

Film festivals are an important indicator of the state of production, both in terms of screening the most prominent public works, and providing artistic incentives to creators in the field or in their direct role in supporting production. For example, the Red Sea Lodge of the Red Sea International Film Festival, in cooperation with the Torino Film Lab, organized a nine-month support program that included 9



workshops and screened 12 films, half of which were Saudi. These films compete for a production prize of \$100,000 per winning project<sup>(33)</sup>, and the Saudi Film Festival’s Script Development Laboratory provided financial support for five scenario projects.

Infographic 3: Saudi projects selected from the Red Sea Lodge.



Table 11: List of Scenario Development Lab Awards for 2021

Name	Award Amount in SAR
Ali Yahya Al-Khabrani	20,000
Abdulaziz Ghazi Al-Issa	20,000
Ali Saeed Al-Madlough	10,000
Abdul Rahman Badran	10,000
Aqil Abdel Moneim Al-Khamis	10,000

### International partnerships and local production

Overall, international partnerships in production and photography projects enhance the Kingdom’s presence as an international film industry destination, stimulate local industry in the sector, and contribute to the acquisition of different experiences and skills by workers. They also have an economic impact in supporting tourism, transport, logistics, and security sectors on filming sites. As a step in this



direction, in 2021 the Film Commission provided logistical support for three world movies filmed and produced inside the Kingdom. The first of these films, a family entertainment film, was Champions, in which three Saudi actors (two males and a female) who played leading roles. This film was shown in movie theaters in the first quarter of 2022. The other two films, Desert Warrior and Kandahar, are still in production, and are classified as thrillers, and have huge budgets and large production teams as compared to local films. A Saudi actor stars in Kandahar, more than 600 additional actors are in these films, more than 1,000 auditions took place, and shooting took place in four cities: Tabuk, Al-Ula, Riyadh, and Jeddah. Three local companies worked in production support for the two films (Desert Warrior and Kandahar), and the proportion of Saudis involved in permanent production from the beginning to the end of the projects was 10% for Kandahar and 20% for Desert Warrior.<sup>(34)</sup>

Infographic 4: International films produced in the Kingdom in 2021.<sup>(35)</sup>







**Music**

As suggested by Rotana Audio’s production figures that trace the trends in musical and commercial production, in 2021,<sup>(36)</sup> a total of 6 albums and 42 singles were produced, as compared to 8 albums and 49 singles in 2020. Unsurprisingly, the number of male artists and singers is greater than those of their female counterparts, despite the emergence of new female voices on the music scene. On the level of public institutions, the Music Commission produced seven choral works performed by Saudis, for which classical Arabic poems were selected, blending classical Arabic with Latin and Andalusian melodies. The Commission also produced a national song entitled “Green History” as well

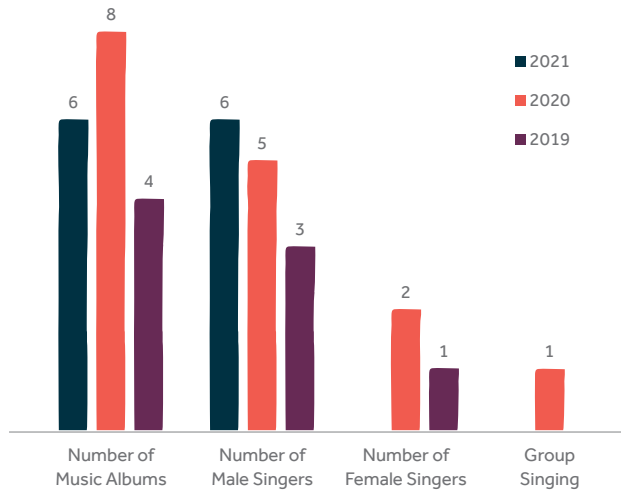
as performances and musical performances when the Saudi national football team qualified for the 2022 World Cup.

The year 2021 also saw the production of music and music podcasts, such as the Musiqana podcast published by the Music Commission, which discusses various musical themes, including the history of international and Saudi music, music education, instruments, and melodies. The first episode aired in November 2021 with musician Mamdouh Saif, and the second episode in December 2021 with musician Ali Khafaji. There was also the Nahawand podcast produced by Paper Samwich, and six episodes of this podcast were aired during 2021.

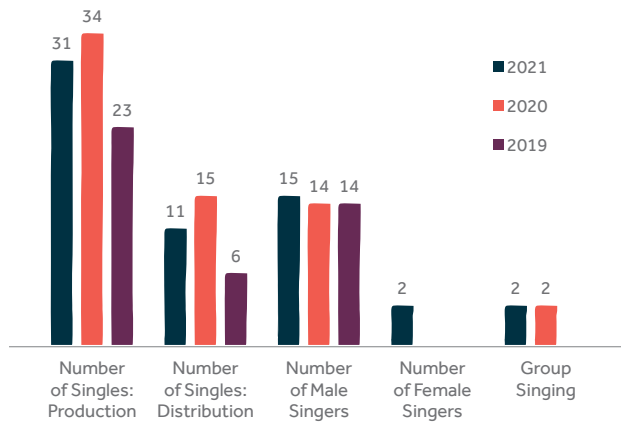
**Table 12:** Musical works produced by the Music Commission

Song	Singer	Words	Melodies	Distribution
“The Night Says”	Bushra Al- Hammoud	Sultan Al- Deet	Rami Basahih	Rami Basahih
“And We Drowned”	Adnan Al- Aidroos	Mohamed Al- Bakri	Rami Basahih	Aziz Al- Masri
“Lonely as a Summer Cloud”	Montazer Al- Suwaileh	Iyad Al- Hakami	Rami Basahih	Rami Basahih
“Tired of Not Seeing You”	Zeina Emad	Ahlam Al- Hamid	Rami Basahih	Rami Basahih
“The Unseen”	Akram Matar	Ibrahim Al- Sawani	Rami Basahih	Rami Basahih
“The Voice”	Azzam Othman	Mohammad Faqih	Rami Basahih	Rami Basahih
“He Fell in Love with His Soil”	Shaker Al- Zahrani	Tariq Al- Sumili	Ahmed Qarnawi	Aziz Al- Masri

**Figure 8: Musical and lyrical albums produced by Saudi artists during 2019 – 2021.**<sup>(37)</sup>



**Figure 9: Singles produced by Saudi artists during 2019–2021.**<sup>(38)</sup>



## Production in the fields of design and the arts

### Visual arts

#### Art exhibitions and distribution

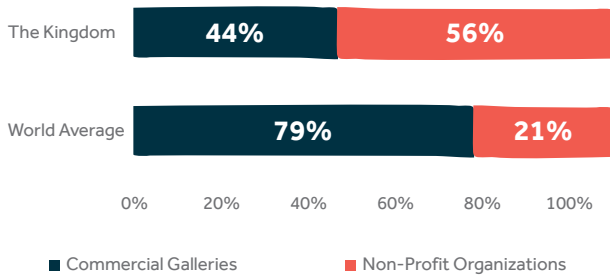
Despite the adverse impact of the COVID-2019 pandemic on some commercial art galleries, which resulted in the termination of their activities, the current report traces an indication of recovery of this part of the visual arts sector: the growth of the number of exhibitions held by art galleries, which nearly doubled on average. The 17 private galleries that were included in the partial survey<sup>(39)</sup> of art galleries for 2021 held 121 exhibitions, as compared to only 74 exhibitions by 19 galleries in 2020. This reflects the growth from an average of 4 exhibitions per gallery in 2020 to approximately 7 exhibitions in 2021. The total number of participants in the exhibitions held by the art galleries stood at 1,033, half, or 510, of which came from female artists, a rate that indicates the prominent role of female artists in the artistic scene in the Kingdom, which is a remarkable level of participation by women and one that exceeds the global average<sup>(40)</sup> where only 33% of the total number of participants in art exhibitions in 2018 were women.<sup>(41)</sup>

As in previous years, non-profit art organizations participated in a large share of the exhibitions held during 2021, holding more than half of the total number of exhibitions, which is higher than the global average. This highlights the role of non-profit organizations in the art scene in the Kingdom and may be explained by the major role played by these institutions in addition to the need for the art market to grow in a more mature manner. In the addition to the 154 exhibitions held by art institutions, the report monitors at least 275 exhibitions held in the Kingdom in 2021, a limited number of which were held in hybrid form—with in person and virtual exhibitions being held simultaneously—based on the data of 21 commercial art galleries and a non-profit art institution.

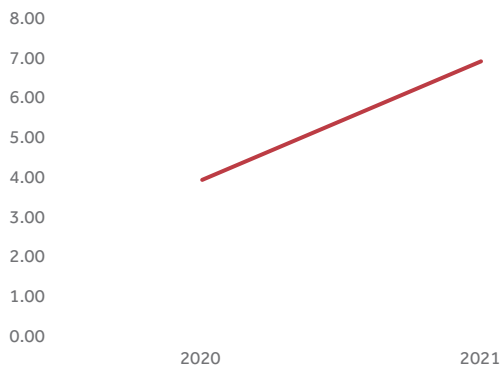


**Creativity and Production**

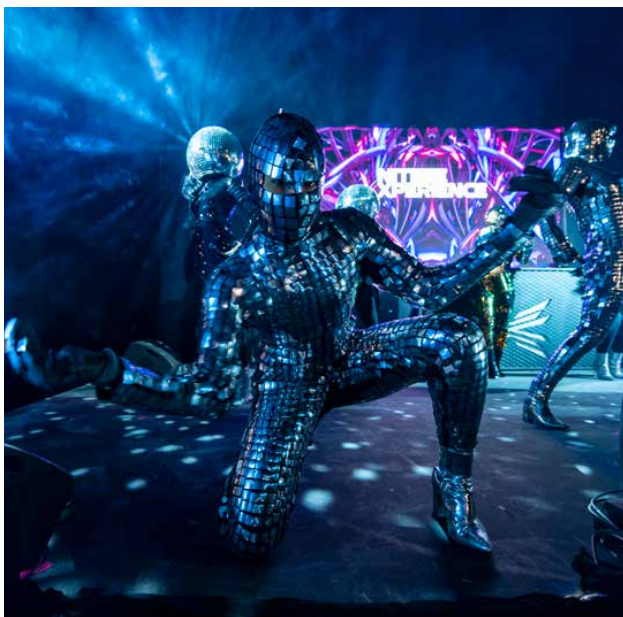
**Figure 10:** Share of commercial galleries and non-profit organizations in the total number of exhibitions held<sup>(42)</sup>



**Figure 11:** Average number of exhibits organized by a gallery or institution.

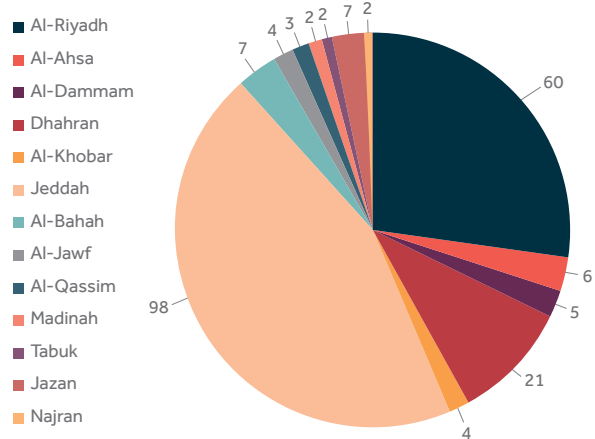


As expected, the majority of these exhibitions (72%) were concentrated in Jeddah and Riyadh, which are hubs for the the commercial activity of the arts sector, just as other

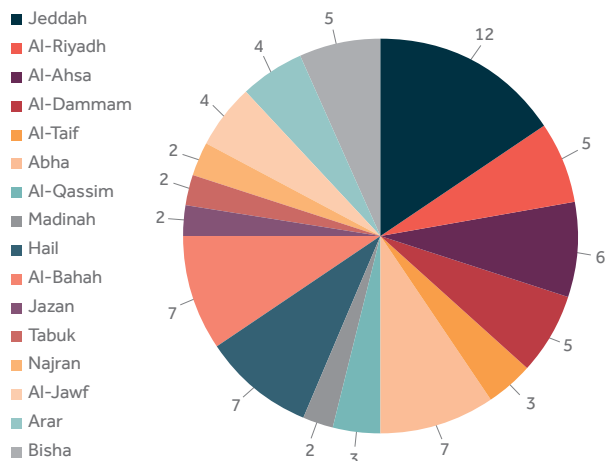


creative sectors are concentrated in major cities. The Eastern Province comes in third place, specifically the city of Dhahran, where the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture—Ithra—is active. Art exhibitions outside major cities were mostly confined to the branches of literary clubs, or branches of the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts. Last year, the Society held 74 exhibitions, most of which were plastic art exhibitions,<sup>(43)</sup> which highlights the great importance of the role of non-profit organizations in bridging the significant disparity in the availability of opportunities between cities and parties. An institution such as the Society for Culture and Arts does a vital job in bridging this gap, which requires further support and additional efforts to achieve a reasonable measure of equal opportunities for contact with and enjoyment of the arts by citizens and residents throughout the Kingdom.

**Figure 12:** Distribution of art exhibitions, by city



**Figure 13:** Art exhibitions held by the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts, 2021



### Qualitative exhibitions

During the year, several qualitative art exhibitions were held, such as the Noor Riyadh Exhibition in which more than 30 Saudi and international artists participated with more than 60 works of art inspired by the theme of light. Most of these

artists relied on visual techniques that matched the theme in order to create a sensory experience for the recipient. The works were distributed throughout the city to promote visual identity and activating the cultural and aesthetic aspect of the open spaces.<sup>(44)</sup>

**Table 13:** Saudi artworks participating in Noor Riyadh exhibition.

Title of work	Artist	Materials or techniques used
Mitochondria	Ahmed Mater Who Among us is the Writer?	Tesla coil machine, along with sculptures from the fulgurite pipes
Green Antenna	Ahmed Mater	Neon light
Seeds of the Earth	Ayman Zidani	3D video installation
The Unknown	Dana Awartani	Embroidery on silk and 3D projection
Searching for Darkness	Rashed Al Shashai	Motion lighting models in variable dimensions
When the Moon Was Complete	Zaman Al-Jassim	Fiber glass, LED lights, and video display
Trees Talking to Each Other	Sara Abu Abdullah	Wooden container, soil, tomato plant, and artificial light
My Mother's Corner	Saeed Qamhawi	Light reflector, sand, audio clips, and steel frames
Will the Individual Get Over His Condition?	Suleiman Al- Salem	Round structure and light reflector system
He Was Governor	Sultan Fahad	Color print, X-rays, and light box of variable dimensions
Riyadh Casino	Abdullah Al-Othman	Neon light and steel
Infinite Blue	Lulwah Al-Homoud	Variable-dimensional video installation artwork
The Sun Again	Mohamed Al-Faraj	video of different dimensions
Our House Is in the Sky	Marwah Al-Mugait	Synthetic art video, water screen
And Nostalgia Takes Us to a Sea of Passion that Knows No Borders	Manal Al Dowayan	Giclee print on aluminium sheets and aluminium lights
Light Capture	Maha Malluh	Photogram using a light scanner
God is Alive, and He Never Dies	Nasser Al-Salem	Neon, one-way mirror, acrylic box
Exodus of the Ship of the Mind	Muhannad Shono	Network, steel wires, and video presentation
Temporary Messages	Nojoud Al-Sudairi	LED markers and variable-dimensional cube marquees

**Table 14:** Outstanding exhibitions by art institutions in 2021

Show	City/Gallery	Duration	Organizer
Fading of Boundaries: Art and the Creative Industries	Riyadh / Prince Faisal bin Fahad Art Gallery	June 6–30	Misk Art Institute
Noor Riyadh	Riyadh / King Abdullah Financial District	March 8–April 3	Riyadh Art
On the Table: Memory, Environment, Place	Jeddah / Hayy Jameel	April 30–December 6	Jameel Art
Spacetoons	Jeddah / Athr Gallery	September 1–30	Misk Art Institute in collaboration with Athr Gallery



Diriyah Biennale

The Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale entitled “Tracking Stones” was held in 2021 and lasted for three months; from December 11, 2021 to March 11, 2022, during which 63<sup>(45)</sup> works by Saudi and international artists were exhibited. Artists from 21 different countries took part in the exhibit, and the highest level of participation after Saudi Arabia came from China with 13 works of art that contributed to the development of the content of the exhibition. The Director General and CEO of the Center for Contemporary Art of China, Philip Tinari, played the role of the art curator for the exhibition, with the help of Wejdan Redha from Saudi Arabia, and with Shischuan Liwan and Neil Zhang from China as assistants.<sup>(46)</sup>

During the Diriyah Biennale, Saudi artists accounted for 39.68% of the total work on offer, with 25 new or reinvented works. As an indication of diversity and of the emergence of modern art forms in the contemporary art scene in the Kingdom, as well as a decline in classical plastic arts trends, 20 of these works (i.e., 84%) belonged to the style of compositional works, or were based on technical media, whether audio, visual, or audiovisual. The remainder is also plastic works, belonging to veteran artists from a generation that emerged at a time when fine arts were the dominant form of the visual arts. Two of these works



were created by the late artists Fahad Al-Hujailan and Mohammed Al-Salim, whose works were re-exhibited, with the third being a composition by the late artist Munira Musalli, in a gesture of appreciation to that generation of pioneers.

**Table 15:** Saudi artists participating in the Diriyah Biennale<sup>(47)</sup>

Number	Artist	Type of Work	
1	Abdullah Al- Othman	Composite work	
2	Abdullah Hammas	Drawing	
3	Ahmed Mater	Composite work	
4	Ayman Zidani	Composite work	
5	Bricklab and Mama PhotoGrama	Composite work	Collaboration between artists Abdul Rahman and Turki Qazzaz with Italian design studio Bricklab
6	Dana Awartani	Composite work	
7	Dania Al-Saleh	Composite work	
8	Fahad Al-Hujailan	Drawing	Presentation of the work of the late artist Fahad Al-Hujailan
9	Faisal Samra	Multimedia	
10	Filwa Nazer	Composite work	
11	Hmoud Al-Attawi	Composite work	
12	Jawhara Al-Saud	Photography / drawing	
13	Lulwah Al-Homoud	Composite work	

Number	Artist	Type of Work	
14	Maha Malluh	Composite work	
15	Mahdi Al- Jaribi	Composite work	
16	Manal Al-Dowayan	Composite work	
17	Marwah Al-Mugait	Video / performance	
18	Mohammed Al-Salim	Drawing	Presentation of the work of the late artist Mohammed Al-Salim
19	Muhannad Shono	Composite work	
20	Munira Musalli	Composite work	Presentation of the work of the late artist Munira Musalli
21	Omar Abdul Jawad	Composite work	
22	Rashed Al-Shashai	Composite work	
23	Sarah Abu Abdullah and Ghada Al-Hassan	Custom / composition	
24	Sarah Ibrahim	Video compositional performance	
25	Shadia Alem	Composite work	
26	Sultan Bin Fahad	Composite work	
27	Zahra Al-Ghamdi	Composite work	

### Architecture

One of the most significant creative developments within the architecture sector in 2021 was the establishment of The King Salman Charter for Architecture and Urbanism. This initiative, launched by the Architecture and Design Commission in December 2021, presented an integrated creative philosophy of architecture that draws its principles from King Salman's vision of architecture, or the so-called 'Salmani' Style, a label first launched in 2017 by Prince Abdulaziz bin Ayyaf, Secretary of Riyadh region, in an article

in Al-Jazeera newspaper.. In this article, Prince Abdulaziz bin Ayyaf addressed the March of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, as the Emir of Riyadh, and his keenness to infuse the traditional style with modern construction elements, in a harmonious manner between the old and the new, in architectural projects completed during his time as emir of the region. This keenness was highlighted by the King Salman Charter for Architecture and Urbanism, which was issued as a printed book that accompanied the launch of the initiative with



its principles of originality and continuity,<sup>(48)</sup> human pivot, and the possibility of living, in addition to innovation and environmental sustainability.

The Charter aims to establish these principles as a strategic basis for the future of urbanization in the Kingdom and to serve as a guide for decision-makers, specialists, and architecture professionals. The King Salman Charter for Architecture and Urbanism initiative includes a number of services and incentives, all of which aim to activate the Charter, in addition to the document published, an award and a mobile exhibition launched at the end of 2021 in Riyadh and set to tour at the beginning of next year in Dammam, Jeddah, and Abha.<sup>(49)</sup> The “Sedra” project a Riyadh residential neighborhood that launched in the end of 2021,<sup>(50)</sup> is one of the largest modern residential projects that have adopted the principles of the Salmani style of architecture. The name of the project was given in August 2021 by The ROSHN Company, which is owned by the Public Investment Fund. The name is inspired by the authentic Cedar tree that grows in Saudi neighborhoods, reflecting the resilience to the climatic conditions known to the region.<sup>(51)</sup>

In the same vein, the announcement of the Historic Jeddah Revival Project in September 2021 came as part of the Jeddah Historic Development Program complimenting efforts to develop the region as a vital center of culture and a natural incubator for creativity, inspired by the human and historical value of the region. This 15-year project includes several paths for the development of infrastructure, service, environment, and urban improvement of the region to make it a global interface for the Kingdom, and the project intends to invest in the area’s unique heritage, cultural, and urban potential.<sup>(52)</sup>

At the 17th Venice Biennale of Architecture in Italy—“How are we going to live together?”—held from May to November

2021, the participation of three Saudi architects represented another creative feature that emerged<sup>(53)</sup> through the theme of their work “Maqar” which was presented in the Kingdom’s Pavilion. The participating artists were Hessa Al-Bader, Hussam Dakkak, and Basmah Kaki. Their work was born from their research into the reality and history of quarantine and its ability to create new means that respond to changing circumstances. Their work also highlighted the impact and implications of isolation in shaping the interlocking relationship between the individual, the place, and the surroundings.

### Fashion design

In the fashion sector, two important trends have emerged: inspiration of Saudi heritage in designs and the attention to sustainability techniques. These trends were reflected in the products in the fashion shows held in 2021,<sup>(54)</sup> as well as in conferences and scientific production in the fashion field.

The Fashion Commission issued a guide to the dress code for the Saudi Cup.<sup>(55)</sup> In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Commission also launched a textile competition as part of the 2021 Arab Calligraphy Initiatives. The competition contained the following three tracks: women’s and men’s fashion design, children’s clothing design, shoe design, and jewelry. The Calligraphy Initiatives aimed to develop the fashion industry to reflect the aesthetics and art of Arabic calligraphy.<sup>(56)</sup>

To promote sustainability in the production and fashion industry, the Fashion Commission also held a sustainability exhibition, entitled GFX Swap Shop, as part of the Fashion Futures programs. The exhibition is based on the concept of exchange and recycling, where the presentation and exchange of fashion pieces and products seek to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and develop the concepts prevailing in the fashion industry.



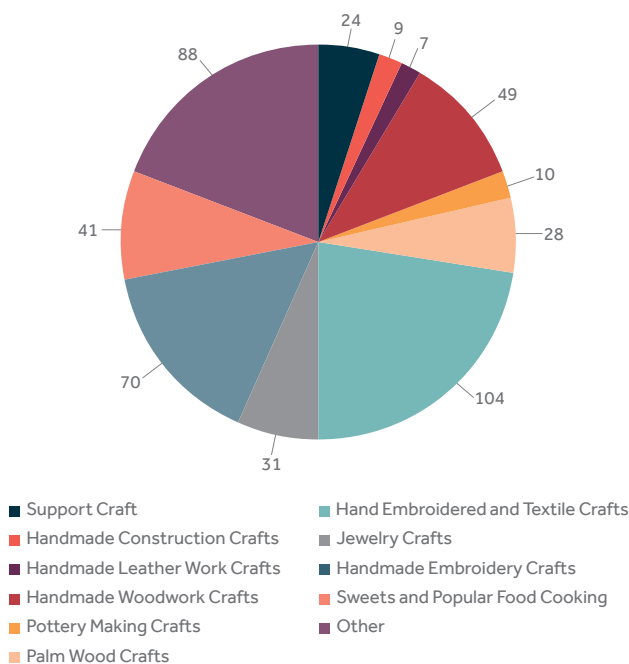
**Table 16:** Examples of the 2021 fashion releases

Description	Author	Genre	Publisher
Fashion leadership	Amani Radwan	Book	Universal Publisher & Distributor
Contemporary fabric-style ornament design inspired by the architectural aesthetics of Damascus	Seeta Mohammed, Al-Mutairi, and Shaimaa Huwsawi	Scientific discussion	Saudi Art and Design Journal, Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University
Arabic crafts as a formative aesthetic element in enriching the digital designs printed for surfaces and fabrics of travel bag.	Jawzaa Falah Al-Anzi	Scientific discussion	Saudi Art and Design Journal Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University
The impact of the trend of cutting padding fabrics on the quality of the fabrication of Saudi dress	Imad Eddin Sayed Johar	Scientific discussion	Saudi Art and Design Journal Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University

**Industries and crafts**

In 2021, a total of 4,429 artisans were listed in the crafts register. According to the data from 2019–2021, textile items, including carpet sewing and Sadu, stand at 23%, followed by hand-embroidered crafts such as sewing and embroidering clothes, napkins, pillows, and sheets at 15%. The lowest proportion of participation is artisan leather works, which includes leather tanning and leatherwear-making, as well as handmade heritage construction crafts (e.g., clay and plaster decoration, coloring on wooden and wall surfaces), which accounts for no more than 2% each.<sup>(57)</sup>

**Figure 14:** Number of artisans, by craft



**Cultural Creativity**

In this section, we review the creative aspect of artistic and subjective content, which is at the heart of the creative process in the cultural field, and around which sectors with an innovative or artistic dimension are centered. The report monitors the award-winning works locally, regionally, and globally as an objective indicator because of the difficulty of providing a deep technical and critical analysis of the contents, and which is outside the scope of the report. Instead, it lists award-winning Saudi works, the nature of these works, the award field, and the type of prize received.

**National Cultural Awards**

The National Cultural Awards Initiative, which was launched in 2021, attempts to act as a reference umbrella for local awards in the various cultural sectors by presenting 14 awards annually in 11 cultural sectors in addition to the Foundation’s Cultural Award, the Cultural Pioneer Award, and the Youth Cultural Award. These awards aim to stimulate cultural production, encourage social participation, highlight national talent, honor pioneers, and celebrate national cultural achievements. They also motivate and encourage the private sector to contribute to cultural activity and sponsor national talent. Therefore, the awards are premised on the following five general criteria: (1) continuity, authenticity and uniqueness of production; (2) cultural participation in terms of interaction with society, proliferation and influence; (3) association with the directions of the award; (4) non-governmental support through the economic dimension of the winning participations; and finally, (5) global accessibility, through attendance, deployment, and participation in international events and awards.



Through these five criteria –and in particular, the third one that aligns with the programs of the Ministry of Culture– we can monitor trends in supporting artistic tracks and movements, as well as specific performance and literary competitions each year to create an empowering space of support and revitalization for these tracks through which creatives contribute to a self-sustaining cultural ecosystem. For example, in 2021, the award in the visual arts branch went to two female artists and a male artist influenced by Islamic art and Arabic calligraphy, reflecting the current interest in Arabic calligraphy, which the Ministry of Culture called the Year of Arabic Calligraphy.

Furthermore, the interest in cultural heritage is also reflected in the cultural personality of the year, His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Nasser Al-Abboudi, who has made many contributions to and written about intangible cultural heritage, in particular, genealogy, language, and travel literature, as well as through the efforts of the Saudi Heritage Preservation Society to maintain the first place in the branch

of cultural institutions in the non-profit sector, as well as the inclusion of national heritage as part of the 14 branches of the award.

Director Shahad Ameen received the youth branch award, as well as the first place in the film branch, despite the recent emerging and growing interest in the sector. Shahad directed her first feature film entitled Scales, which was screened at the 76th Venice Film Festival and won several regional and international awards at film festivals. The 2021 literature branch awards were limited to the novel, and in coming years will be allocated to other genres each year in key areas such as the novel, story, poetry, and children’s literature. The award was not awarded in the field of architecture and design, as submitted works failed to meet the requirements of the award. While some awards paid tribute to personalities who had enriched the sector over the years, such as the national heritage branch, and the theater and performing arts branch, several branches, such as music, received encouragement by way of moral support for youth and emerging talents.

**Table 17:** Winners of the 2021 National Cultural Awards<sup>(58)</sup>

Award branch	First place	Second place	Third place
Visual Arts Award	Lulwah Al-Homoud	Dana Awartani	Ahmed Angawi
Music Award	Zeina Emad	Akram Matar	Reem Tamimi
Fashion Award	Lomar	Yousef Akbar	Arwa Al-Ammari
Literature Award	Abdulaziz Al-Saqabi	Maqboul Al-Alawi	Amal Al-Harbi
Publishing Award	Obeikan for Publishing and Translation	Kadi & Ramadi Publishing and Distribution House	Dar Athar Publishing and Distribution house
Translation Award	Abdullah Idris	Sultan Al-Mujaiwel	Bandar Al-Harbi
Theater and Performing Arts Award	Sami Al-Juman	Yasser Madkhli	
Film Award	Shahad Ameen		
Culinary Arts Award	Racan Al-Arifi	ZADK Culinary Academy	Noura Al-Badran
National Heritage Award	Abdulaziz Al-Dakhil	Hisham Murtada	Torathuna Social Responsibility Company
Architecture and Design Award	There was no winner in 2021.		
Cultural Institutions Award	Private sector track	Non-profit sector	Social responsibility sector
	King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture-Ithra	Saudi Heritage Preservation Society	Electronic App (My Book for You)
Cultural Pioneer Award	H.E. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Nasser Al-Abboudi		
Youth Cultural Award	Film director Shahad Ameen		

## Local cultural awards

### Artistic awards and production stimulation

Local awards stimulate production and support creators in various creative sectors, particularly those awards that have maintained continuity and gained importance within the creative community, such as the Saudi Film Festival Awards, which launched in 2008 and held its seventh series of awards in 2021. It is noteworthy that the film, Had Eltar, which won the best feature film award at the festival and had previously won international awards, has been nominated by the Film Commission to represent Saudi films at the Academy Oscar Awards.



Infographic 5: Winners of the Seventh Saudi Film Festival Awards<sup>(59)</sup>

7th SAUDI FILM FESTIVAL thira   1-7 July 2021	
<b>Best Feature Film</b> Had Eltar Directed by Abdul Aziz Al-Shallahi	<b>Best Short Film</b> The Little Bird Directed by Khaled Fahad
<b>Best Documentary</b> Roshan's Tale Directed by Abdul Majid Al Harbi	<b>Abdullah Al-Mohaisan Award for Best First Film</b> Egg Rebelled Directed by Sultan Rabie
<b>Jabal Tuwaiq Award for Best Film Reflecting a Saudi City</b> Had Eltar About Riyadh	<b>Best Music</b> Gia Al- Rashidat In Forty years and One Night
<b>Best Actor</b> Meshaal Al- Mutairi For his role in Forty Years and One Night	<b>Best Actress</b> Baseema Al- Hajjar For her role in Scales
<b>Best Cinematography</b> Scales Directed by Shahad Ameen	<b>Jury Award</b> Forty Years and One Night Directed by Mohammed Al-Hlayyel

In the same sector, the Red Sea International Film Festival presents a local award, the Al-Yusr Award for Best Saudi Film, in which 12 feature films competed in, and the film Rupture, written and directed by Hamzah Jamjoom, won.<sup>(60)</sup>

Visual element: Advertisement poster for Rupture film – Best Saudi Film Award at the 2021 Red Sea International Film Festival.

Many of these awards contribute to the refinement of local talent through competition and the participation of critics and specialized juries. On the university level, the first Saudi University Theater Festival was held at Jazan University, where more than 100 students representing 11 Saudi universities who competed by presenting 11 theatrical performances to the public and critics in the university theater.

Table 18: Winners of the first Saudi University Theatre Festival

مهرجان المسرح الجامعي الأول	
<b>Scenography Award</b> The Detainee Jazan University	<b>Best Theatrical Director</b> Who Among us is the Writer? Taif University
<b>Best First Post</b> From the Bottom Northern Border University	<b>Best Integrated View</b> Wooden Legs Gallery Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University
<b>Best Promising Actor</b> Rakan of Peace Northern Border University	<b>Best Actor First Role</b> Mohamed Al-Jaeed King Abdulaziz University
<b>Best Script</b> Who Among us is the Writer? Taif University	<b>Best Supporting Actor</b> Abd Al-Wahab Fendi King Khalid University



**Excellence and institutional work awards**

The Excellence Awards reflect the support of official bodies and institutions for various cultural sectors, specifically on the institutional level. For instance, the Makkah Award for Excellence presented annually by the Emirate of Makkah Province in 10 different fields. The Academy of Arab Poetry received the Award of Cultural Excellence for its initiatives in the field of Arabic poetry and support for studies and research around it. The Complex of Public Departments in Makkah received the urban excellence award for the flexible design of the complex located on an area of 1.5 million square meters. The Saudi Electricity Company’s South Jeddah Power Plant was awarded the Environmental Excellence Award from the Coral Reef Culture and Marine Environment Initiative, which will plant more than 500 units of coral reefs to protect marine life and preserve the environment to ensure the growth and reproduction of coral reefs, fish growth, the promotion of the marine environment, and the food security of fishers, as well as the mitigation of environmental impacts from electric power production processes.<sup>(61)</sup>

Visual element, The 12th Makkah Excellence Awards.

Cultural excellence	Urban excellence	Environmental excellence
Arab Poetry Academy	Government department complex in Makkah	The Saudi Electricity Company’s South Jeddah Power Plant

As part of the Riyadh International Book Fair, the Literature, Publishing & Translation Commission presented the Excellence in Publishing Awards in three areas of local work,

namely the Excellence in Publishing Award, the Children’s Publishing Excellence<sup>(62)</sup> Award, and the Excellence in Translation Award. The prizes were worth SAR 50,000 for each winner. Dar Tashkeel, active in the field of literary publishing and literary translation, received the Award for Excellence in Publishing, while Arwa Arabic Publishing House received the Award for Excellence in the Children’s category, and Dar Madarek received the Excellence in Translation Award.<sup>(63)</sup>

Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University presents the Princess Nourah Award for Women’s Excellence, which honors women figures in various fields. The award in the field of literature for 2021<sup>(64)</sup> was won by novelist Atheer Al-Nashmi for the novel *The Puzzle of Solitude*, which tells the story of a young man with autism, his deep relationship with his mother, and his life after her death.

**International cultural awards**

**Saudi writers and novelists’ awards**

Poet and translator Ghassan Al-Khunaizi received the Sargon Boulus Prize for Poetry and Translation, and the significance of the award, which was launched in 2018, is that he is the first Saudi writer to receive it, which is an indication that there is growing interest in literary translation and a translator’s ability to reach the world. Despite the plethora of narrative production, it was surprising to some critics that Saudi novelists were absent from the long list for the Arabic Novel Award, which Saudi novelists and authors had won in previous years. Figure 18 lists writers and authors who won prominent regional awards in the fields of literature, criticism, and literary studies in 2021.

Table 19. Some awards won by Saudi writers and authors in 2021.

Sheikh Zayed Book Award <sup>(65)</sup>	Prince Abdullah Al- Faisal Award <sup>(66)</sup>	Rashid Bin Humaid Cultural & Sciences Award <sup>(67)</sup>	Sharjah Award for Arab Creativity <sup>(68)</sup>	Al-Aqeeq Poetry Award	Sargon Boulus Poetry & Translation Award
<p>Winner in the young author's branch: Dr. Asma Al-Ahmadi on the book The Problems of the Narrated Self in the Saudi Feminist Novel 1999–2012, Critical Study</p>	<p>Winner of the song branch: Poet Ibrahim Hallosh on Operetta (Pulse of the Earth)</p> <p>Winner of the Best Initiative in the Service of Arabic Poetry: Umm Al-Qura University (Arabic Poetry Encyclopedia in Saudi Arabia)</p>	<p>First place in the Literary Criticism Branch: Dr. Najat Taher Al-Abi</p> <p>Second place in the vertical poetry branch: Habib Al- Maateeq</p> <p>Second place in modern eloquent poetry branch: Ibrahim Al- Hajji</p> <p>Second place in the popular poetry branch: Abdullah al-Anzi</p> <p>Second place in the poetry branch: Hussein Al Ammar</p>	<p>Third place in the short story branch: Aisha Mokhtar for her collection of stories, The Wind Excludes No One</p>	<p>First place: Abdullah Obeid for poetry collection (Divan) (Days of the Unemployed)</p> <p>Second place: Mohamed Al- Sodi About poetry collection (Divan) (Like a River that Dries its Mistakes)</p> <p>Third: Shaqra Al-Mudkhali for the poetry collection (Divan) I Barely See Myself</p>	<p>Ghassan Al-Khunaiz for his poetry collections (Divan) and sporadic poetic translations</p>





**Architecture, design, and promotional culinary awards**

The importance of international trade awards stems from the prestige and credibility they bestow on the winners. These awards relate to the commercial dimension of the consumer experience. The Luxury Lifestyle Awards is a model for one of the world’s oldest businesses in this field, and the categories in which these awards are presented vary. 17 companies operating in Saudi Arabia (Saudi and non-Saudi companies) have received awards for excellence in culturally related categories, such as architecture, design, and culinary arts.

**Infographic 7: Luxury lifestyle excellence awards recipients**



Sharbachak Restaurant designed by Something Design <b>Commercial interior design</b>	Double Tree Project by Hilton, Jeddah <b>Architectural design of luxury hotels</b>
Beef Stock Restaurant designed by Cesar Design <b>Commercial interior design</b>	Gold Sushi Club Restaurant <b>Japanese food</b>
Office of engineer Tareq Al-Hajj <b>Mixed architecture</b>	Doubletree Hotel <b>Hotel engineering</b>
Office of engineer Tareq Al-Hajj <b>Architectural studios</b>	Villa designed by Al-Azzaz <b>Architecture</b>
Yaam Architects <b>Architectural studios</b>	C&R private villa <b>Architecture</b>
Irori Restaurant <b>Fine dining</b>	Private villa designed by M Interior <b>Residential interior design</b>
Art Deco Design <b>Interior design studios</b>	Villa designed by INJ <b>Residential interior design</b>
SIBYL Design studio <b>Interior design studios</b>	SK-Touch Studio <b>Residential interior design</b>
Soe Restaurant <b>Restaurants</b>	

Chunk Social Restaurant and Café received the Visual Identity Award for the Middle East and the Africa Track at the Restaurant & Bar Design Awards for design and creative spaces. The restaurant is located in Riyadh and was designed by Lot Studio and H2R Design.

The Saudi short film Tastes of Al-Ahsa won the Best Potential World Region of Gastronomy Film award, presented by the International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism for the category Potential World Regions of Gastronomy. It talks about the traditions of the people of the Al-Ahsa province in agriculture and palm culture, as well as the ways of making traditional sensory dishes.<sup>(69)</sup>





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- (40) This is the total number of participants, both female and male artists, and some of these artists participated in more than one exhibit.
- (41) The Art Market 2019, An Art Basel & UBS Report Prepared by Dr. Clare McAndrew, Founder of Arts Economics, 2019.
- (42) The Art Market 2018, An Art Basel & UBS Report Prepared by Dr. Clare McAndrew, Founder of Arts Economics, 2018.
- (43) Data from The Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts.
- (44) Riyadh Art's official website.
- (45) Data from Thunaiyat Ad-Diriyah Foundation (January 11, 2022).
- (46) Data from Thunaiyat Ad-Diriyah Foundation (January 11, 2022).
- (47) Data from Thunaiyat Ad-Diriyah Foundation (January 11, 2022).
- (48) "Amara and Omran Riyadh, Salmani Style," Abdulaziz bin Ayyaf, Al Jazeera, November 27, 2017.
- (49) The official website of the Arts and Design Commission.
- (50) The news; official website of ROSHN company, August 4, 2021.
- (51) Previous source.
- (52) SPA, Cultural / H.H. Crown Prince announces the launch of the project "Historic Jeddah Revitalization" and describing it as an attractive center for living and development, September 6, 2021.
- (53) SPA, Cultural / Kingdom participates in a national pavilion at the 17th Biennale Venice Architecture, April 12, 2021.
- (54) For details of exhibitions, see chapter on Cultural Participation.
- (55) Ministry of Culture, "Fashion Commission Issues World Cup Saudi Dress Code."
- (56) Data from the Fashion Commission, February 21, 2022.
- (57) Data from Heritage Commission. (February 1, 2022).
- (58) The website of the National Cultural Awards Initiative.
- (59) Data from the Red Sea International Foundation, January 16, 2022.
- (60) Data from the Red Sea International Foundation. January 16, 2022.
- (61) Makkah Award for Excellence—Official website of the award.
- (62) Data from the Literature, Publishing & Translation Commission (February 21, 2022).
- (63) Data from the Literature, Publishing & Translation Commission (February 21, 2022).
- (64) Princess Nourah Women's Excellence Award—Official website.
- (65) The official website of the Sheikh Zayed Book Award.
- (66) The official website of the Arab Poetry Academy.
- (67) The official website of the Rashid Bin Humaid Cultural & Sciences Award.
- (68) The official website of the Sharjah Award for Arab Creativity.
- (69) International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism—Prize page.



A hand-drawn illustration of a person's hand holding a white marker, drawing a rose on a whiteboard. The whiteboard is covered with several other line drawings of roses and leaves. The hand is wearing a patterned sweater. A dark purple banner is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing the text "Cultural Participation".

# Cultural Participation



## Cultural Participation

- Visit and Attendance Indicators
- Cultural Tourism Indicator
- Distribution and Diversity Indicators
- Social Integration Indicator



Vitality of the cultural field largely depends on participation by members of the community in cultural activities and their reception of cultural products. Accordingly, cultural participation is the most prominent manifestation of the cultural cycle. This chapter discusses various features of cultural participation during the year 2021 through four indicator clusters: (1) attendance and visit indicators; (2) cultural tourism indicators; (3) diversity and distribution indicators; and (4) social integration indicators. These indicators cover three phases of the cultural cycle: dissemination, exhibition, and participation, which particular focus on the latter.

Overall, in 2021, signs of recovery in attendance rates appeared in all sectors, even though, in some fields, such signs were rather limited, as different sectors were impacted differently by the COVID-19 pandemic. The most important evidence of this recovery was the continued growth in domestic cultural tourism, in contrast to foreign cultural tourism that continued to be affected by the pandemic. The results of third wave of the Cultural Participation Survey showed a link between monthly income levels and rates of cultural participation. The most prominent social integration indicator is the growth in the number of non-profit organizations during the last three years. In 2021, this number reached 58. In terms of volunteerism, generally, the education field was in general the most preferred cultural field for volunteers on the National Volunteer Portal.

## Visit and Attendance Indicators

Revival and recovery of cultural participation levels are a prominent indicator in the results of the state of culture. In this section, we provide a comprehensive picture of this recovery in 2021, along with residual impacts. The results clearly showed that participation expanded after an extraordinary contraction during the pandemic year; whether in terms of attendance at musical concerts, theatrical performances or even poetry evenings, all of which registered growth as compared to 2020; or in terms of visits to cultural facilities such as museums, libraries, or cinemas. However, the rate of this recovery of activities and facilities was uneven and largely depended on the nature and magnitude of the sector. For instance, whereas the museum sector failed to regain pre-pandemic visit and interaction rates, as was also the case for this sector around the world, cinemas, a relatively new sector, registered enormous growth. In what follows, we review available data on visit and attendance obtained from the third Cultural Participation Survey through two dimensions of cultural participation: (1) visits levels of cultural facilities and (2) attendance rates of cultural activities. Analytical comparisons of attendance rates from previous years are also made, which is followed by a review of the most prominent exhibitions and events in 2021 as examples of the relative resumption of vitality in the cultural field. This part also provides a preliminary understanding of any persisting impacts of COVID-19 on participation levels in terms of individuals' motivations, and their preference for virtual events.

## Cultural Participation Survey

The third wave of the Cultural Participation Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2021 with the objective of providing accurate data that could be used to measure the participation rates of citizens and residents of the Kingdom in the various cultural fields. Among several dimensions, the survey measures the attendance (reception) rates of cultural activities based on 12 variables (out of a total of 32). The questions in this dimension specified the time period for repeated visits ("the last 12 months"), as was done in a number of similar surveys measuring cultural participation.<sup>(1)</sup> The Cultural Participation Survey covered a representative sample of 3,043 citizens and residents of both genders across all provinces of the Kingdom which was selected using the simple random sampling method.<sup>(2)</sup>

## Rates of visits to cultural facilities

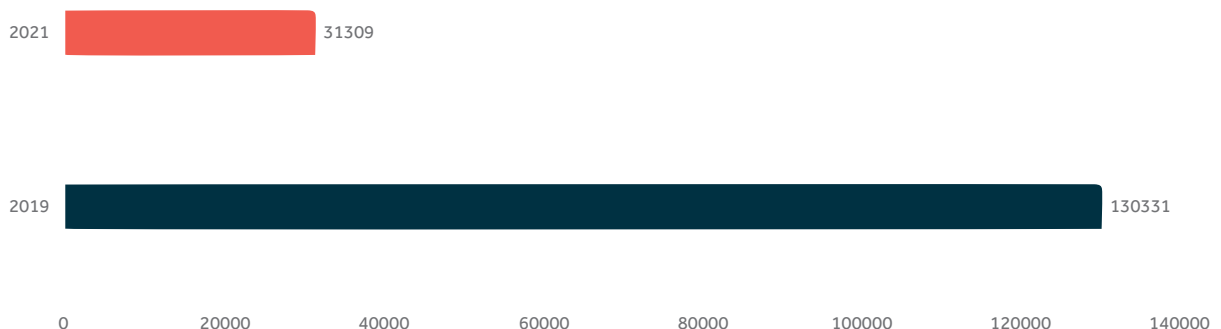
### Museums visits rates

The museum sector was among the cultural sectors that were most severely impacted by the pandemic in 2020. The year 2021 witnessed a rise in museum activity. Yet, this increase did not signal a recovery from the impact of COVID-19, as visits to the National Museum of Saudi Arabia were fewer as compared to 2019.<sup>(3)</sup> The total number of museum visits in 2021 was 31,309<sup>(4)</sup> as compared to 130,331 visits in 2019 (see Figure 1).<sup>(5)</sup> This finding is consistent with

the results of a UNESCO report that showed that, in 2020 and 2021, there was a sharp global decline averaging 70% in the number of in-person museum visits. This finding consistent with the results of a UNESCO report that showed that, in 2020 and 2021, there was a sharp global decline (ca. 70%) in the number of in-person museum visits. The reason behind this decline was that, in some countries, museums were closed in early 2021 due to the second wave of the pandemic and the corresponding precautionary health measures (e.g., social distancing, wearing face masks, curtailed visit hours); another contributing factor was a decline in international tourism levels. However, despite these situational challenges, the results of Cultural Participation Survey revealed a widening of potential and investible audience, 77% of whom expressed their desire to visit museums in the future (see Figure 2). Since the effects of the pandemic continued unabated for the second consecutive year, the option to visit museums virtually remained equally available as in-person visits. In mid-2021, the Ministry of Culture partnered with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology to launch a technical simulation of the National Museum which allowed visitors to tour the building virtually and see the artifacts contained in it at any time. Such platforms add an experience to visiting museums that is not limited by spatial constraints, and which in theory broadens the opportunity to visit as well as the variety of visitors. Giving credence to the observation of the State of Culture Report (2020) on the extent of the popularity of the virtual museum experience,<sup>(6)</sup> the virtual tour platform of the National Museum of Saudi Arabia recorded a total of 1,425 virtual visits from outside the Kingdom and 6,500 such visits from inside the Kingdom during 2021,<sup>(7)</sup> numbers that are quite limited when compared to in-person visits.



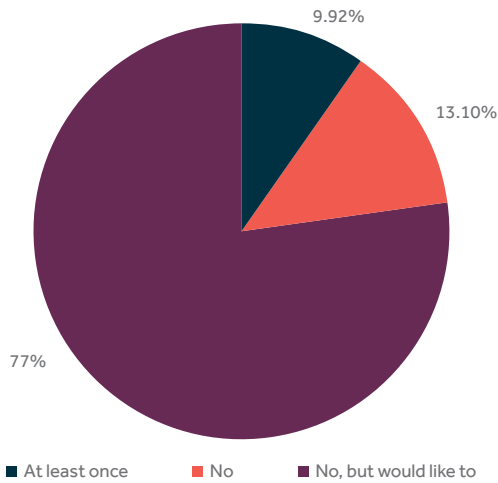
Figure 1: Number of visits to the National Museum of Saudi Arabia by year





## Cultural Participation

**Figure 2:** Distribution of individuals who visited museums at least once in the last 12 months<sup>(8)</sup>



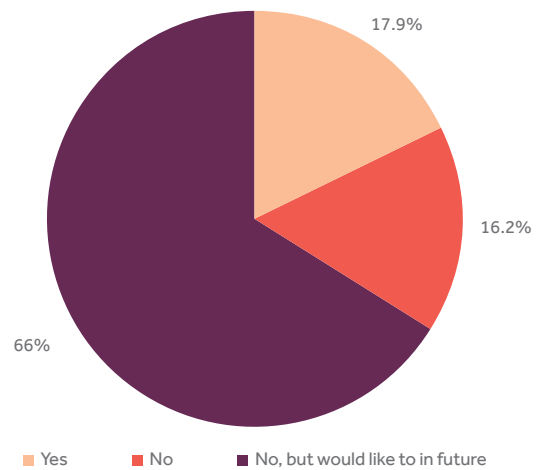
### Library visits rates

The results of the 2021 Cultural Participation Survey<sup>(9)</sup> showed that library visits were at the forefront of cultural activities in terms of participation levels: 17.9% of the survey participants stated that they had visited a public library at least once in the last 12 months (see Figure 3). In terms of actual visit counts, the survey, which included the King Fahd National Library and a non-inclusive lists of a number of other prominent libraries in the Kingdom, indicated that the total number of visits exceeded 177,000, of which the National Library alone hosted 37,000 (see Table 1). Furthermore, as of 2021, the average number of visits to university libraries in a survey, which included a non-exhaustive list of university libraries, came to 77,000 for one library.<sup>(10)</sup>

This rise in library visits is consistent with the expanding role of libraries, which is no longer limited to providing knowledge material and references to its visitors, but extends to include the promotion of social participation through events, literary evenings, dialogue sessions, world days, as well as seminars, interviews, workshops, training sessions, and competitions.<sup>(11)</sup> A library has thus become a social and cultural center that targets a wide variety of social groups, including young children, persons with disabilities, and youths. As examples, the King Fahad Public Library in Jeddah and the King Abdulaziz Public Library organized 73 cultural activities for children during 2021 (Table 2). The King Fahd National Library hosted the International Philosophy Conference, which attracted an audience with diverse interests, experience, and academic and professional backgrounds. It also hosted other activities that included spaces for interactive experience covering the conference topics in a creative manner, in addition to various

workshops accompanied by an exhibition on philosophical projects, activities for children and teenagers, and reading corners.<sup>(12)</sup> Likewise, the Ithra Library organized a number of literary events for notable authors, as well as events that coincided with the Arabic Language Day, and other cultural and reading activities such as the activities of the Ithra Reading Club and a children’s book exhibition.<sup>(13)</sup>

**Figure 3:** Distribution of individuals who visited libraries in person at least once in the previous 12 months.<sup>(14)</sup>





**Table 1:** Number of visits to the National Library and a non-exhaustive list of notable public libraries in the Kingdom for the year 2021.

Library	City	Number of visits
King Fahd National Library	Riyadh	37,008 <sup>(15)</sup>
King Fahad Public Library	Jeddah	20,811 <sup>(16)</sup>
King Abdulaziz Complex for Endowment Libraries	Madinah Province	500 <sup>(17)</sup>
King Abdulaziz Public Library	Riyadh	23,266 <sup>(18)</sup>
Library of the General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf	Riyadh	185 <sup>(19)</sup>
Sulaiman Al-Rajhi Public Library	Al-Qassim	3,166 <sup>(20)</sup>
Educator Salih bin Salih Community Library	Unaizah	1,395 <sup>(21)</sup>
King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies Library	Riyadh	239 <sup>(22)</sup>
Saud Al-Babtain Charitable Center for Heritage and Culture Library	Riyadh	250 <sup>(23)</sup>
Saudi Library (General Presidency of Islamic Research and Ifta)	Riyadh	400 <sup>(24)</sup>
Library of Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim	Riyadh	500 <sup>(25)</sup>
Dar al-Rahmaniya Library	Al-Ghat	24,975 <sup>(26)</sup>
Dar Al-Uloom Library	Al-Jawf	4,890 <sup>(27)</sup>
Ithra Library (Public and Children's Library)	Dhahran	60,128 <sup>(28)</sup>
<b>Total</b>		<b>177,732<sup>(29)</sup></b>

**Table 2:** Examples of children’s activities organized in public libraries during 2021

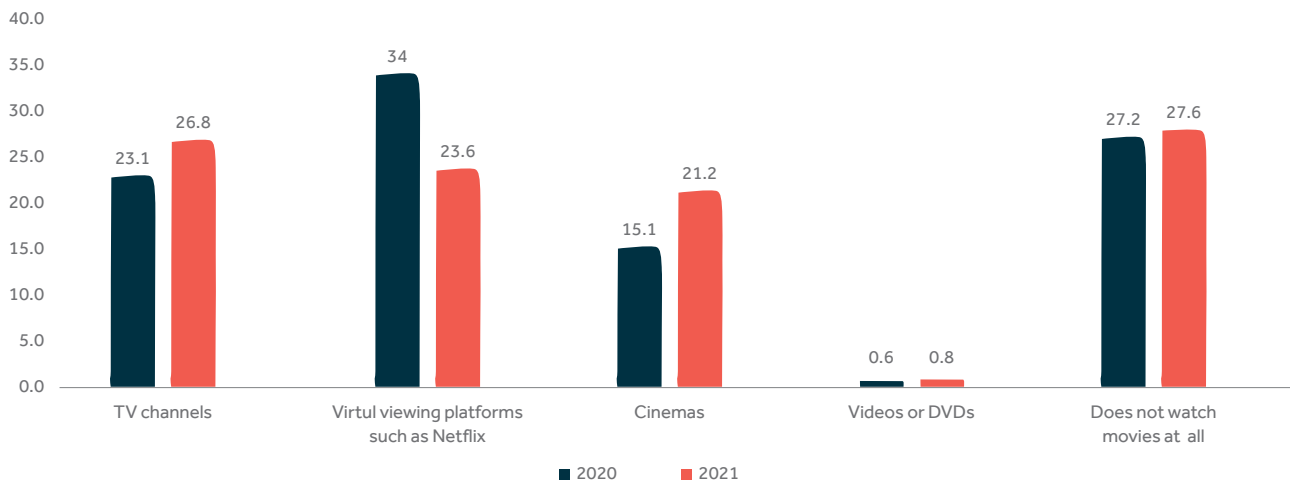
Library	King Abdulaziz Public Library <sup>(30)</sup>	King Fahad Public Library <sup>(31)</sup>
Number of activities	39	34
Attendance	212	969

**Rates of cinema attendance**

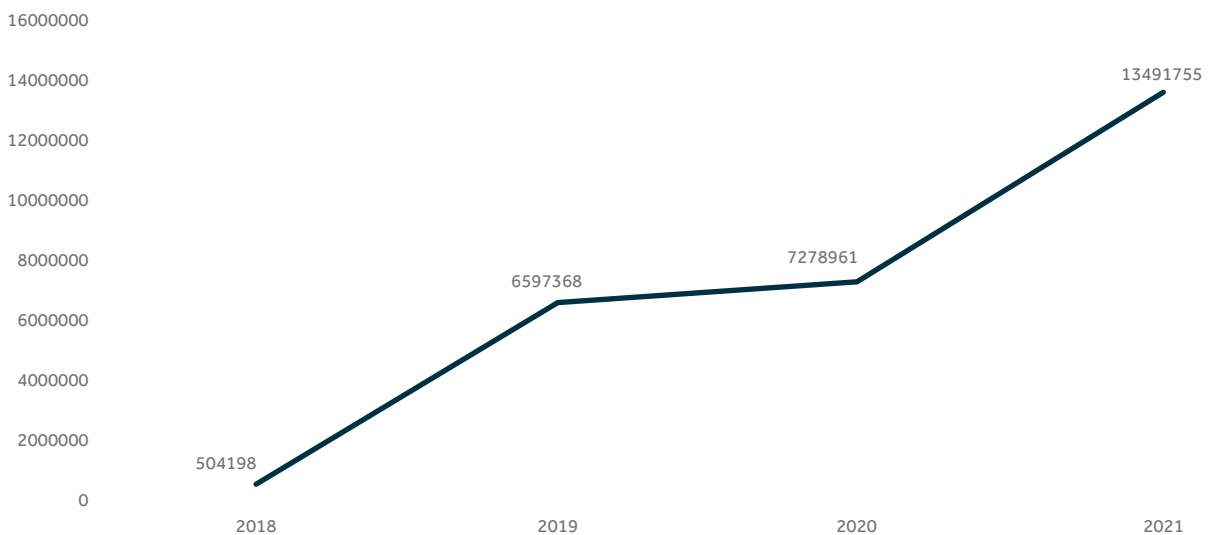
The results of the 2021 Cultural Participation Survey<sup>(32)</sup> also revealed how people chose to watch films. In this respect, in 2021, there was a rise in the rates of those who preferred watching films in cinemas against a decline in the number of

those who preferred watching films on digital platforms as compared to 2020 (Figure 4). This is because earlier, lockdown policies led people to watch films on digital platforms and on-demand streaming services. The rise in the rate of those who preferred to watch films in cinemas reflected the gradual easing of precautionary measures as well as the increasing number of cinemas across a widening geographic region, with new cinemas opening in the various cities of the Kingdom during 2021.<sup>(33)</sup> The percentage preference for watching films in cinemas is consistent with the number of cinema tickets sold, which has been on the rise since the opening of cinemas in 2018. The average growth in ticket sales over the four years comes to 199%, while the growth in ticket sales between 2020 and 2021 alone stood at 85% (see Figure 5).

**Figure 4:** Distribution of film watching modalities, by year<sup>(34)</sup>



**Figure 5:** Numbers of cinema tickets sold in the Kingdom, by year<sup>(35)</sup>





### Attendance rates for cultural activities

#### Attendance rates for music concerts

Furthermore, indicators of attendance of cultural activities showed a significant recovery since COVID-19 restrictions were eased. The data of the National Events Center pertaining to the number of musical concerts revealed that the total attendance in Riyadh was 469,183 in 2021 alone.<sup>(56)</sup> Similarly, three days of Formula 1 events in Jeddah saw sales of 165,235 tickets.<sup>(57)</sup> To compare, in 2020, mere 100,401 participants attended the music concerts organized by the General Entertainment Authority in four cities,<sup>(58)</sup> suggests that the live concerts sector had benefited from high levels of cultural participation in terms of reception, while digital platforms served as a temporary alternative during the pandemic. The 2021 Cultural Participation Survey<sup>(59)</sup> showed a rise of 12.5% in the rate of those who attended a musical concert at least once in the previous 12 months as compared to 2020 (see Figure 6).

However, this continues to be lower than the rates achieved in 2019 (see Figure 7).

Figure 6: Attendance rate of music events and concerts in 2021 over the previous 12 months.

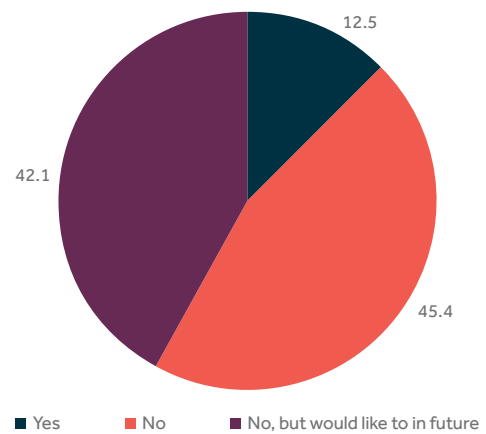
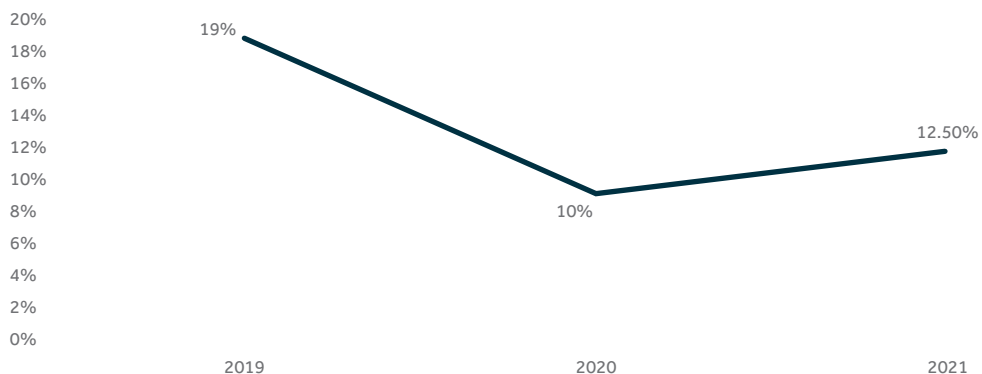


Figure 7: Attendance rate of music concerts, by year





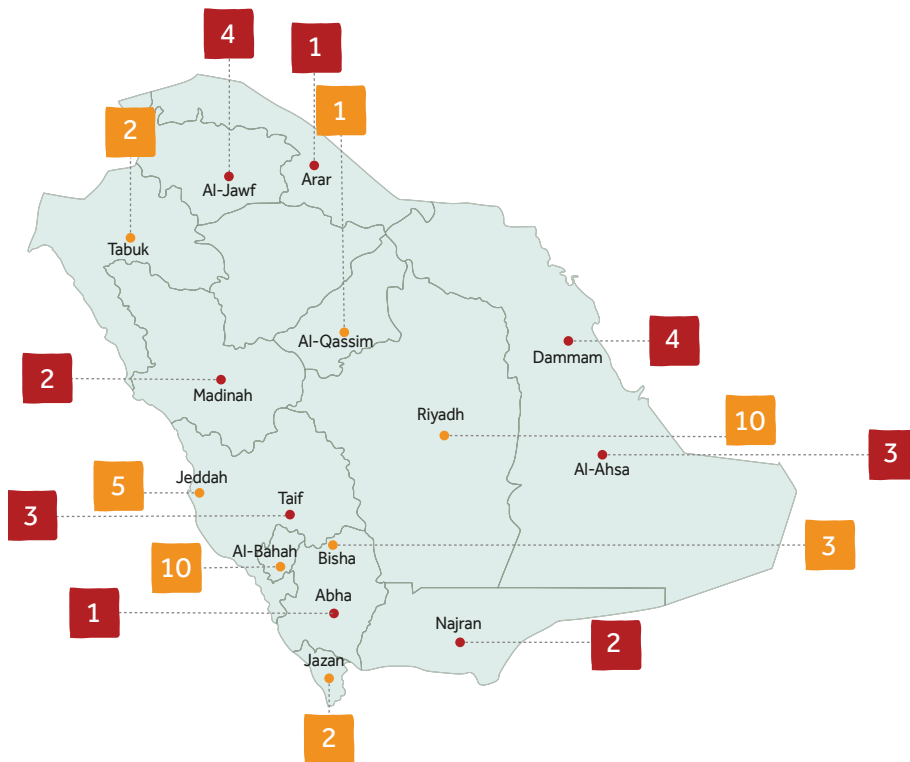


**Rates of attendance at theatrical performances**

In 2021, rising attendance rates were also observed in in-person theatrical performances, which was due to the return of cultural activity to open spaces and the growing variety and quantity of theatrical performances.<sup>(40)</sup> In 2021, 92 theatrical performances took place across the various provinces of the Kingdom<sup>(41)</sup> and most of them (around 50) were hosted in Riyadh. Of these, 21 were organized by the National Events Center. These performances were attended by 113,316 visitors, with 48,261 attending Arabic shows and 29,663 attending international performances.<sup>(42)</sup>

With regard to performances that included live shows and circuses, 35,392 persons visited such shows hosted by the National Events Center some of which were free and some of which were paid. While two of the free live shows had audiences of more than 9,978, two circuses had audiences of 25,414.<sup>(43)</sup> The Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts organized specialized performances, often involving folk dance or folk music (see Figure 8). Such shows had a permanent social presence at weddings and social occasions as part of custom, tradition, and general social culture.

Figure 8: Infographic: Number of performances hosted by the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts, by branch

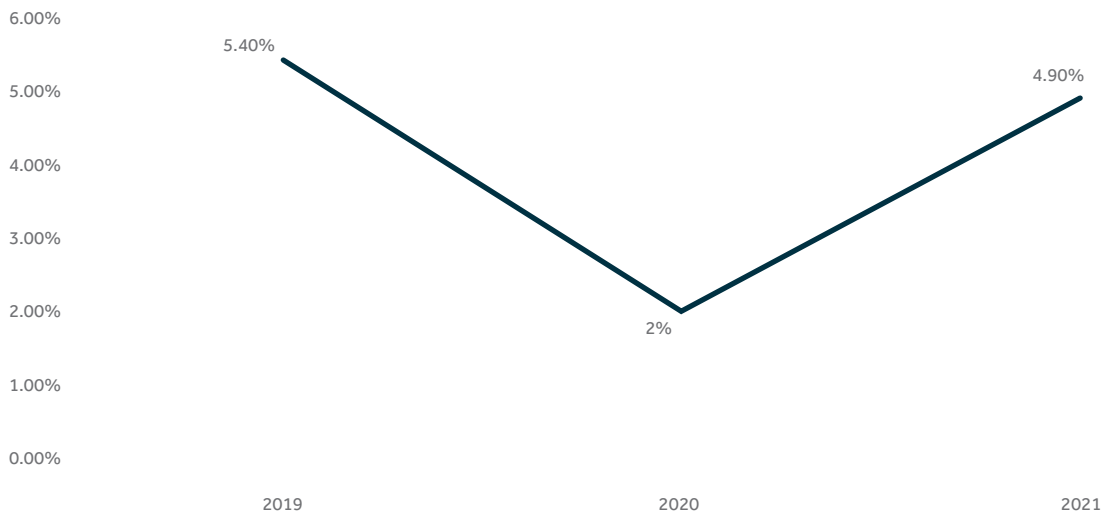


**Rates of attendance at literary evenings**

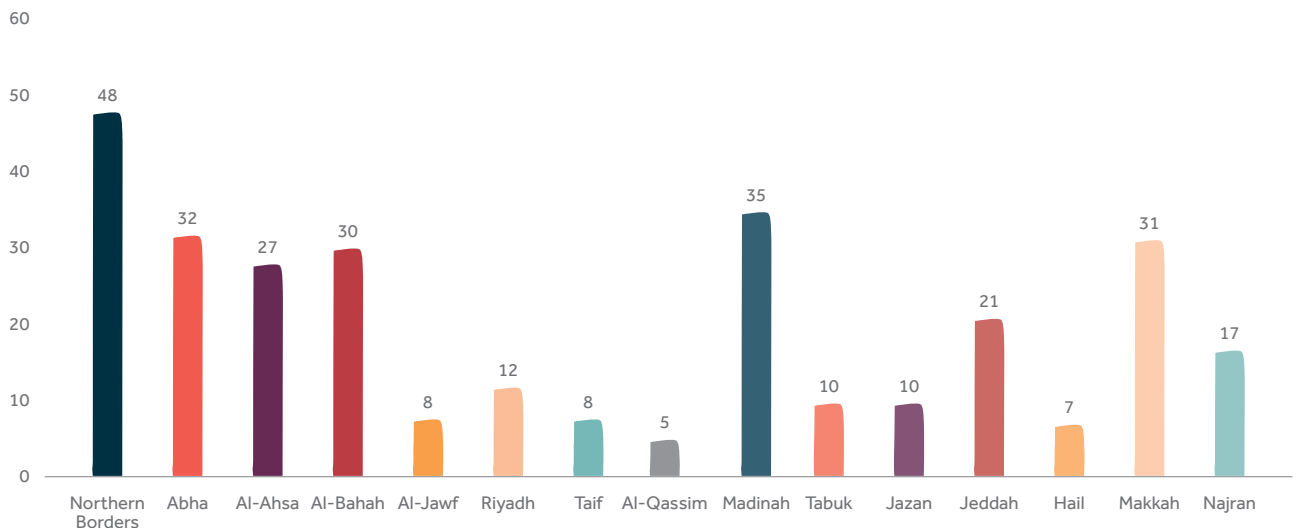
The results of 2021 Cultural Participation Survey<sup>(44)</sup> showed that, in 2021, the attendance rate for literary and poetry evenings increased more than 2-fold as compared to 2020: specifically, 4.9% of the survey respondents reported that they had attended at least one literary evening during the previous 12 months, which is closer to the rate in 2019 (see Figure 9).<sup>(45)</sup> The rising participation rates in 2021 provide a positive impression of the literary scene returning to its in-person form, with a total of 358 persons attending literary evenings organized by the Literature, Publishing & Translation

Commission in 2021.<sup>(46)</sup> Literary clubs<sup>(47)</sup> contributed to the literary and cultural scene through its public speech performances and activities in which a total of 301 in-person and virtual events have been organized<sup>(48)</sup> that included poetry evenings, literary and cultural meetings, and dialogue sessions (Figure 10). Literary clubs varied in their activity levels, with clubs in Abha, Al-Ahsa, Al-Bahah and Madinah hosting the largest number of speaking events in 2021. By this measure, the literary club in the Northern Borders province appears to have been the most active during the year, hosting 48 in-person and virtual events attended by a total of 6,547 people.

**Figure 9:** Percentages of attendees of in-person poetry evening or literary meetings during the previous 12 months by year



**Figure 10:** Number of cultural events organized by literary clubs during 2021<sup>(49)</sup>





### Notable festivals and events

In contrast to 2020 when notable festivals were postponed, hosted virtually, or organized on a small scale with limited attendance due to the pandemic, the festivals and events sector in 2021 saw a significant growth in terms of numbers, attendance, and proliferation in the various provinces of the Kingdom. Festivals and events in 2021 continued to incorporate aspects intended to promote community participation, support the practitioners of cultural activities, provide opportunities for participation and marketing support for their products, as well as provide appropriate spaces for showcasing them. In what followed, we provide a review of notable events.<sup>(50)</sup>

In the film sector, the Red Sea International Film Festival held in Jeddah, the first edition of which was originally scheduled in 2020 but was postponed due to the pandemic, registered an attendance of 32,645 people, and screened 136 out of the 735 films submitted. There were 2,233 entries, of which 1,162 were Saudi and 1,071 were from other countries,<sup>(51)</sup> the majority from Egypt. Of all screenings in the festival, 40% of the films were directed by women. All participating works vied for the festival's Yusr Prize. Projects winning the Red Sea Souk Awards received more than \$700,000 in prize money.<sup>(52)</sup>

In 2021, the seventh edition of the Saudi Film Festival was held in-person in Dhahran. This event was held virtually in 2020, organized by the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture

and Arts in Dammam and King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture—Ithra, and with support from the Film Commission. The seven-day festival, which was attended by 10,800 people, aimed to increase competitiveness and productivity among film makers. With 405 participants, 57 out of 89 film submissions were screened,<sup>(53)</sup> and participating films competed for the Golden Palm Award.<sup>(54)</sup> In addition to film screenings, the festival hosted a number of training workshops in the field of cinema,<sup>(55)</sup> while six books—print and e-book versions—were distributed as informational publications.

In the theater and performing arts sector, the first edition of the Theater Forum for Innovative Shows was held from 27-30 June 2021, organized by the Riyadh-based Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts. Six plays were performed by a number of theatrical troupes, with audience of up to 3,980.<sup>(56)</sup> The forum aimed to provide an incentive for theatrical troupes to present innovative and creative performances, as well as to support young talent, and offer an opportunity for the exchange of theatrical expertise and experience. In addition, it sought to empower young actresses and female theatre specialists to be involved alongside male participants. Six plays were performed by several theatrical troupes.<sup>(57)</sup>

Furthermore, the University of Jazan hosted the first edition of the Saudi Universities Theater Festival, which aimed to support Saudi theatre practitioners, strengthen the role of

Saudi university theater and create space for the exchange of experience and expertise by offering a number of training workshops in theater, acting and playwriting. Seminars were held after each of the plays involving experts in acting and production.<sup>(58)</sup> Over the course of this five-day event which began on December 6, 2021, eleven plays were presented by a number of universities from across the Kingdom, with audiences of up to 4,019.<sup>(59)</sup>

In the culinary arts sector, 2021 witnessed a variety of food-crop festivals, most notably the Farmers' Market and the Festival of Dates. The Farmers' Market was organized sequentially in three provinces of the Kingdom. This festival was organized by the Culinary Arts Commission and the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture. It is estimated that around 20,000 visitors<sup>(60)</sup> attended the festival in the three provinces, with 84 participants and volunteers.<sup>(61)</sup> The festival aimed at the sale of local food products at suitable prices to support local farmers. Civil society members manage this market, where products are sold directly to customers at affordable prices. The festival included social activities such as a children's corner focused on teaching the basics of traditional farming, face painting, photography booths, a falcon's corner, a coffee-making corner, and other recreational activities such as live oud music, a corner for Arabic calligraphy and activities to strengthen the bonds between the residents and their city. The pilot version of the festival was held at the beginning of 2021 in the Ra's Na'amah farm in Diriyah, with the objective of safeguarding and enhancing the food culture of the local community. This was organized in conjunction with the Festival of the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture in 2021, the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables launched by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The second Farmers' Market festival was organized at the beginning of September 2021 in Al-Rudaf Park in Taif City, while the third was hosted by the King Abdullah Environmental Park in Al-Ahsa in the last week of November.

Unsurprisingly, given its economic importance, the Festival of Dates, held in December 2021 at the Riyadh International Convention & Exhibition Center, attracted the largest numbers, with almost 650,000 visits during over the course of its five days.<sup>(62)</sup> The platform for the largest annual gathering of producers and consumers of dates in the Kingdom, this festival aims to raise the market value of Saudi Arabian dates and increase competitiveness in the local market. Additionally, it aims to educate society to support the option to consume local dates, and open new e-commerce markets in the date sector. It also provides an opportunity to encourage young entrepreneurs to launch

their business in the palm and date sector by partnering with date producers and farmers, and producers of downstream products. The festival included a few parallel activities such as workshops, lectures, cultural events, and international competitions. It thus offered visitors and participants an integrated experience of culture, education, and recreation by providing information on dates and their benefits. It also raised awareness among children of the importance of this Saudi Arabian heritage while entertaining the visitors through numerous events related to dates and palms. The festival was organized under the supervision of the National Center for Palms & Dates.<sup>(63)</sup>

Furthermore, on December 7–15, 2021, the Culinary Arts Commission held the Saudi Feast Festival in historic Jeddah focused on Saudi Arabian cuisine in conjunction with the Red Sea International Film Festival. Offering a local platform to celebrate the Saudi culinary arts and present them as cultural products. It also aims to provide enabling spaces for Saudi chefs, both male and female, to present their products and skills and contribute to providing educational, cultural, and recreational content for all sectors of society.<sup>(64)</sup> The festival includes four main courses focused on Saudi cooking. The first course is devoted to the culinary arts in the Red Sea provinces (Tabuk, Madinah, Makkah, Jazan, and Asir). Visitors can taste the ingredients and recipes these regions are famous for, experience their products and gain knowledge about their heritage. The second course contains educational and cultural shows, events that blend music and food, and interviews with experts in the culinary field. The third course contains a shop selling cookbooks as well as a market for the sale of Festival-oriented products. The fourth course includes a restaurant area and food carts that serve visitors more than 35 varieties of traditional Saudi Arabian dishes. The Festival was held in open spaces in the historic Jeddah city<sup>(65)</sup> with an estimated attendance of more than 500,000 visitors.<sup>(66)</sup>

In the fashion sector, the Saudi 100 Brands exhibition was held in 2021 as part of Riyadh's future of fashion events. This exhibition, which was attended by 2,558 people, was aimed at discovering local brands in the area of traditional Saudi Arabian fashion, and revealing new talent by showcasing Saudi designers and providing them with new opportunities to develop their talent and skills, while enabling investors and those working in the field to develop the fashion sector in the Kingdom. The 100 best trademarks were chosen from among 1,500 submissions at the exhibition held in the King Abdullah Financial District (KAFD) in Riyadh from December 11–18, 2021<sup>(67)</sup>. The exhibition included numerous types of fashion products (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Design infographic: Fashion brands participating in the 100 Saudi Brands exhibition



Finally, in the framework of promoting heritage sites in the Kingdom, the second Flowerman Festival was held in two primary locations, the first at Rijal Almaa Heritage Village, and the second at Soudah Park. With visitors numbering 46,598,<sup>(68)</sup> the tagline of the Festival was “Nine Centuries of Glory” in reference to the design and architecture of the Rijal Almaa village, which is viewed as a unique symbol of heritage architecture in the Kingdom as well as the culture, customs and traditions of the province and its residents. Special focus was placed on the qualities of Rijal Almaa, which are reflected in the names, arts, stories, and status of the Almaa women.

**Notable cultural exhibitions**

In 2021, there was also a market resurgence of cultural exhibitions. After a period of relative inactivity in 2020, many in-person exhibitions of various cultural sectors were organized, including various exhibitions, organized by the Ministry of Culture and its affiliate authorities or private establishments such as the National Events Center, have been held in public spaces<sup>(69)</sup> and in cultural facilities (see Table 3).

Table 3: Examples of notable cultural exhibitions in 2021

Topic of the exhibition	Sector	Organizer	City	Exhibition location	Duration	Number of visitors
Art Memento Exhibition	Museums and visual arts	Ministry of Culture	Riyadh	National Museum	September 27– November 6	4,840 visits <sup>(70)</sup>
The Journey of Writing and Calligraphy Exhibition	Museums and visual arts	Ministry of Culture	Riyadh	National Museum	June 16–August	6,457 visits <sup>(71)</sup>
The Secrets of Alidades Exhibition <sup>(72)</sup>	Visual arts	Saudi Art Council	Jeddah	Gold Moor Centre	July 8– 7 September	14,000 visits <sup>(73)</sup>
King Salman Charter for Architecture and Urbanism Exhibition	Architecture and Design Arts	Architecture Commission	Riyadh	Tuwaiq Palace	December 2–28	2,298 visits <sup>(74)</sup>
Philips Exhibition of Precious Watches <sup>(75)</sup>	Fashion	Fashion Commission	Riyadh	Tuwaiq Palace	November 11–13	700 visits <sup>(76)</sup>
Swap Shop GFX Sustainability Initiative <sup>(77)</sup>	Fashion	Fashion Commission	Riyadh	Personage	December 11–12	455 visits <sup>(78)</sup>

Topic of the exhibition	Sector	Organizer	City	Exhibition location	Duration	Number of visitors
Riyadh International Book Fair	Publication	Literature, Publishing & Translation Commission	Riyadh	Al-Riyadh Province	October 1–10	900,000,00 visits <sup>(79)</sup>
Index Saudi Exhibition	Architecture and Design Arts	DMG Events	Riyadh	Riyadh Front Exhibition & Conference Center	September 7–9	10,000 visits <sup>(80)</sup>
Unique Jewelry Exhibition	Fashion	National Events Center	Riyadh	Al-Riyadh Province	November 6–2	4,308 visits <sup>(81)</sup>
Chocolate Factory	Culinary Arts	National Events Center	Riyadh	Boulevard	November 1–December 31	7,397 visits <sup>(82)</sup>
Dinosaur World	Events and Festivals	National Events Center	Riyadh	Boulevard	December 19–16	10,446 visits <sup>(83)</sup>
I am an Arab Woman	Fashion	National Events Center	Riyadh	Al-Riyadh Province	9–15 December	5,896 visits <sup>(84)</sup>
On the table: Memory, environment, place	Visual Arts	Jameel Art	Jeddah	Hayy Jameel	April 30–December 6	17,362 visits <sup>(85)</sup>

### Impact of Covid-19 on Visits and Attendance Levels: Drivers and Obstructions

Overall, the foregoing review of visits to cultural facilities and attendance of cultural activities showed some recovery in cultural participation and the revival of the physical presence of culture. However, this does not mean that the COVID-19 pandemic left no impact on participation in the cultural field or did not pose challenges on other levels. In this respect, the results of the Cultural Participation Survey suggested that the likelihood of certain changes in behavioral patterns, as 26.3% of the survey respondents stated that the rate of their visits to festivals and events had decreased for health reasons (see Figure 12), while only 6% reported that their participation in cultural festivals and events had increased. The impact of health considerations on whether or not to attend cultural events in person was more apparent among older respondents. As seen from Figure 13, 31% of the survey respondents over 45 years of age reported declining participation in events due to health reasons, whereas this percentage fell to 19% for the 18–29 age group.

In line with our expectation, the percentage of those who preferred virtual events to continue showed a decline when compared to last year. However, 62% of the sample expressed

their desire to continue enjoying the option of virtual participation in exhibitions and other events (see Figure 14).

Figure 12: Attendance rates of cultural festivals and events<sup>(86)</sup>

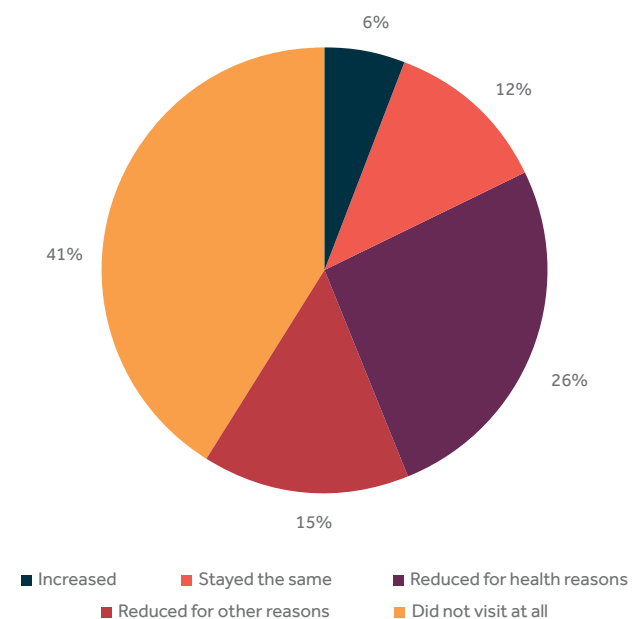




Figure 13: Attendance rates of cultural festivals and events, by age<sup>(87)</sup>

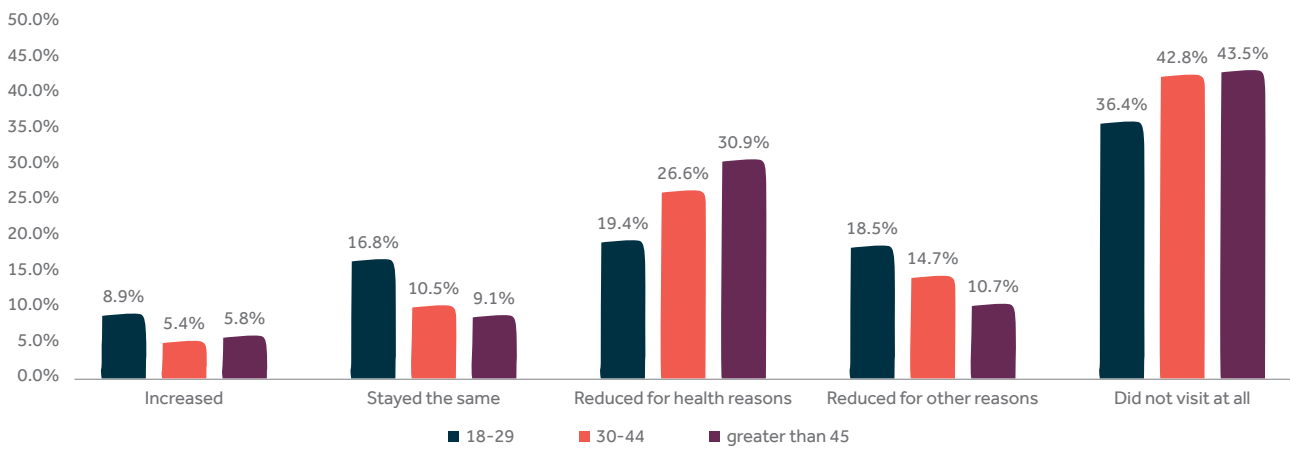
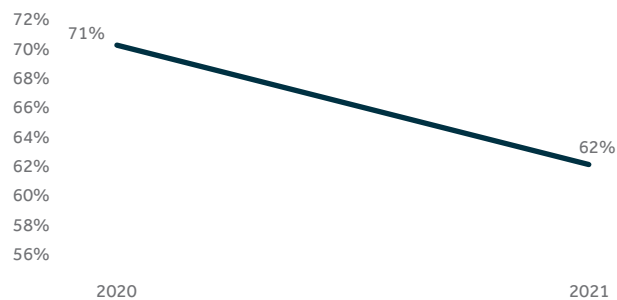


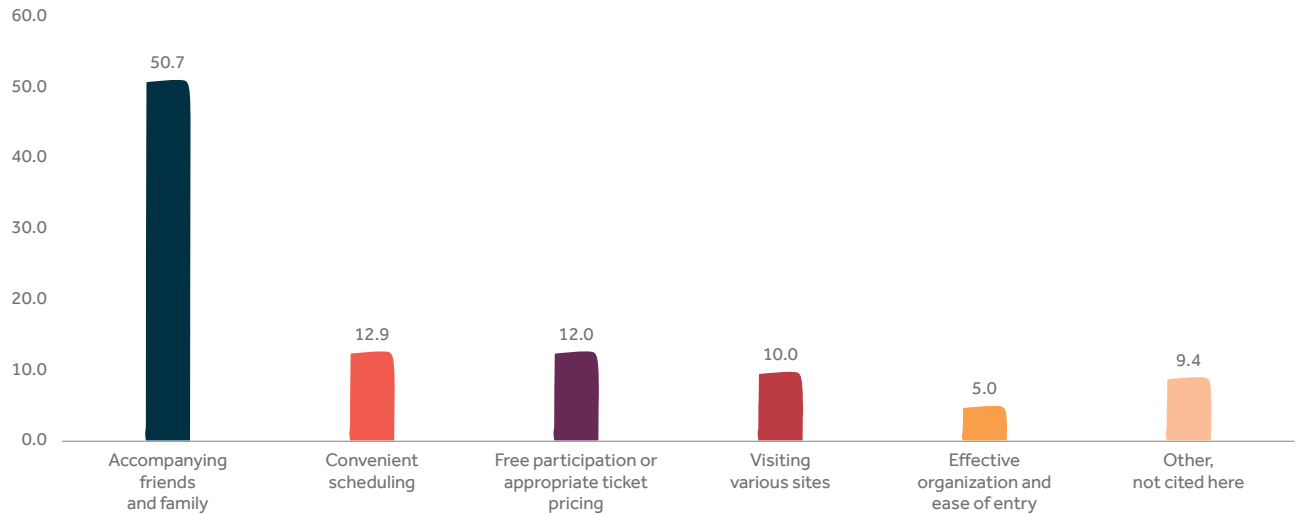
Figure 14: Percentages of the respondents who supported the continuation of virtual events<sup>(88)</sup>



**Motives and impediments to attending cultural events and festivals**

The 2021 Cultural Participation Survey was also an attempt to explore the motives behind cultural participation behaviors, as well as factors that prevent people from attending cultural events. The importance of the social dimension of culture and its activities may be seen in the fact that a principal motive for attending events was the companionship of family and friends (Figure 15), while factors such as convenient timing (13%) and free admission (12%) were the primary drivers for around a quarter of the individuals surveyed.

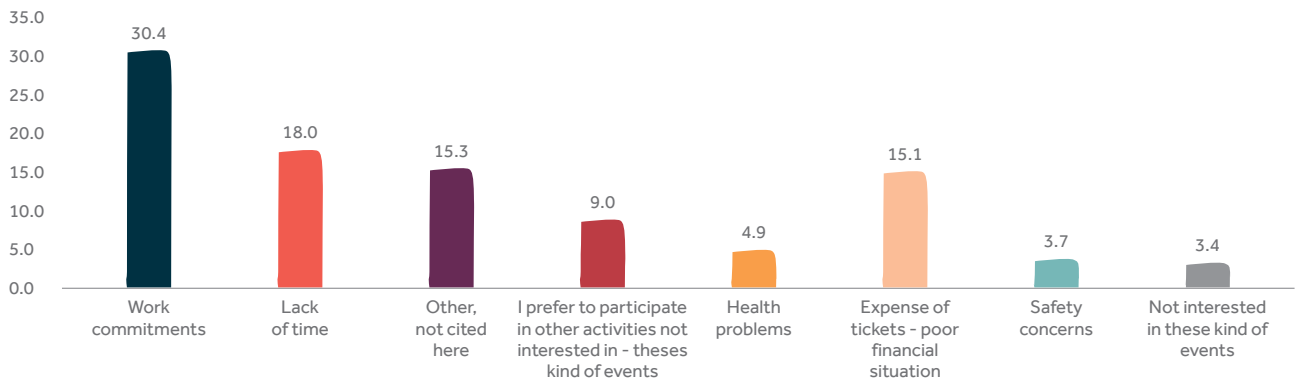
**Figure 15: Primary drivers for attending cultural events in 2021<sup>(89)</sup>**



As for the factors that prevented people from attending cultural events and festivals, the survey revealed that for 30.4% of the respondents, the primary reason was preoccupation or work. Next was lack of time at 18% (see

Figure 16). Furthermore, 15% of the respondents indicated that financial considerations (e.g., the prices of the tickets, weak financial situation) prevented them from participating in such events.

**Figure 16: Primary reasons for not attending events and festivals in 2021<sup>(90)</sup>**



## Cultural Tourism Indicator

Cultural tourism is a point of intersection of culture and growth. Its importance lies not only in its cultural activity as a source of sustenance and a means of livelihood, but also in its contribution to reviving cultural activity and enhancing participation in all cultural activities. Therefore, cultural tourism indicators may lead us to conclusions related to cultural participation. Domestic and foreign tourism that includes cultural activities can also help us to monitor trends in cultural participation. Cultural tourism includes any excursions with visits to cultural sites or facilities viewed as points of attraction.





## Cultural Participation

The results of looking at the cultural tourism data on the level of activity<sup>(91)</sup> suggest that, in 2021, the rates of domestic travel involving visits to cultural events and festivals recovered to record 5,359,000 excursions after having declined in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, the numbers of such excursions being recorded exceeds the rates recorded in 2019. Similarly, domestic travel that included visits to cultural festivals and events registered higher levels over the last five years than other activities did. This may be attributed in part to the sheer number, variety and accessibility of cultural events and festivals (Table 4).

Unlike cultural festivals and events, visits to historical and heritage sites<sup>(92)</sup> grew at a steady rate of 30.3% despite the COVID-19 pandemic (see Figure 17). This distinguishes such visits from others, which either grew slightly, as did rates of visits to sanctuaries and nature parks, or declined significantly, as did the number of excursions involving visits to museums, art galleries, cultural events or festivals. (Figure 17)

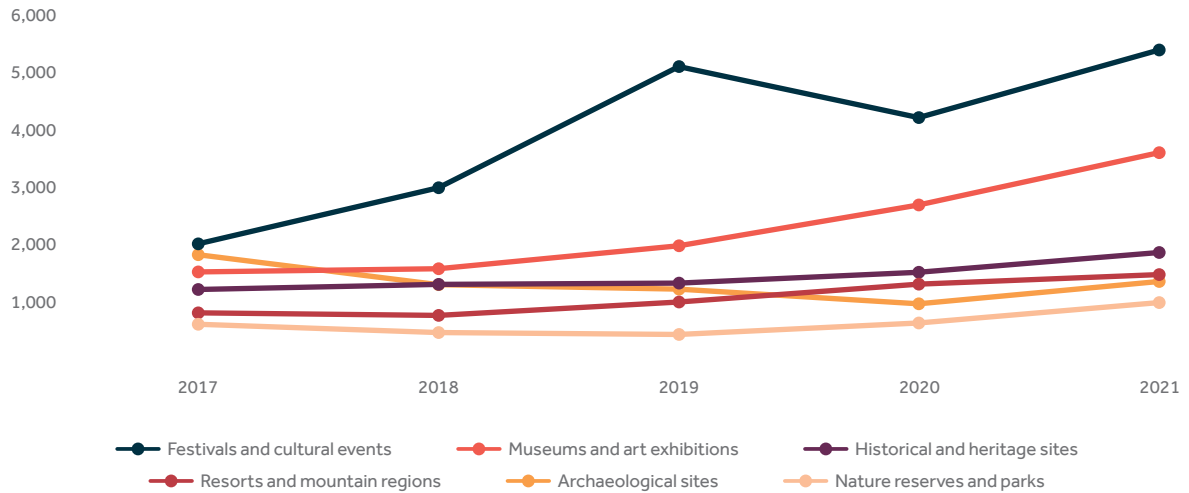


**Table 4:** Examples of notable cultural activities that were popular among tourists (international and local) in 2021<sup>(93)</sup>

Season/festival	Date	No. of event days	No. of activities	Local attendance	International attendance	Number of participating government agencies	Region
Home Season	June 7–August 8, 2021	69	895	136 million views on streaming platforms		6	Virtual
National Day Season	September 23, 2021	32	6	10,27896	4,401	46	13 Administrative Regions
International Saudi Falcon & Hunting Exhibition	October 1–15, 2021	15	15	500,000	300	15	Malham Riyadh Province
The Red Sea International Film Festival	December 15–16, 2021	10	735	1,162	1,071	—	Jeddah
MDLBEAST Sound Storm	December 16–19, 2021	4	144 theaters + accompanying events	730,000 90% in-person visits (local + international)		More than 10	Riyadh

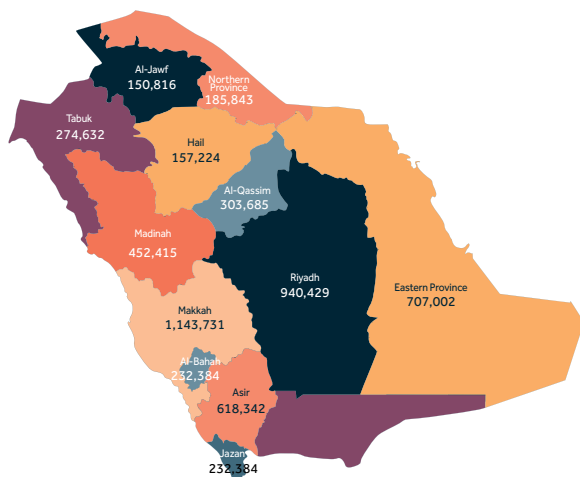


Figure 17: Rates of cultural activities as part of domestic travel, by activity<sup>(94)</sup>



The Makkah Province is regarded as the most attractive province of the Kingdom for domestic tourists in terms of participation in cultural events and festivals. This Province, which includes cities such as Taif and Jeddah, was the preferred destination for almost a fifth of all domestic excursions that included a visit to cultural events and festivals (Figure 18). It was followed by Riyadh, Eastern Province, and Asir respectively.

Figure 18: Domestic tourists' rates of participation in cultural events and festivals by province<sup>(95)</sup>



Overall, as compared to 2020, the 2021 data point toward a rise in the numbers of domestic excursions with visits to museums and art galleries; of note, this rise amounting to 1.25 million visits, even surpassed 2019 rates (see Figure 19). However, this trend was not observed in foreign visits, which were severely impacted by the pandemic



and declined by over 90% between 2019 and 2021. In line with the growing number of museums—especially private museums—the Asir Province attracted the highest level of domestic travel involving a visit to a museum or an exhibition. It was followed by Riyadh, Makkah, and the Eastern Province (see Figure 20).

Figure 19: Number of excursions with visits to museums or art galleries<sup>(96)</sup>

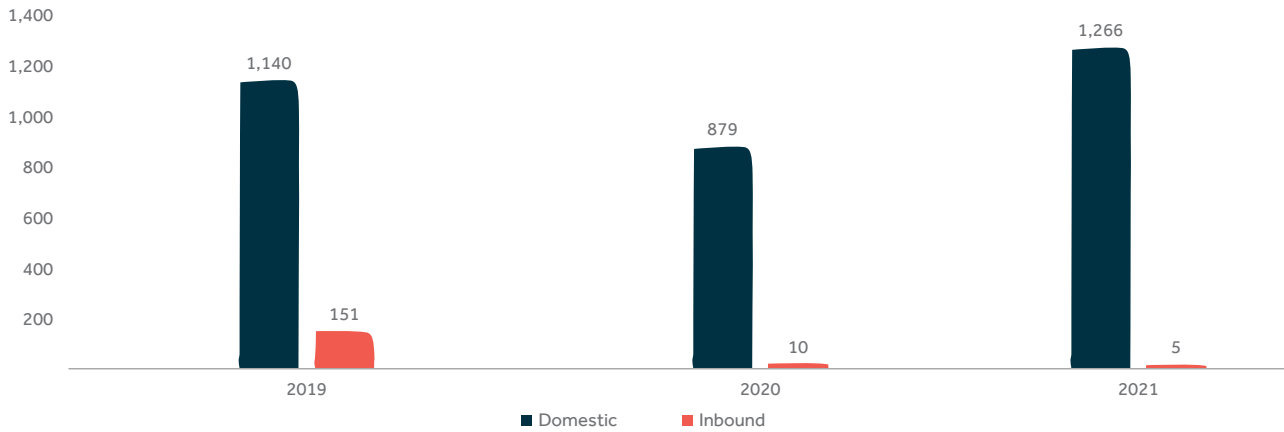
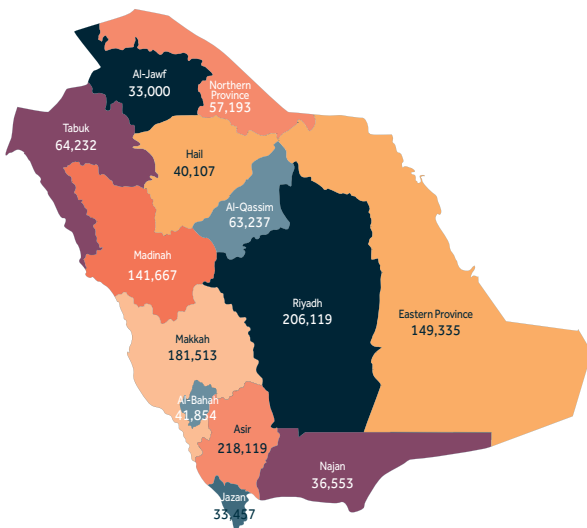


Figure 20: Rates of visits to museums and art galleries as part of domestic travel, by province<sup>(97)</sup>



Of note, the sharp decline in foreign cultural tourism involving museum and exhibition activities is not an exception but part of a general pattern. This pattern appears most strikingly through the impact of the pandemic on visits to heritage and archaeological sites as compared with other cultural activities undertaken by foreign tourists, among whom such visits continued on a negative trajectory from 2020 to 2021 (see Figure 21). After being the number one cultural activity during the years 2017–2019, such visits had plummeted by 2021 to last place. This decline, which resulted from long periods of border closures and restrictions that made international travel difficult across the globe, applies to all activities except for those related to mountainous provinces, which were the only cultural activity that remained relatively popular among foreign tourists. In fact, this activity witnessed not merely recovery, but growth. The total numbers of cultural activities engaged in by foreign tourists were low during this period, with the number of foreign visitors coming to around 200,000 (see Figure 22).

Figure 21: Impact of the pandemic on cultural activity rates among foreign tourists<sup>(98)</sup>

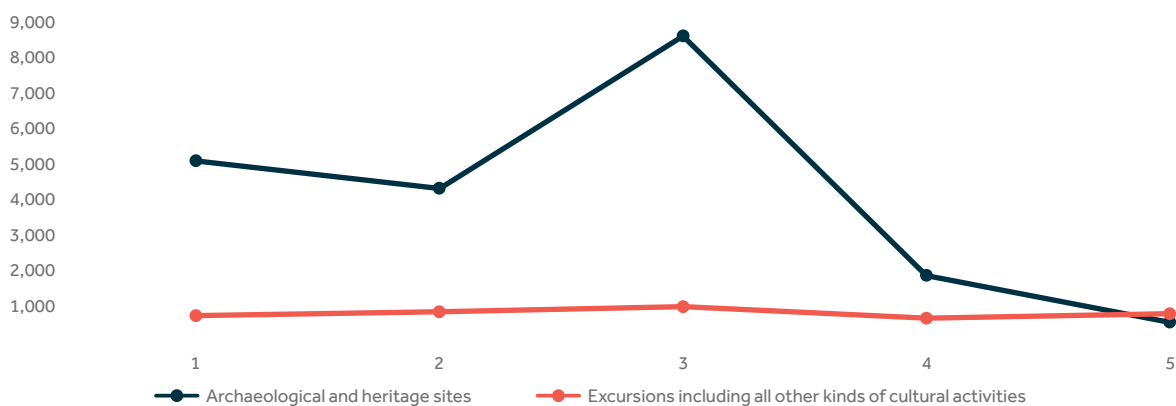
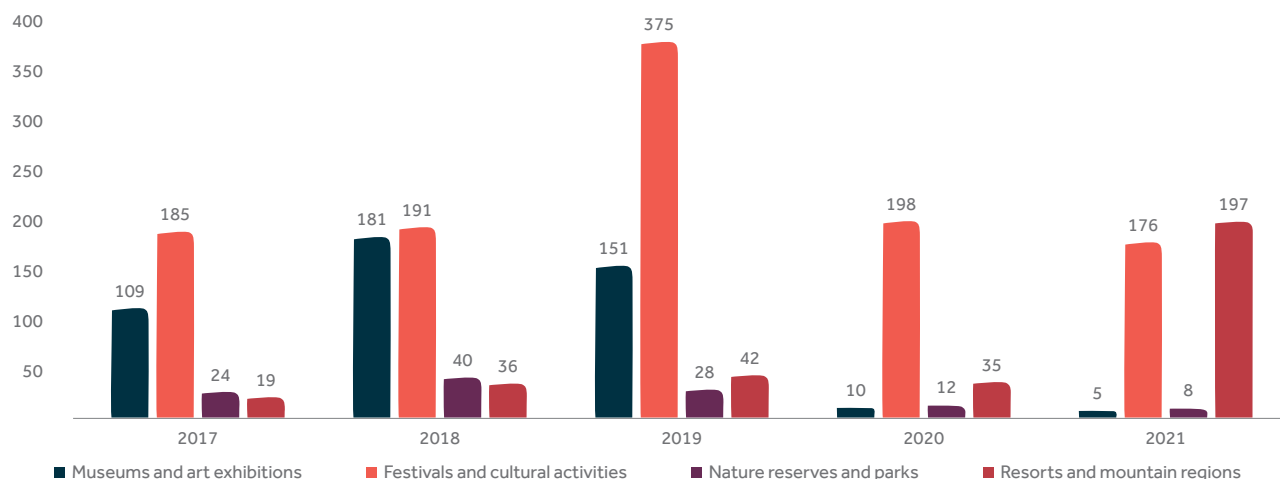


Figure 22: Cultural activities of foreign tourists excluding heritage and archaeological sites



## Distribution and Diversity Indicators

Whereas visit and attendance indicators can help to determine the total number of persons engaged in cultural participation, distribution and diversity indicators are concerned with measuring how the total numbers were distributed, either across social groups (diversity) or according to the geographic distribution of participation opportunities and ease of access to them (distribution). That is, while the first set of indicators represents the response to the question, “How many community members participate?” diversity and distribution indicators respond to the question, “Who participates?”

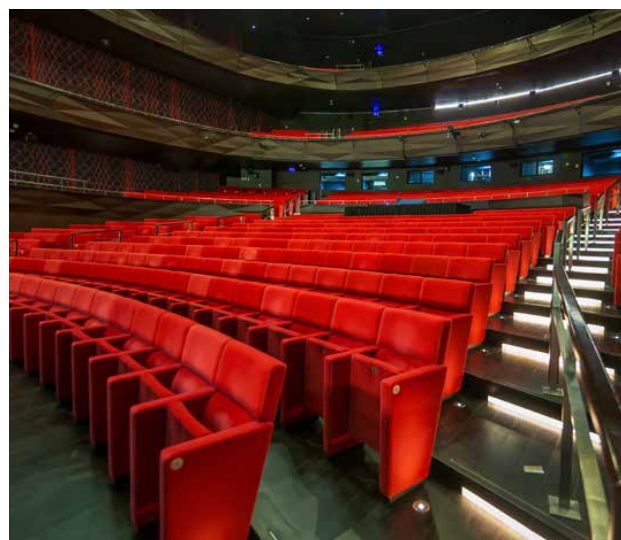
Accordingly, in the next section, we address the issue of access to cultural facilities, comprising both the headquarters of cultural activities and related services, and their distribution across the regions of the Kingdom in 2021. It then goes on to analyze the social determinants (characteristics) of participation rates in order to identify the extent to which there are equal opportunities for cultural participation.<sup>(99)</sup> The purpose of these indicators is to yield insight into levels of equality of opportunity for cultural participation with a view to the cultural empowerment of diverse groups within society, and to ensure the accessibility and equitable distribution of cultural facilities.

### Distribution of cultural facilities

The availability of cultural facilities is a key condition that enables cultural participation, as it dictates the geographic scope of many public cultural activities and enhances the vitality and visibility of this aspect of social life. The

distribution of cultural facilities is used as an indicator of the opportunities available for cultural participation precisely because the extent to which equality exists in such opportunities may be deduced based on the geographical distribution of cultural facilities, affording an overall picture of needs for growth in terms of the number of facilities.<sup>(100)</sup> In order for preliminary comparisons to be made, the index provides for an estimate of cultural facilities according to the population of the province/country. This section takes the distribution of museums and cinemas as models, as the data available on these facilities allows their distribution to be presented in a systematic manner.

With regard to museums, the data points to their relative availability: in Asir, Al-Jawf, Hail, and Al-Qassim, with the rate



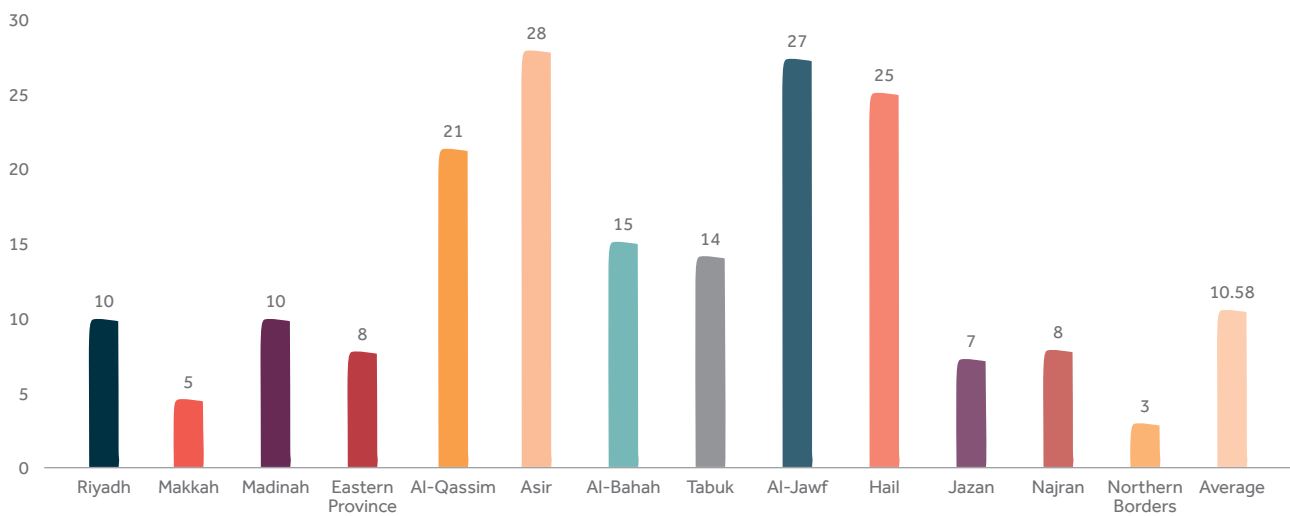




exceeds 20 museums per million population, which exceeds the global average of around 12 per million people. Of note, in several regions of the Kingdom, this number is made up of small private museums, especially in the Asir Province,<sup>(101)</sup> which boasts 28 museums per million inhabitants. This is nearly three times the rate for the Kingdom as a whole, which stands at 10.58. Although this level of museum provision is close to the global average, it falls far short of the rates

in leading or emerging countries in this field (71 in France and 21 in South Korea<sup>(102)</sup> respectively). More importantly, the number of museums relative to the population falls below the average in areas such as Jazan, Najran, and the Northern Borders. Likewise, densely populated regions such as Makkah, the Eastern Province and major cities may require higher rates of growth in the number of museums in line with their populations (see Figure 23).

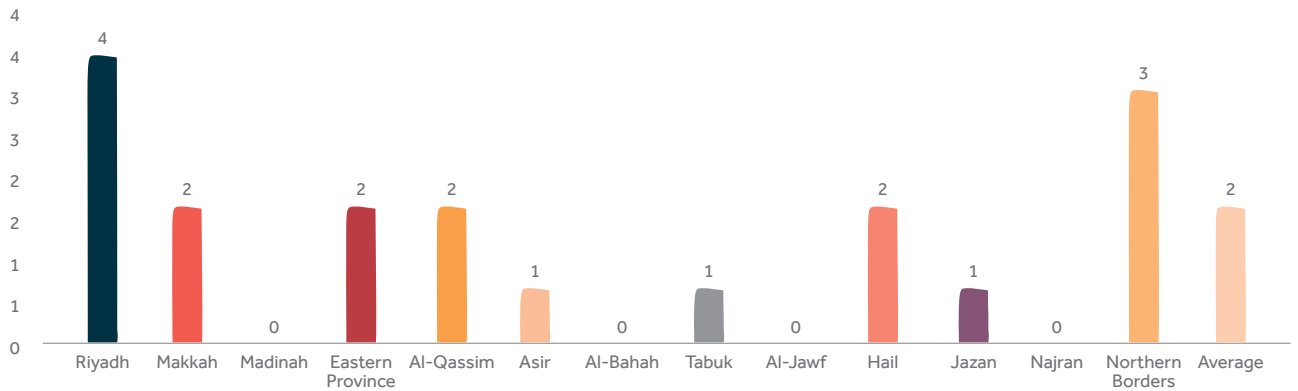
Figure 23: Number of museums per million population, by province<sup>(103)</sup>



Unlike museums, cinemas are less available in all regions of the Kingdom, as visiting cinemas represents a newly established activity. Cinemas have not yet opened in the provinces of Madinah, Al-Bahah, Al-Jawf, or Najran, while the availability of cinemas in other regions

is on average only around two per million inhabitants (see Figure 24). With the rapid growth of the sector, the limits placed on cultural participation rates in terms of visiting cinemas in the various regions are expected to diminish.

Figure 24: Number of cinemas per million population by province<sup>(104)</sup>



### Social diversity

Social diversity measures the extent of equality or disparity between the different groups of society in terms of cultural participation. Highlighting any potential gaps between groups according to social characteristics (gender, age, educational level, and monthly income level) makes it possible to identify social groups that have not been sufficiently included in the domain of cultural participation based on the 2021 Cultural Participation Survey.<sup>(105)</sup> The metric measures the differences according to the appropriate statistical tests, and a comparison is made with previous years.

### By gender

The results of the 2021 Cultural Participation Survey showed that the level of cultural participation among males is slightly higher than that for females in terms of visits to public libraries, archaeological and heritage sites, and wildlife reserves. However, gender did not make a significant difference in terms of visits to museums, cultural events, and festivals. In general, these levels offer a relatively positive image of female participation in the cultural sphere; however, the general pattern does not apply to literary evenings, in which rates of female participation were consistently low. The results of the 2021 Survey evidenced a similar trend, reflecting a larger presence of males in cultural activities that enjoy a smaller audience than other cultural activities across both genders (see Figure 24).

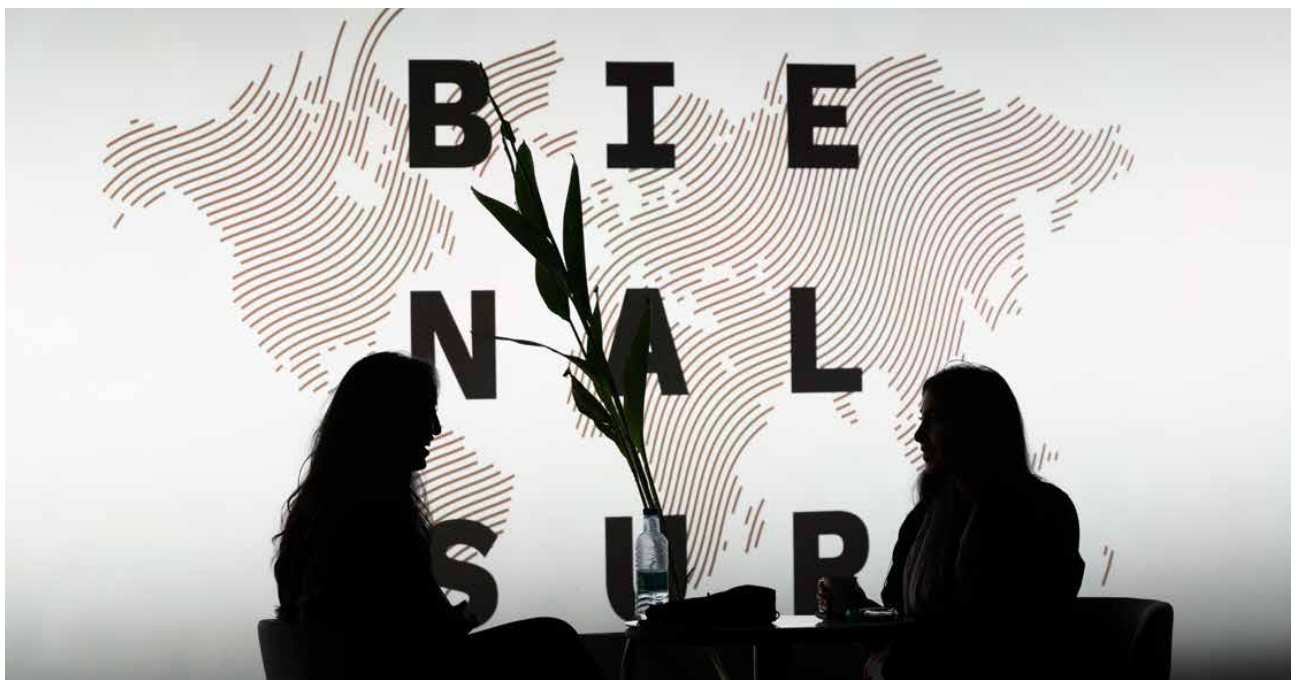
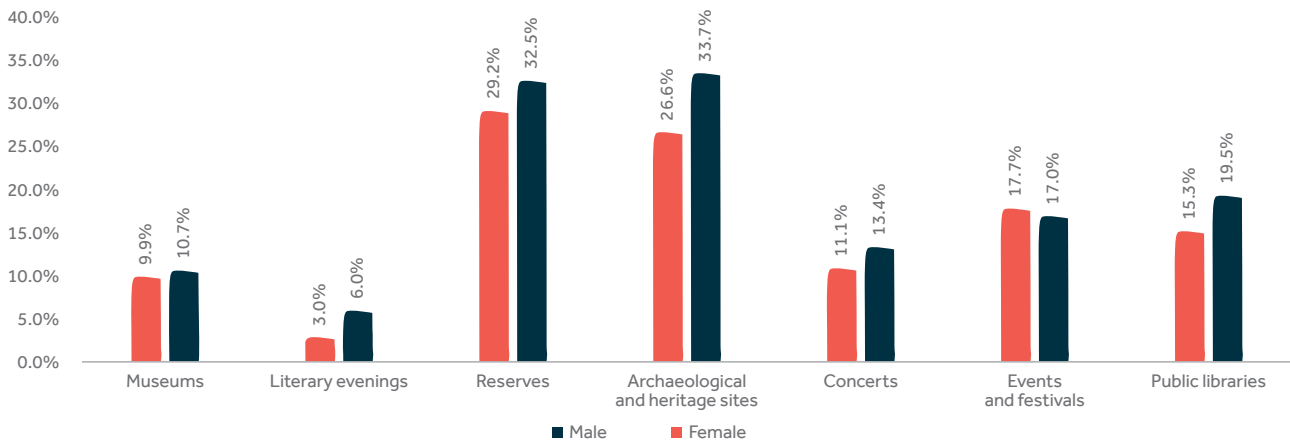




Figure 25: Cultural participation rates, by gender

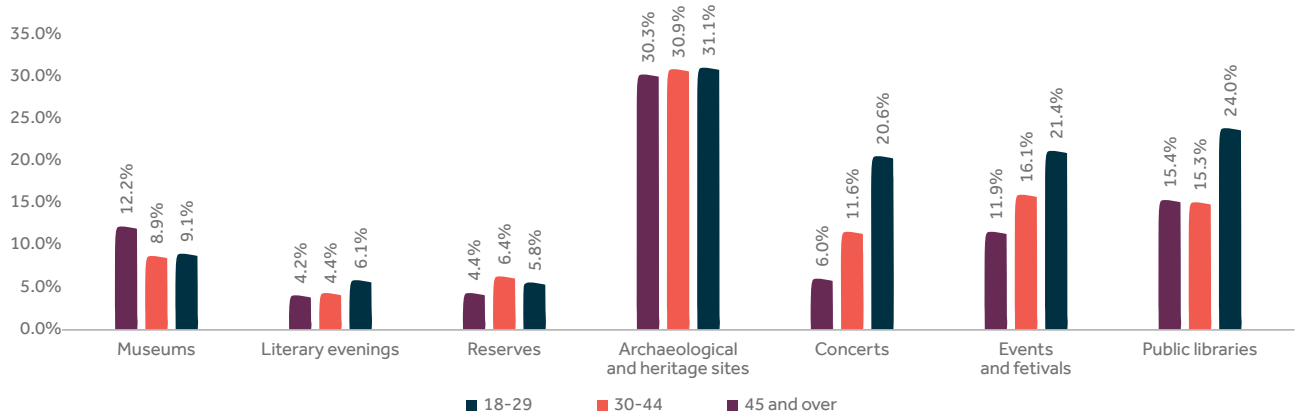


**By age group**

The age variable is a key determinant of cultural participation. Age differences provides a general reflection of the significance of the youth group in ensuring the vitality of the cultural sector, as cultural participation rates were higher among the younger age group (18–29 years old). In line with our expectation, the survey results indicated a considerable difference in rates of participation in concerts, which are the cultural activity for which age differences are most significant. This disparity was also reflected in the attendance of cultural events and festivals. In contrast to festivals and concerts, where the relationship between participation rates and age appeared to be direct and graded, nearly a quarter

of the survey respondents aged from 18 to 29 years old reported visiting a public library at least once in the past 12 months, as compared to rates of around 15% among the older age groups. This may be due to the involvement of this age group in studies, with students demonstrating similar rates to those included in the sample who were not students. It is interesting that the only activity for which participation rates for older groups are higher than rates among younger groups was that of museum visits. Adults aged 45 years and over have the highest rate of participation in this cultural activity, at 12.2%. By contrast, age did not make a significant difference in relation to visits to archaeological and heritage sites and wildlife reserves (see Figure 26).<sup>(106)</sup>

Figure 26: Cultural participation rates, by age group



**By educational level**

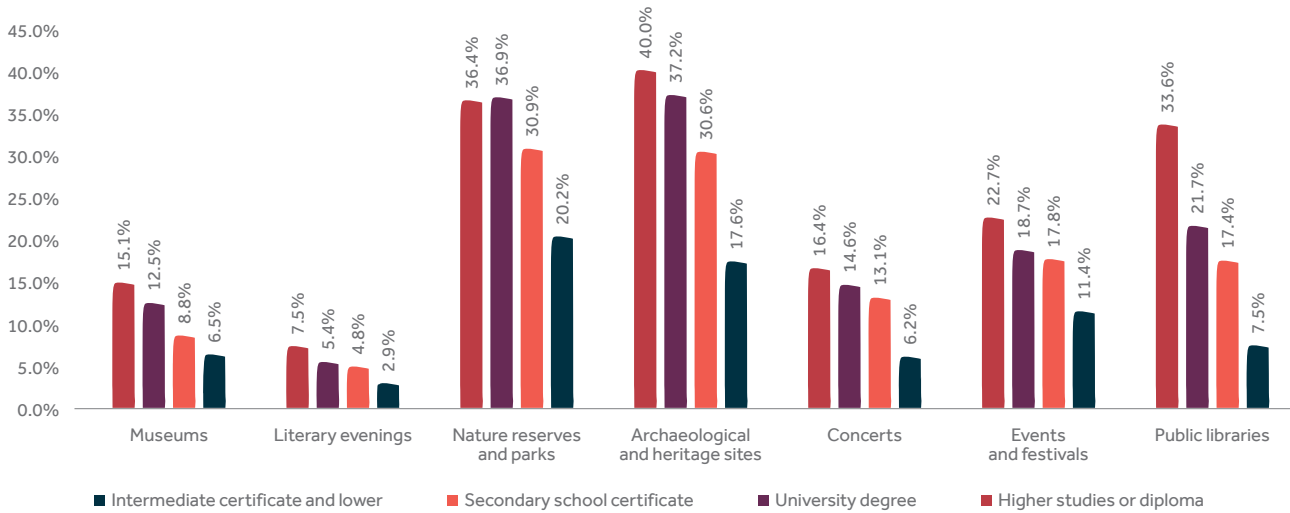
The results of the 2021 Cultural Participation Survey indicated that a lower level of cultural participation correlates with a lower educational level. Differences in this respect were particularly explicit in the rates of visits to archaeological and heritage sites, which, while preferred by groups with higher educational qualifications, gradually fall as educational qualification levels decrease. Visits to nature

reserves and parks represented the type of participation most favored by groups with intermediate or lower-level qualifications at 20.2%, while no significant differences appeared in other cultural activities (Figure 27). With regard to cultural participation according to educational level in other countries, people with a university education in the European Union (EU) were twice as likely to participate in cultural activities as people with lower educational attainments.<sup>(107)</sup>





Figure 27: Cultural participation rates by, educational level

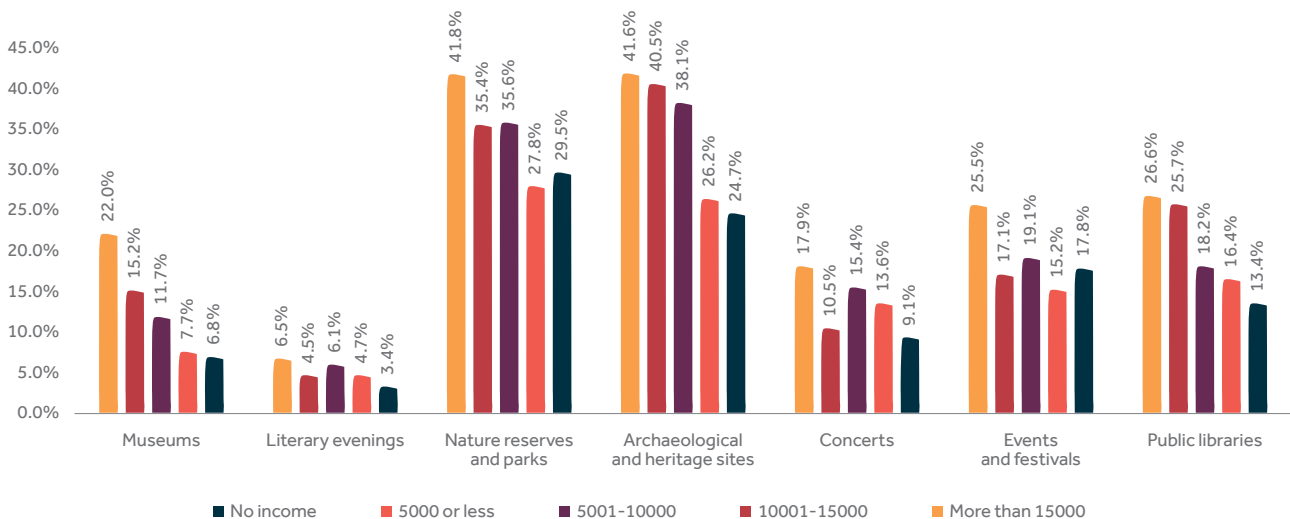


**By monthly income**

Another key factor that contributes to determining the level of cultural participation is economic status. According to the results of the 2021 Cultural Participation Survey, a decreased level of cultural participation among the lowest-income groups as compared to higher-income groups, which is clearly represented in museum visit rates. It is also manifest in relation to cultural activities that are not usually associated with entry fees or tickets, such as visiting public libraries or heritage and archaeological sites. Indicators point to a direct relationship between monthly income levels and rates of cultural participation, which is

reflected in the rate of visits to historical archaeological sites for people with higher income as compared to those with no income. The most attractive cultural activity for high income groups was visits to nature reserves and parks, with a participation rate of 41.8% (see Figure 28).<sup>(108)</sup> The same pattern appears in other countries as a general trend; this challenge facing the cultural sector is not unique to the Kingdom, as seen via similar indicators in the EU. In the EU, participation rates were reported to rise with increased monthly income, while going to the cinema represents the preferred cultural activity of people with lower incomes.<sup>(109)</sup>

Figure 28: Cultural participation rates, by monthly income





## Social Integration Indicator

The social integration indicator is concerned with two dimensions of the practice of cultural participation: non-profit organizations, and volunteering in cultural activities. It aims to measure the vitality of the non-profit cultural sector in terms of promoting the social integration of various groups within society, and to provide an insight into the provision of volunteer opportunities in cultural activities, along with the ease of access and empowerment of groups within the community.

### Non-profit cultural organizations

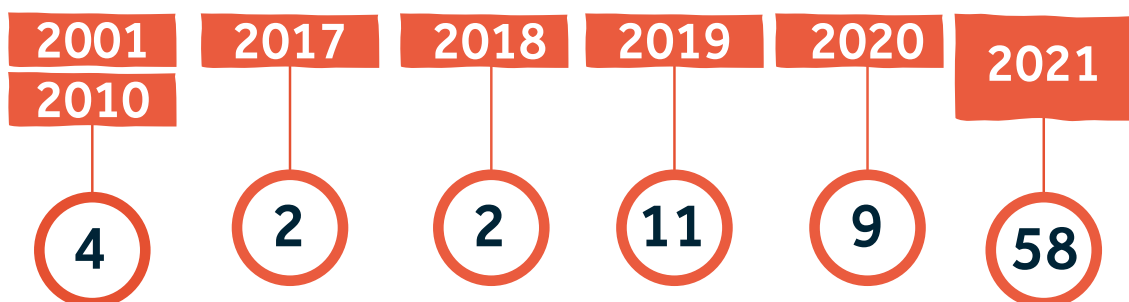
Cultural participation has a civil institutional dimension that represents the backbone of cultural practice and its original domain. This is the non-profit cultural sector, where participation takes on an organized collective form which enhances the resources available for cultural activity and offering a space for effective participation that is not limited to mere reception. Based on the importance of this transverse sector of the cultural field which cuts across all sub-sectors of culture, His Highness Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan Al Saud, Minister of Culture, approved the strategy of the Ministry of Culture for the non-profit

sector in March 2021. The systematic development provides for the expanded classification of non-profit organizations, their wider geographical coverage, and the diversity of their areas of contribution, in addition to seeking to grow the capabilities of organizations within the sector. Within the framework of this strategy, the sector is supervised by a specialized department in the Ministry of Culture, the General Department for the Non-Profit Sector, working with the National Center for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector. The department is in charge of founding organizations and providing them with supervision and technical support.

### Growth of the non-profit cultural sector

The effects of the organization and support provided by the Ministry under the umbrella of this strategy became manifest in 2021 through the sizeable jump that occurred in the number of non-profit cultural organizations. In this year alone, more organizations were established than the total number that had existed previously; 67% of the total number of active organizations were established in 2021, representing 58 new non-profit organizations (Figure 29).<sup>(110)</sup> However, the sector, which had previously lacked organizational support, must maintain a high rate of growth in order to keep pace with the expansion of the cultural field. At the end of the year there were only 86 registered organizations, representing just 2.5 organizations per million people.<sup>(111)</sup>

Figure 29: Infographic: Non-profit cultural organizations by year of establishment<sup>(112)</sup>



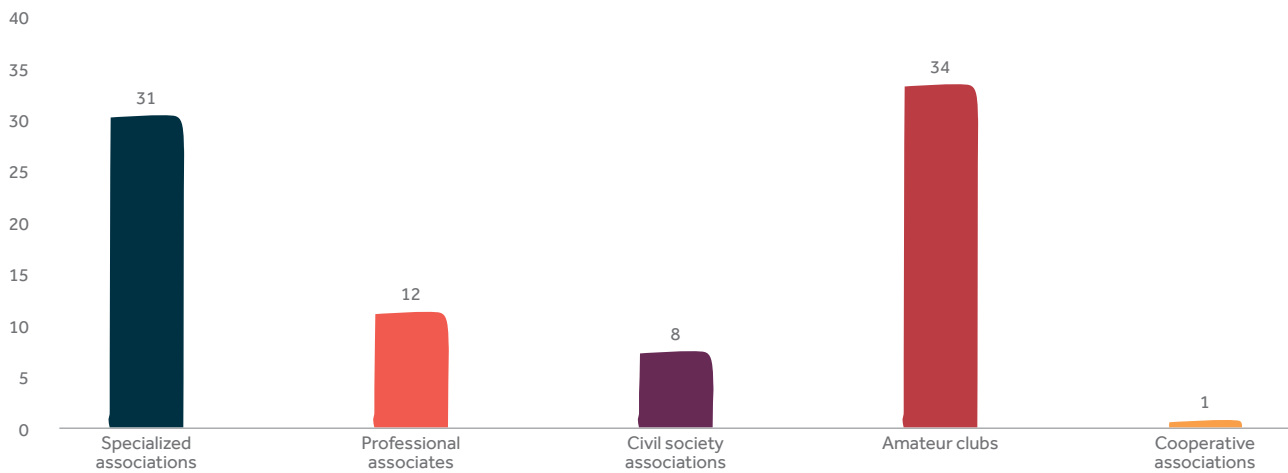
**Enhancing the specialty of the non-profit cultural sector**

The growth in the number of cultural non-profit organizations was accompanied by the increased role diversity within the sector, which emerged as a direct reflection of the expansion of the classification to include civil society associations, specialized associations, professional associations, cooperative associations, and amateur clubs.<sup>(113)</sup> Most existing organizations are classified as amateur clubs or specialized associations, with more than 30 organizations in the Kingdom falling under each of these two classifications. This may be attributed to the ease of access to the the Hawi Association for Amateur Clubs, which allows for the possibility of establishing or joining clubs in various fields and activities via the association’s electronic platform, without there being any need to visit its headquarters in order to obtain approvals, permits or licenses.<sup>(114)</sup> Professional associations ranked the third with 12 organizations, most of which were established during 2021 (see Figure 30) in an important development for the future of professional cultural work within the Kingdom. The five categories cover the needs of diverse people involved in the cultural field. Amateur practitioners, for example, may find a space in clubs, while professional

associations exist to help professional practitioners organize their affairs, get involved in the development of their sector, and preserve their gains.



**Figure 30:** Number of non-profit cultural organizations, by type of organization<sup>(115)</sup>



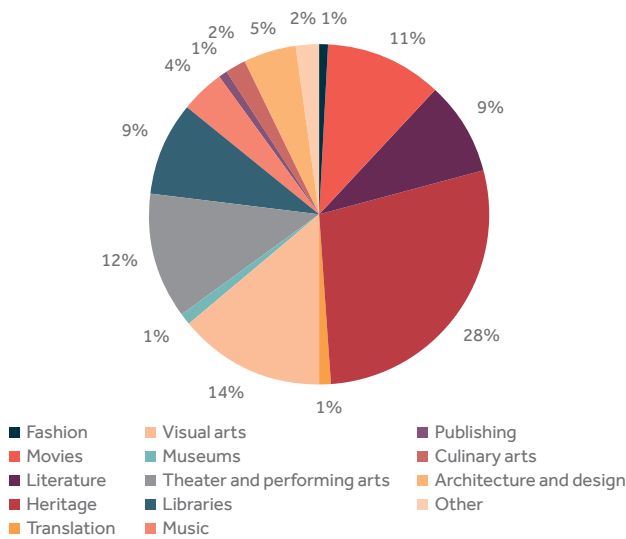
**Table 5:** Distribution of non-profit organizations, by year<sup>(116)</sup>

Organization type	Before 2021	During 2021	Total
Specialized associations	19	12	31
Cooperative associations	0	1	1
Professional associations	2	10	12
Cooperative associations	7	1	8
Amateur clubs	0	34	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>86</b>

**Distribution of non-profit cultural organizations: thematic and geographic coverage**

Development in non-profit organizations sector in 2021 was not only quantitative, but also represented a widening diversity. Specialized organizations were established in fields in which there had previously been none, such as fashion, music, and museums. The most notable growth came in the fields of movies, visual arts, theater and performing arts and libraries, with the establishment of eight organizations in each of these areas in 2021 alone. Overall, about a quarter of non-profit cultural organizations worked in the field of heritage (Figure 31), with specialized associations constituting 15 out of 24 organizations in the field. While only one amateur club exists in sectors such as heritage and museums, the activity of amateur clubs was prominent in other fields, with seven amateur clubs being established in 2021 in the field of visual arts, and six in the fields of theater, performing arts and libraries (see Figure 32).

**Figure 31: Percentages of non-profit organizations, by sector<sup>(117)</sup>**



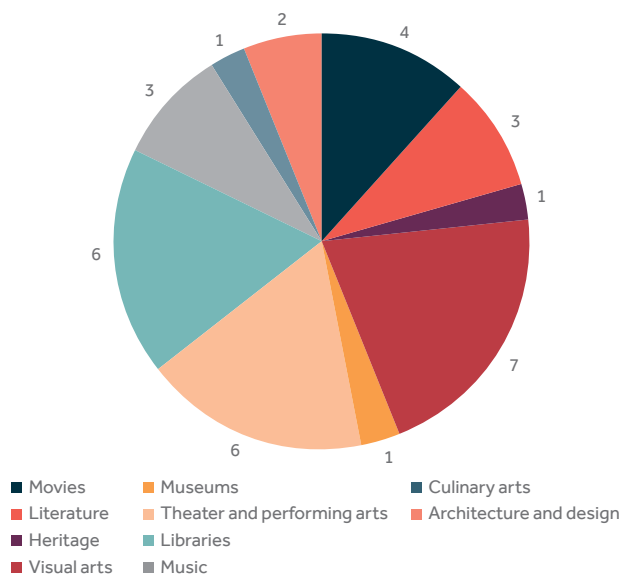
**Table 6: Distribution of non-profit organization sectors, by year<sup>(118)</sup>**

Sector	Before 2021	2021	Total
Fashion	0	1	1
Film	1	8	9
Literature	3	5	8
Heritage	17	7	24
Translation	1	0	1
Visual arts	2	10	12
Museums	0	1	1
Theater and performing arts	1	9	10
Libraries	0	8	8
Music	0	3	3
Publishing	0	1	1
Culinary arts	0	2	2
Architecture and design	1	3	4
Other	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>86</b>





Figure 32: Distribution of amateur clubs, by sector<sup>(119)</sup>



In 2021, the non-profit cultural organizations sector also expanded its geographical coverage. While such organizations had previously only been registered in 6 regions, in 2021 they were established in Al-Bahah, Al-Jawf, Madinah and Asir (see Figure 33). However, despite this expansion, coverage did not reach all regions of the Kingdom, and more than half of the organizations are concentrated

within the Riyadh region, with the capital as the location of the headquarters of all 12 professional associations. A quarter of the organizations in the Kingdom are located in the regions of Makkah (15.1%) and the Eastern Province (11.6%; see Table 7). Major cities with the highest density of non-profit organizations include Madinah, Unaizah, and Hafr Al-Batin (see Table 8).

Table 7: Distribution of non-profit organizations, by year<sup>(120)</sup>

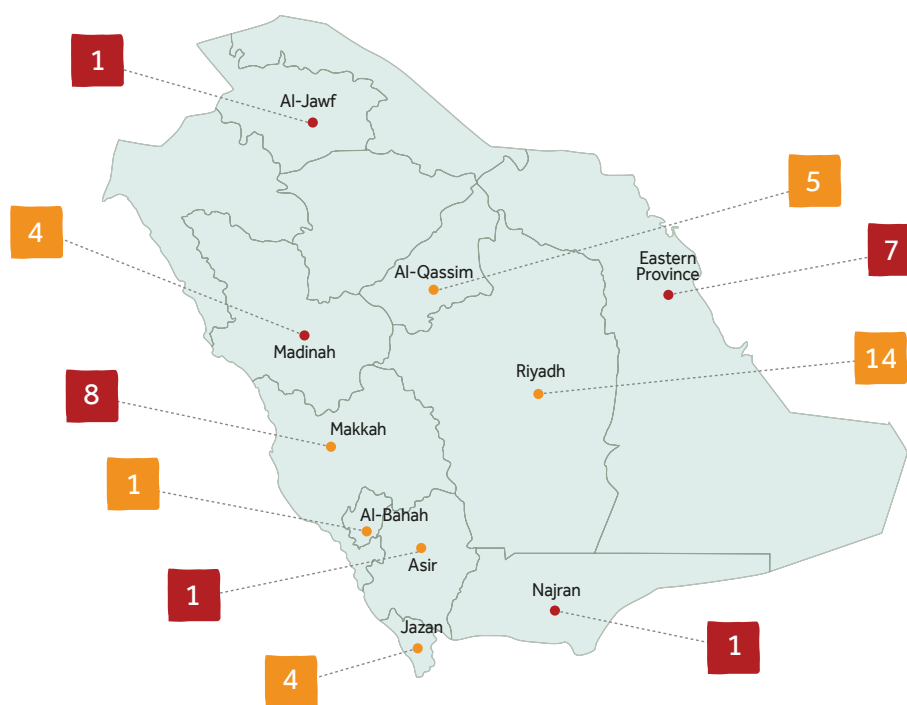
Province	Before 2021	After 2021	Total	Percentage
Eastern Province	1	9	10	11.6
Al-Bahah	0	1	1	1.2
Al-Jawf	0	1	1	1.2
Riyadh	16	30	46	53.5
Al-Qassim	4	1	5	5.8
Madinah	0	4	4	4.7
Asir	0	2	2	2.3
Makkah	5	8	13	15.1
Najran	1	0	1	1.2
Jazan	1	2	3	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 8:** Number of non-profit organizations, by province<sup>(121)</sup>

Province	No.
Riyadh	40
Jeddah	10
Al-Khobar	5
Madinah	4
Hafr Al-Batin	3
Unaizah	3
Other cities	21



**Figure 33:** Infographic: Number of sectors in which non-profit cultural organizations are active by province for the year 2021<sup>(122)</sup>



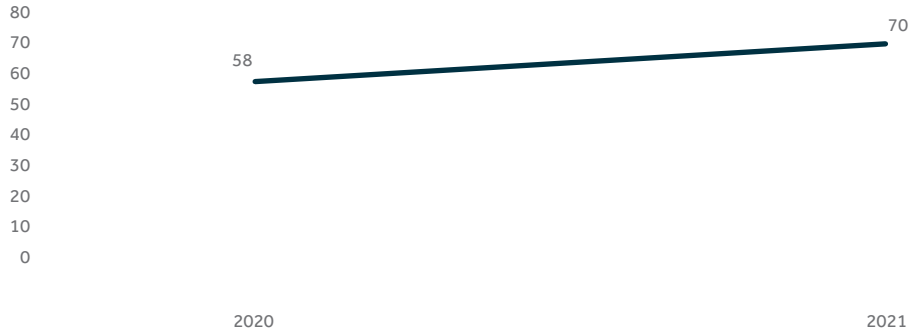
**Activity of non-profit cultural organizations in 2021**

Along with the support to non-profit organizations from Ministry of Culture, organizations, His Highness the Minister of Culture, Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan Al Saud, gave the direction for public libraries, cultural centers, literary clubs, and arts and culture associations to be made available for holding events affiliated with these new organizations. However, in 2021, the increase in the total number of activities offered by non-profit cultural organizations was somewhat limited as compared to 2020 (see Figure 34). It is

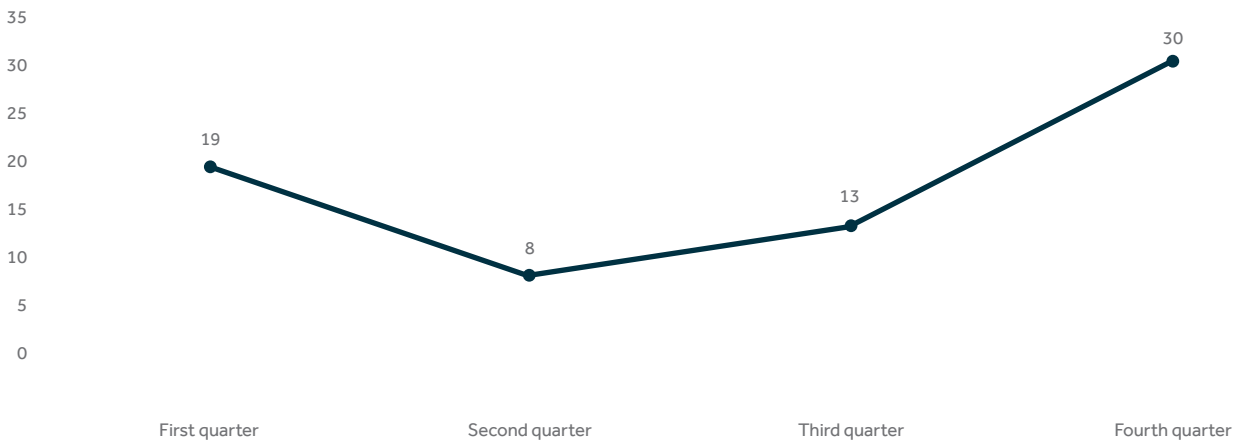
likely that the organizations established this year may not yet have fully started their activities, especially given that more than half of them were established in the second half of 2021; this assumption is supported by the increase in the number of events held in the last quarter of the year. The fourth quarter was the most active in terms of events held, registering 30 events (see Figure 35). Dialogue sessions and meetings were among the types of activities most frequently provided by non-profit organizations at 24%, followed by training courses and workshops at 20% (see Figure 36).

**Cultural Participation**

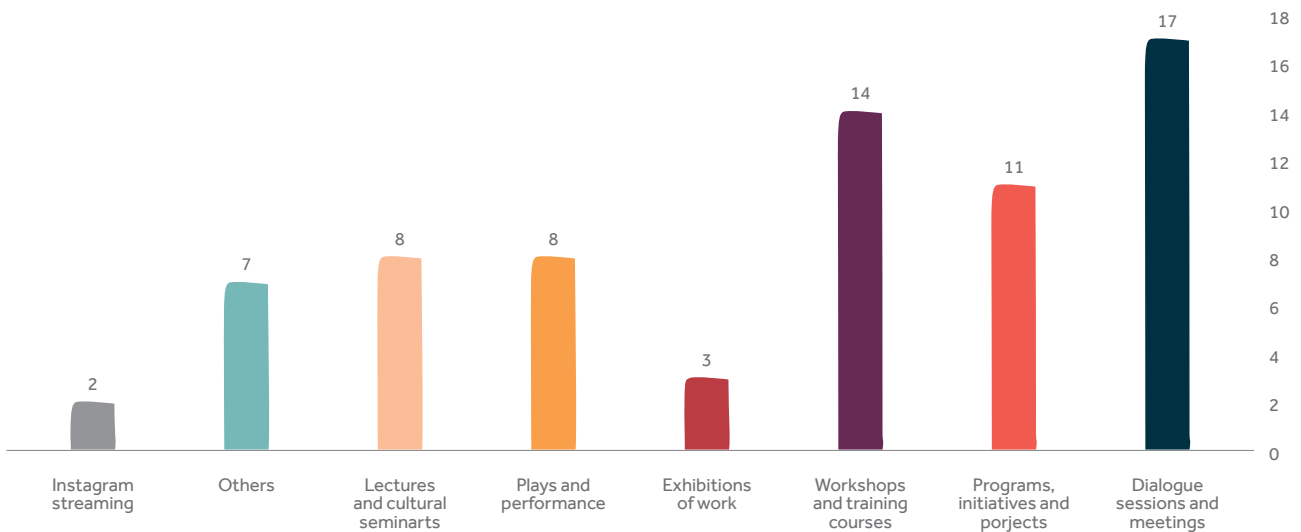
**Figure 34:** Number of cultural events provided by non-profit organizations, by year<sup>(123)</sup>



**Figure 35:** Events held by non-profit organizations in 2021<sup>(124)</sup>



**Figure 36:** Number of activities offered by non-profit organizations, by type of event<sup>(125)</sup>



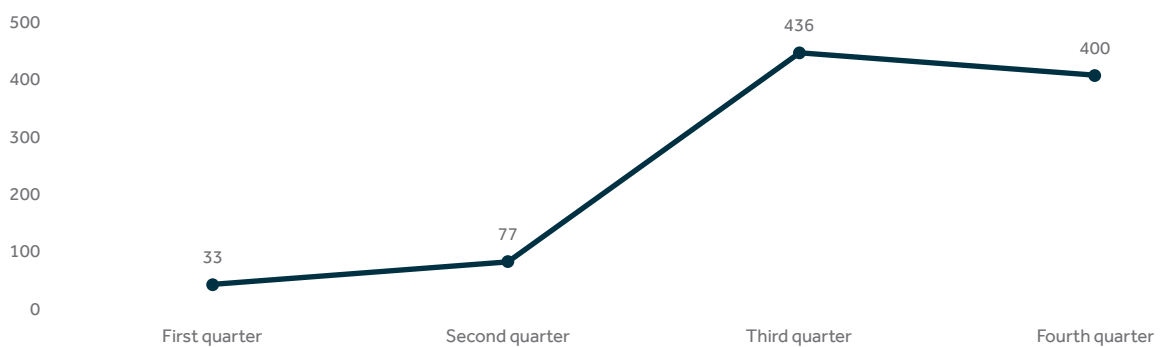
## Volunteering in the cultural field

### Volunteering in non-profit organizations

Non-profit organizations provide opportunities for volunteering and social participation in strengthening the role of cultural activities. The number of volunteers at these

organizations reached 946 during 2021, representing a total number of 6,548 working hours. The third quarter of the year was the highest in terms of volunteering rates in cultural organizations, when the number of volunteers stood at 436 (see Figure 37).<sup>(126)</sup>

**Figure 37:** Number of volunteers at non-profit organizations in 2021<sup>(127)</sup>



### Volunteering on the National Volunteer Portal

In the wider context of volunteering for non-profit organizations, the National Volunteer Portal of the Human Resources and Social Development Ministry recorded a total number of 28,555 male and female volunteers in the arts and cultural fields for the year 2021 (Figure 38).<sup>(128)</sup> The National Volunteer Portal is the official platform

for linking volunteers with government agencies or the non-profit sectors (local associations and institutions), providing and facilitating various volunteer opportunities in various fields including the cultural and artistic field. It may also be noted from Figure 39 that the number of male volunteers was higher than that of female volunteers in both fields.







Figure 38: Volunteering trends in cultural fields on the National Volunteer Portal in 2021<sup>(129)</sup>

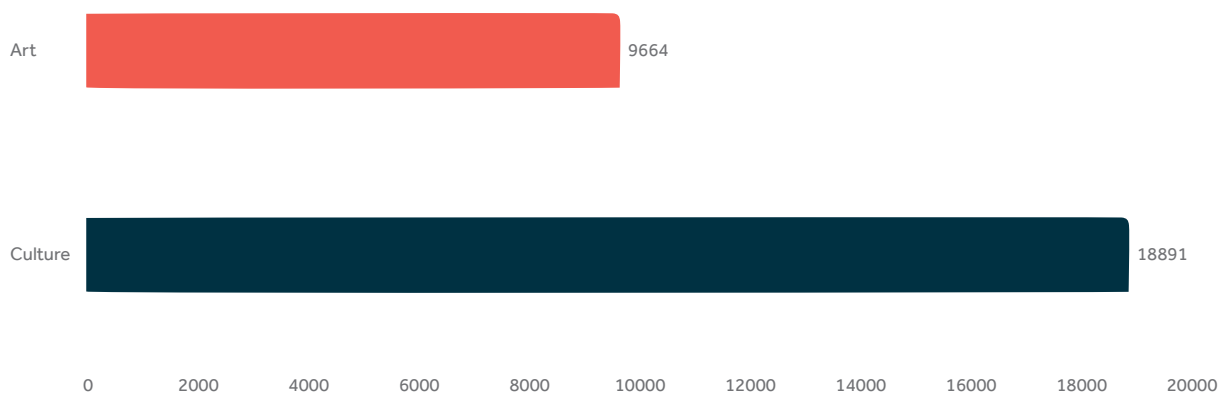


Figure 39: Infographic: Volunteering trends in cultural fields, by gender in 2021<sup>(130)</sup>



**Volunteering and civil society organizations in the field of environment and natural heritage**

The past five years have witnessed a remarkable growth in environmental awareness, representing the broader framework for the interest in and attention to nature as a form of heritage tied up with society and its culture. This interest was translated into the registration of numerous environmental associations of various classifications and green associations, indicating that this rising movement was based on a knowledge of and interest in environmental issues. A key activity of the green associations is the various kinds of voluntary work they undertake to spread environmental awareness. The field volunteering carried out by the Environmental Horizons Society, such as planting trees on various occasions and in specific locations and cleaning up waste, represents a prominent example of this. All these activities carry an important message about caring for the environment and contribute to raising the level of environmental awareness in the community, stemming from the Kingdom's commitment and the goals of Vision 2030 to increase the number of volunteers registering on the volunteer

platform of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development.<sup>(131)</sup>

Among the key environment-related initiatives and events held during the year 2021 was Saudi Environment Week, with the slogan, "The environment belongs to us and future generations." This involved the participation and interaction of tens of thousands of people across the various regions of the Kingdom, from individuals to government agencies, encompassing the private sector, associations, and non-profit institutions. This is alongside the national campaign for reforestation, "Let's Make It Green" (October 2020–April 2021), which aimed to plant 10 million trees at 165 sites across the regions of the Kingdom with the participation of thousands of volunteers from the public and private sectors, embassies and diplomatic missions, and environmental associations. The multiplicity of environmental initiatives is reflected in the wide range of volunteer opportunities in environmental activities, with 2,174 opportunities in 2021, and bringing the number of volunteers to more than 15,000. The number of male volunteers stood at 12,938, and there were 2,735 female volunteers, accounting for a total of 289,832 volunteer hours.<sup>(132)</sup>



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- (2) 2021 Cultural Participation Survey (Third Wave). For details, see Methodology Appendix.
- (3) Ministry of Culture, "Report on the State of Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2019: Facts and Figures" (Riyadh, Ministry of Culture, 2020).
- (4) Data from Museums Commission (13 January 2022).
- (5) Ministry of Culture, "Report on the State of Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2019: Facts and Figures" (Riyadh, Ministry of Culture, 2020).
- (6) For more, see: Ministry of Culture, "Report on the State of Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2020: Digitalization of Culture" (Riyadh, Ministry of Culture, 2021).
- (7) Data from the Digital Transformation and IT Department, Ministry of Culture (13 January 2022).
- (8) 2021 Cultural Participation Survey (Third Wave). For details, see Methodology Appendix.
- (9) Ibid.
- (10) For detailed names of the university libraries, see Methodology Appendix.
- (11) For details on the training sessions and workshops in the libraries, see chapter on Knowledge and Skills, and for details on competitions in libraries, please review chapter on Creativity and Production.
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- (13) Data from the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra) (February 14, 2022).
- (14) 2021 Cultural Participation Survey (Third Wave); for details, see Methodology Appendix.
- (15) Data from the King Fahd National Library (March 1, 2022).
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- (17) Data from the King Abdulaziz Complex for Endowment Libraries (February 3, 2022). For details of the libraries survey, see Methodology Appendix.
- (18) Data from the King Abdulaziz Public Library (February 20, 2022).
- (19) Data from the Library of the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (January 19, 2022).
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- (21) Data from the Alsahlia Civil Society in Unaizah (February 7, 2022). For details of the libraries survey, see Methodology Appendix.
- (22) Data from the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (February 14, 2022). For details of the libraries survey, see Methodology Appendix.
- (23) Data from the Saud Al-Babtain Charitable Center for Heritage and Culture (February 15, 2022). For details of the university survey, see Methodology Appendix.
- (24) Data from the Saudi Arabian Library of the General Presidency of Islamic Research and Ifta (February 13, 2022). For details of the university survey, see Methodology Appendix.
- (25) Data from the Library of Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim (February 21, 2022). For details of the libraries survey, see Methodology Appendix.
- (26) Data from Al-Rahmaniya Public Library (Abdul Rahman Al-Sudairy Cultural Center) (February 17, 2022). For details of the libraries survey, see Methodology Appendix.
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- (30) Data from the King Abdulaziz Public Library (February 20, 2022).
- (31) Data from the King Fahad Public Library in Jeddah (January 30, 2022).
- (32) 2021 Cultural Participation Survey (Third Wave). For details, see Methodology Appendix.

- (33) For more on the number of cinemas, see chapter on Management and Conservation.
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- (35) Data from the General Commission for Audiovisual Media (March 30, 2022).
- (36) Approximate total numbers of 25 concerts from the National Events Center data (February 14, 2022).
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- (44) 2021 Cultural Participation Survey (Third Wave); for details, see Methodology Appendix.
- (45) Ministry of Culture, "Report on the state of culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2019: Facts and Figures" (Riyadh, Ministry of Culture, 2020).
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- (49) Ibid.
- (50) For details on events organized in open spaces, see the theme chapter.
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## Cultural Participation

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- (74) Data from the Architecture and Design Commission (May 24, 2022).
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- (122) Ibid.
- (123) Ibid.
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- (125) Others include activities such as film production, photography trips, and various celebrations.
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# Knowledge and Skills



# 4

## Knowledge and Skills

- Culture and Education
- Cultural and Artistic Training and Qualification in the Kingdom





Knowledge and skills constitute the cornerstone of culture; they not only spread culture and pass it on but also develop and amplify it in ways that ensure cultural continuity. Based on this concept, the Knowledge and Skills chapter will take a look at the reality of cultural and artistic training and education in the Kingdom through a review of salient organizational changes and developments in these two sectors. In its first section, the chapter will examine the main topics of culture and arts in both primary and higher education, with a particular focus on students' orientations towards cultural and artistic disciplines, along with an initial look at the presence of culture in student activities at local universities. The second section of the chapter will paint a general picture of cultural and artistic training and qualification in the Kingdom at a time when the sector is witnessing a number of organizational developments. It will take a look at the most prominent actors in the cultural training sector and the types of programs these actors are offering, as well as their distribution throughout various cultural sectors. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the opportunities and challenges faced by the sector in this transitional period.

## Culture and Education

Since the 1950s, culture and arts education has come a long way in the Kingdom. Despite the limited presence of some of the arts and the sporadic dearth of specialization in it, Saudi educational institutions have managed to produce generations of creatives and artists. Indeed, one can observe the cultural and artistic aspects in the early stages of basic education, which has been concerned from its outset with the teaching of the Arabic language and literature. Art was introduced to the early grades during the 1950s under the moniker of Arts and Crafts, which was then changed to the settled-upon name of Art Education.<sup>(1)</sup> Basic education also included the teaching of several cultural and artistic subjects, including cooking and sewing for girls, while universities have provided departments of architecture, libraries, and literature for decades. However, these beginnings lacked the supporting organizations that would promote creativity in certain fields while providing opportunities to learn in other creative fields hitherto unavailable across institutions.<sup>(2)</sup>

During the past decade, cultural and artistic education entered a new phase of modernization and expansion. This became apparent in the concepts and practices that contributed to the freeing of some artistic fields from the frameworks of merely educational programs in higher education, paving the way for more professional artistic practices. In its previous editions, the Report on the State of Culture reviewed several aspects of this transformation in specific fields, such as visual and culinary arts, fashion, and design. Since the establishment of the

Ministry of Culture in 2018, the transformation has taken a comprehensive institutional turn that did not limit culture to higher education but considered the presence of culture in public education as the cornerstone of the educational



process. This was manifested in a partnership that began, in early 2020, with the signing of two memoranda of understanding between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education, as well as the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation.<sup>(3)</sup> Acceleration of the cultural education system has been the hallmark of the past two years, with efforts to promote a cultural presence in official education on all levels: from the introduction of new subjects for study at the various stages of education and moving on to the launch of teacher accreditation programs in many fields, including the arts,<sup>(4)</sup> and even the launching of the Culture Scholarship Program in early 2020.<sup>(5)</sup> All of these transformations indicate that culture has become an essential theme in education.

### Culture and Arts in Public Education: Significant Changes and Developments

The discussion of culture in public education is part and parcel of a broader context of structural transformations of the educational system in the Kingdom. The most prominent of such developments in 2021 is the increase of semesters from two to three in parallel, as well as the introduction of new academic subjects that feature cultural and artistic themes;<sup>(6)</sup> moreover, the teaching of English was introduced to first-grade pupils,<sup>(7)</sup> along with the introduction of new subjects linked to critical thinking at intermediate and secondary school levels. The Common First Year program was also applied in the first grade of secondary schools in the Kingdom, with the intention of setting the scene for the application of the new track system in the second and third grades of secondary school in the next academic year.<sup>(8)</sup> These changes were accompanied by the development and continuous review of curricula at all school levels to enhance educational outcomes and harmonize them with university programs and the labor market. The First Common Year focuses on qualifying the students in both the Humanities and Natural Sciences in order to specialize in the following year in one of the four new tracks. Table 1 presents these tracks, bearing in mind that the presently applied system at the secondary school level contains two main tracks for the second and third grades (of secondary education): the Natural Sciences track and the Humanities track. In addition, there is an Optional track that includes subjects chosen by students specializing in either one of these two tracks.



Table 1: The new tracks for secondary school

Secondary school tracks after the first joint year
The general track
Computer science and engineering track
Health and life track
Business administration track
Islamic sciences track

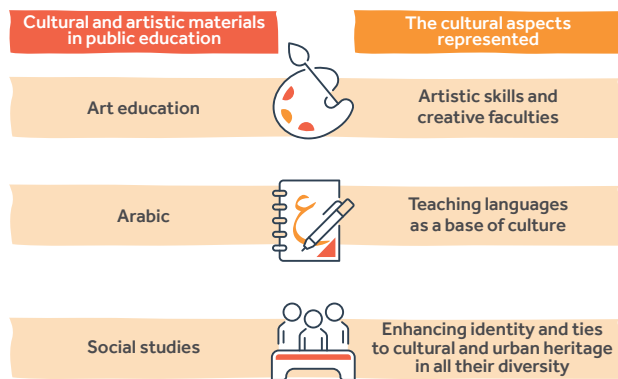
#### Cultural and artistic subjects in public education and their main topics

In a general sense, culture surrounds the entire educational process. This is to be expected, as a major role of education is to pass on and sustain the values and culture of society. However, in the special sense addressed in this chapter, it has more to do with the knowledge and skills that constitute culture and address its topics directly. This includes (1) teaching the language, which represents the vessel containing the essential material of society and opens ways for cultural communication with the outside world; (2) strengthening identity and the ties of cultural heritage in all of its diversity; and (3) fostering creative faculties and providing the student with technical skills. Cultural and artistic education is offered either within courses mainly related to culture and arts in public education and directly connected with the cultural and artistic fields or, in part, through courses that contain a smattering of cultural and artistic topics, even if they do not fit into any particular cultural or artistic niche. In the directly related courses - which have been taught



for decades - the three aspects mentioned appear in the courses such as Arabic Language, Social Studies, and Art Education (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Cultural and artistic materials in public education



At various levels of schooling, the newly-improved Art Education curriculum deals with many art-related topics. Students study not only the contemporary plastic arts, abstract art, and some basics about painting and handicrafts, but also traditional architecture and its history and traditional textile arts. The curriculum also tackles arts which are not familiar to local audiences, such as the Asian art of Batik and how to use it in an Arab context. The subject explores the work of many artists locally and globally, representing a remarkable change in the content of Art Education as a subject. The total number of weekly sessions devoted to Art Education at the primary education level is 12, two sessions for each grade, which constitutes 7% of total weekly sessions per semester. On the other hand, a total of 6 sessions are devoted to Art Education at the middle school level; that is, between 6% and 7% of total classroom time (see Table 2). At the secondary

school level (according to the current curricular system), Art Education has been introduced to the Optional program; 5 classes per week per semester (see Table 4).<sup>(9)</sup>

As for the newly-improved subject of Arabic, the implemented changes have focused on enhancing students' linguistic, reading and writing skills in particular. The subject also aims to increase students' levels of aesthetic appreciation by reviewing, analyzing, and interacting with literary texts. The subject explores topics in communication to promote the students' facility with language. As can be seen in Table 2, there are a total of 33 weekly Arabic language classes in primary school, reflecting the importance of the subject in the new curriculum, as the total number of Arabic language classes is equivalent to the total number of weekly mathematics classes per semester. The total number of weekly classes for all grades of the intermediate stage for the semester is 12 (see Table 2) and five for the two semesters of the first common year of secondary school (see Table 3). In the course system within the Humanities track, the students in the second and third years of secondary school studies have 25 Arabic language classes throughout the academic year, according to the school plan detailed in Table 4.<sup>(10)</sup>

The social studies curriculum includes topics related to history, ancient civilizations, Islamic civilization, antiquities in the Kingdom, and national tourism. There are six weekly social studies classes in primary school (from the fourth to the sixth grade), and in middle school, there are eight weekly classes for all grades (see Table 2). As for secondary school, the subject has five sessions per week in the third semester for the first-grade secondary school students, as shown in Table 3. In the course system and within the Humanities track in the second and third years of secondary school, students study history and social studies, making ten weekly classes throughout the year (see Table 4).<sup>(11)</sup>



**Table 2:** Total number of weekly classes on cultural and artistic subjects in primary and middle schools

Course	Primary	Middle
Arabic language	33	12
Art education	12	6
Social studies	6	8

**Table 3:** Total number of weekly classes in culturally and artistically-oriented subjects for the first joint year of secondary school

Subject	Semester	Number of Classes	% of Year for Subject
Language competencies 1-1	First	5	13.33%
Language competencies 1-2	Second	5	6.67%
Social studies	Third	5	6.67%

**Table 4:** Total weekly classes on cultural and artistic subjects for the second and third years of secondary school pursuant to the current curriculum

Grade	Semester	Subject	Number of Classes	% for Subject during Year
Second and third of secondary school (Humanities track)	All year as per school plan	Language competencies 3 (Joint program)	5	9.52%
		Language competencies 4 (Joint program)	5	
		Language studies classes (Humanities track)	5	6.67%
		Arabic language 1 & 2 (Humanities track)	10	13.33%
		History (Humanities track)	5	4.76%
		Social studies (Humanities track)	5	6.67%
		Art education (Optional program)	5	6.67%

### Culture and Arts in higher education: Towards consolidating the presence of the cultural and artistic disciplines

Higher education on culture and arts enjoys importance that stems from its central role in promoting cultural knowledge and skills in both thought and production. At this stage, education contributes particularly well to refining the knowledge structure and productivity of culture. It also forms a bridge connecting these two sides, so that graduates in various cultural and social fields get qualified as a workforce capable of transferring and accumulating

knowledge, to be then translated into a productive chain in the labor market. Despite the fact that culture and arts have been a part of higher education since its origins in the Kingdom, represented by the faculties of arts and humanities on through the faculties of architecture and design and even tourism colleges, higher education has seen renewed interest for several years. Perhaps the most notable feature of this trend is the launch of the Culture Scholarship Program launched in early 2020, coupled with an increase in the number of universities offering cultural and artistic majors, such as theatrical literature, offered as a major at King Abdulaziz University for graduate students.<sup>(12)</sup> In the third quarter of



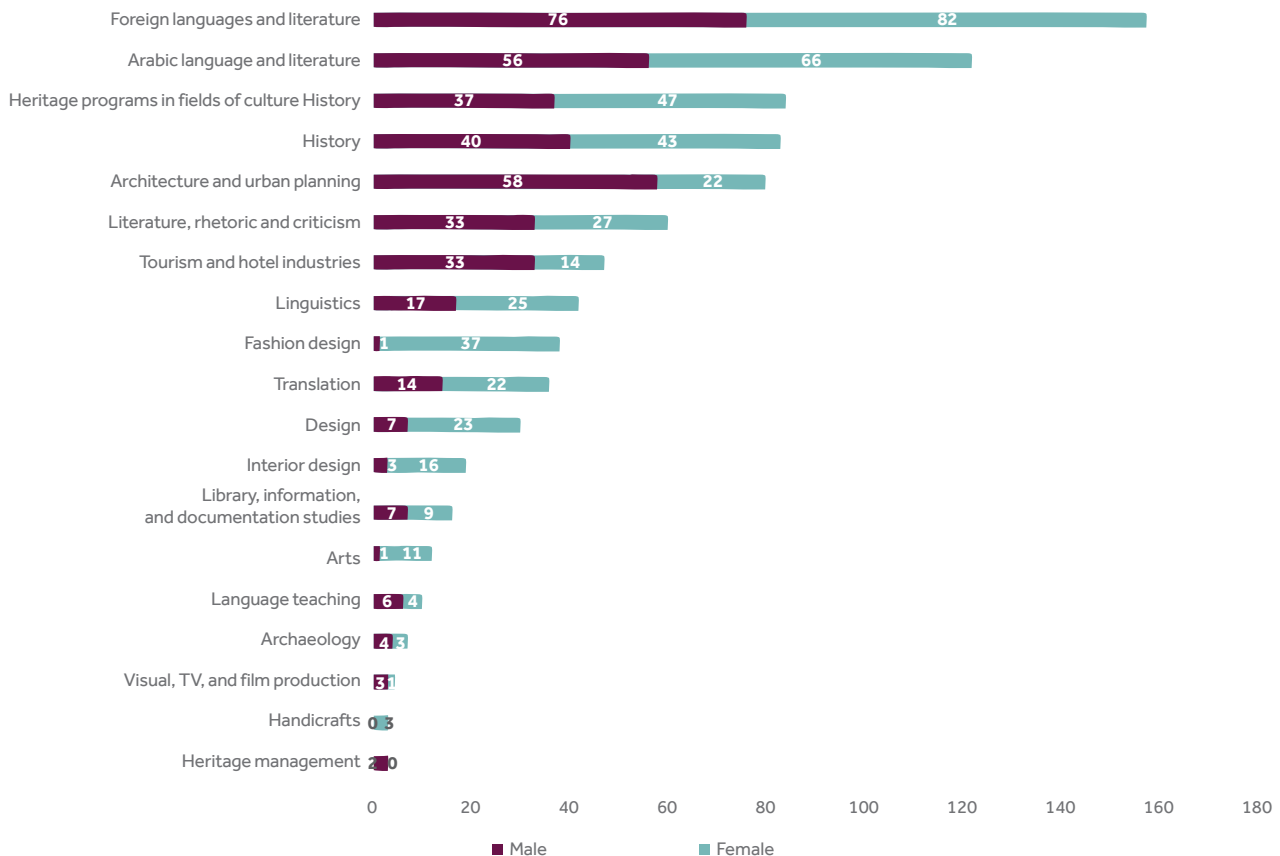
2020, Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University saw the launch of filmmaking, animation, and photography majors for the undergraduate program.<sup>(13)</sup> Thus, Princess Nourah University is the third Saudi university after Effat University<sup>(14)</sup> and Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University<sup>(15)</sup> to allow the study of film production. Similarly, under the auspices of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program, the Path of Excellence Scholarship was launched in the fourth quarter which includes, for the first time, philosophy and several other cultural and artistic disciplines<sup>(16)</sup> as majors. This affirms the attention paid to cultural and artistic disciplines, which have begun to expand and take root in higher education more than ever before.

The following section shows the reality of higher education as represented in academic programs related to culture and arts, as well as discusses students' attitudes towards those disciplines. It also provides a first glimpse into student activities and clubs at local universities. As actors rather than passive recipients, students play an important role in enhancing the presence of culture and arts in university settings.

**Academic programs related to culture and arts in higher education**

Saudi higher education institutions, including public and private universities and colleges, offer various academic programs in the fields of culture and arts. Although the most recent data available in this regard dates back to 2019, they provide a baseline by means of which the state of these approximately 853 programs can be measured. Most of the programs are concentrated in the undergraduate level (460 programs), followed by the master's degree (218 programs), and also include the doctoral degree in select fields.<sup>(17)</sup> There is a negligible variance in the distribution of these programs among male and female students, with 53% of them going to females. However, in some fields, there is a notable disparity in the distribution among the genders. Although the number of programs available to both males and females in language and literature is roughly equal, the programs offered in the discipline of architecture tend to cater for males; at the same time, almost all programs in the disciplines of fashion and arts target female students (see Figure 2).

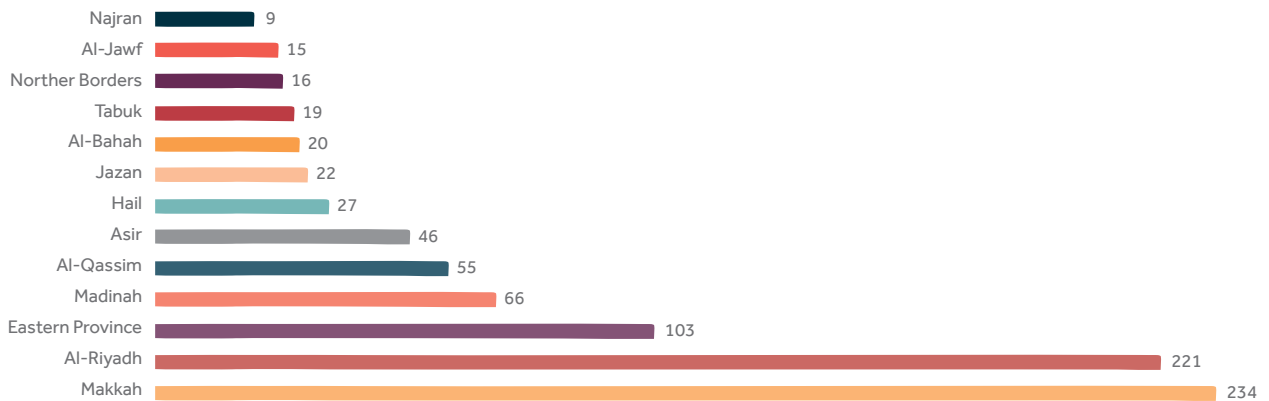
**Figure 2: Number of academic programs offered by Saudi institutes of higher education in disciplines related to culture and arts by gender**



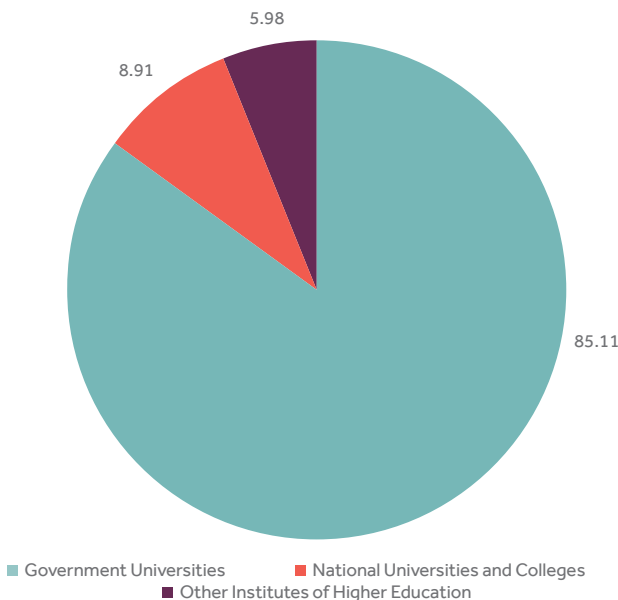
These programs are distributed throughout the various regions of the Kingdom, with a higher concentration in the major administrative regions, such as Makkah and Riyadh, which contain more than half of the total number of cultural and artistic programs (see Figure 3). Similarly, 85% of these

programs are concentrated in public universities (see Figure 4). This imbalance may be due to the lack of cultural and artistic programs at private universities and in colleges that focus on other disciplines, as compared to public universities and educational institutes.<sup>(18)</sup>

**Figure 3:** Number of academic programs offered by Saudi institutes of higher education in disciplines related to culture and arts by administrative region



**Figure 4:** Percentage of academic programs offered by Saudi institutes of higher education in disciplines related to culture and arts by type of educational institute



students, their male counterparts have the choice among 26 programs. This disparity is particularly evident in the disciplines that were either not available to females, such as Architecture and Visual Production (see Figure 6), or those that were not available to either gender as academic majors, such as Tourism and Hotel Management (see Figure 6-7).

However, the notable role of private universities, colleges, and other higher education institutes is that they offer academic programs in some cultural fields that are not offered by public universities, especially to females (see Figure 5). In particular, while private universities and colleges offer 50 academic cultural and technical programs for female



Figure 5: Distribution of academic programs offered in disciplines related to culture and arts by type of educational institute and gender

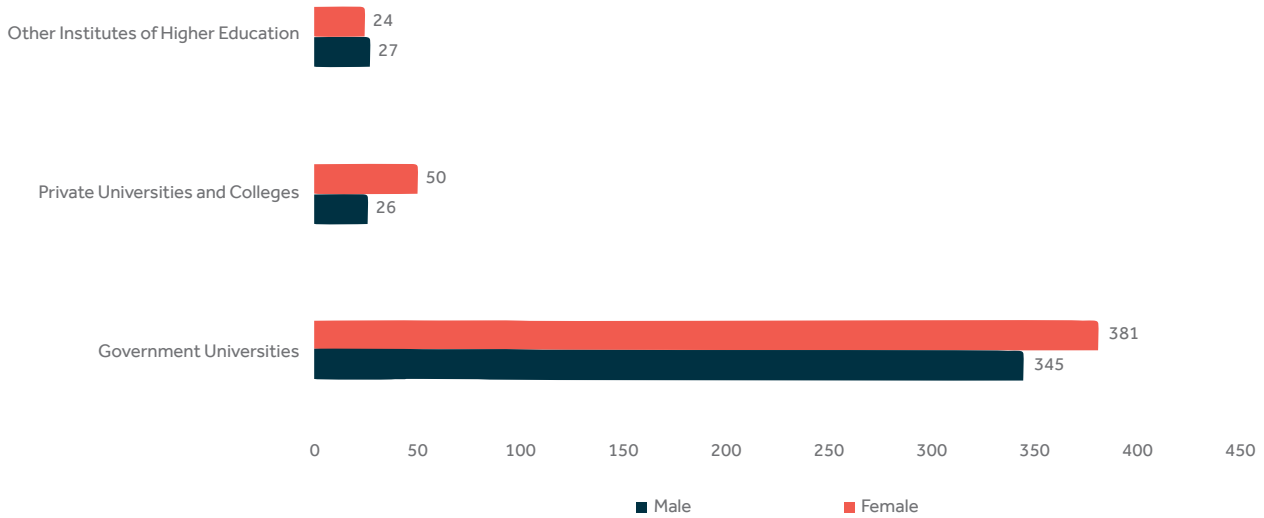
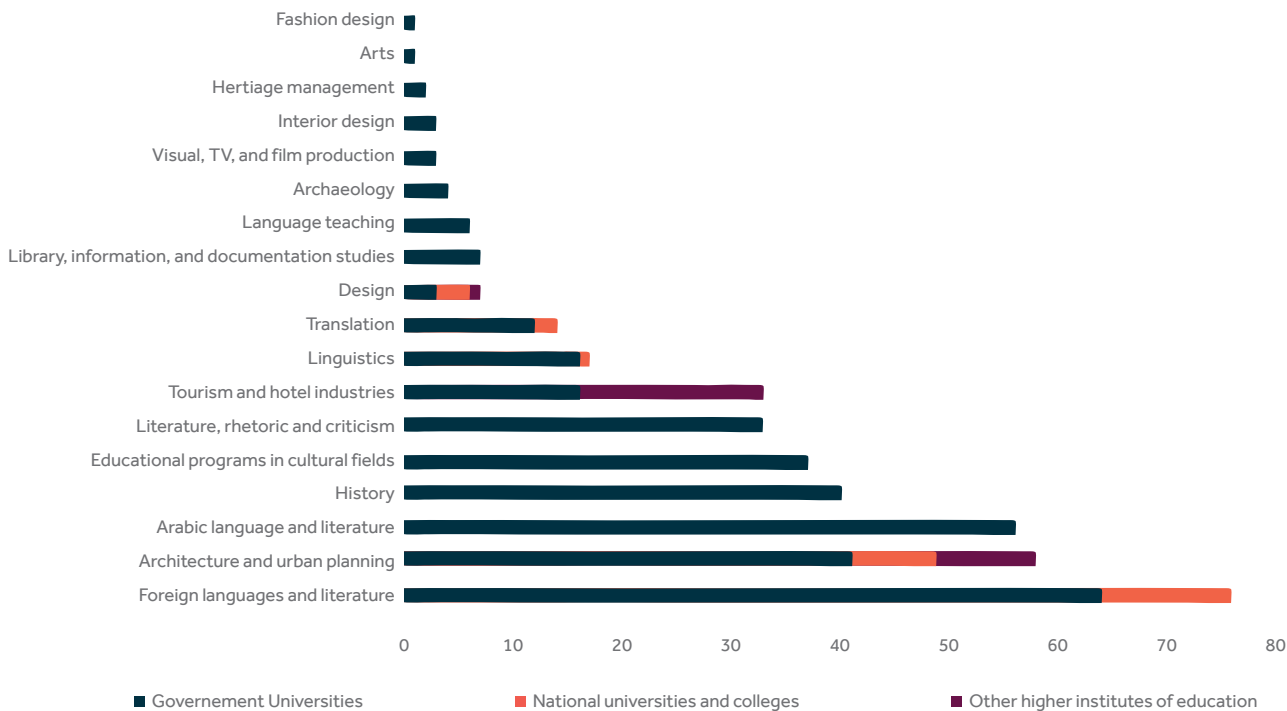


Figure 6: Number of academic programs offered to females by Saudi higher education institutes in disciplines related to culture and arts by type of educational institute



**Figure 7: Number of academic programs offered to males by Saudi higher education institutions in disciplines related to culture and arts by type of educational institute**



**Foreign scholarships for higher education in culture and arts**

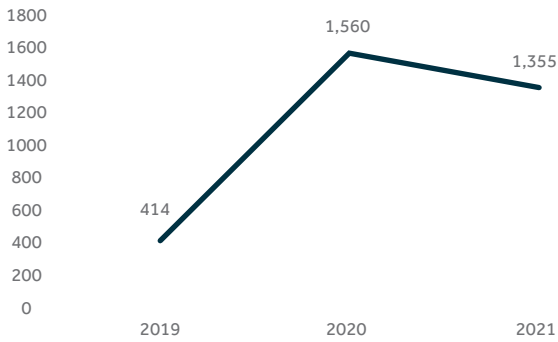
A wide variety of scholarships are available for those wishing to study one of the disciplines related to culture and arts abroad. The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program is the oldest and broadest in terms of the range of programs available to be applied for, while the Culture Scholarship Program launched by the Ministry of Culture in 2020 is considered to be the most specialized of them. This section reviews the data of applicants and recipients of scholarships in disciplines related to culture and arts in these two programs. The aim is to present a panoramic picture of the reality of higher education, for which foreign scholarship is an important tributary to the integration with academic programs offered by local higher education institutions.

The numbers of applicants to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program provide an additional clue about the growing demand witnessed by the cultural sectors, as evidenced by the number of students wishing to study one of the disciplines related to culture and arts. In the period from 2019, the increase in the number of applicants for disciplines related to culture and arts in the Custodian of the Two Mosques Scholarship Program amounted to 132% -2021, despite the slight decline in numbers in 2021 from the previous year (see Figure 8).



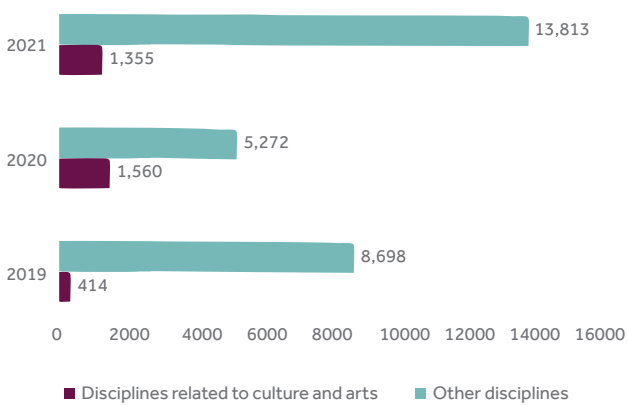


**Figure 8:** Numbers of applicants to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program in disciplines related to culture and arts in the period between 2019-2021



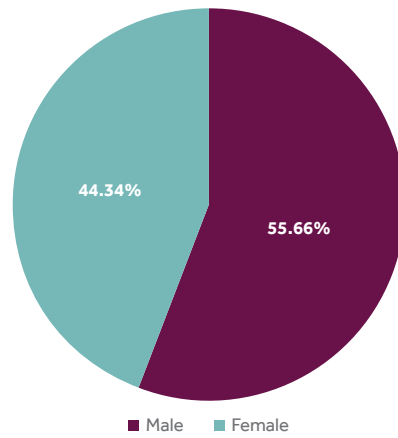
This pattern of gradual growth is consistent if we compare the number of applicants for scholarships in one of the disciplines related to culture and arts with the aggregate number of applicants to the scholarship programs in all disciplines (see Figure 9). In 2020, the growth rate amounted to 23%, with a decrease in percentage (%9) in 2021.

**Figure 9:** Numbers of applicants to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program by the relationship of the discipline to culture and arts in the period from 2019-2021



Interestingly, the numbers of applicants for scholarships in disciplines related to culture and arts show a remarkable difference of 11% between the two genders; 44.34% for female students compared to 55.66% for their male counterparts (see Figure 10). However, this relative distribution takes on a different significance if one takes into account that the percentage of females was only 42.56% of the total number of applicants for scholarships in all disciplines. In other words, female students' representation in disciplines related to culture and arts in relation to the total number of females is higher than that of their male peers, albeit with a small difference.

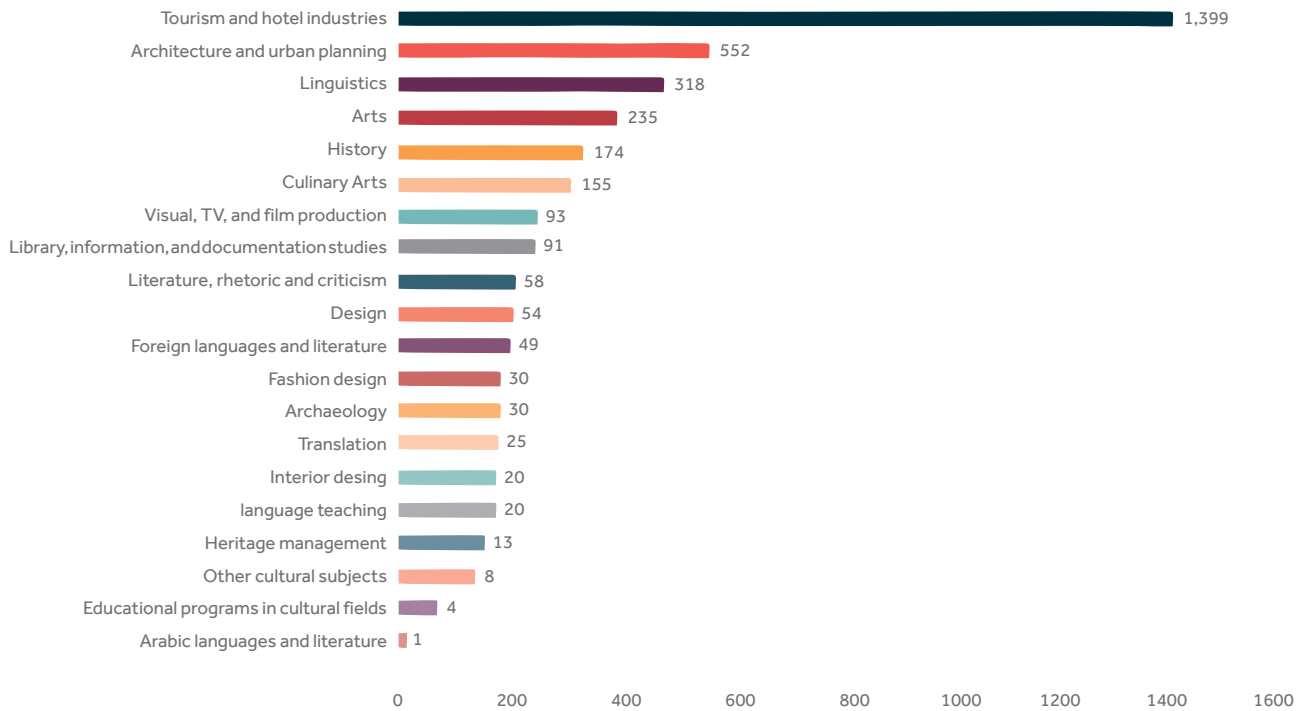
**Figure 10:** Percentage of applicants to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program in disciplines related to culture and arts in the period from 2019-2021 by gender



A comparison of the areas of specialization receiving the largest number of applicants (see Figure 11) with those offered by higher education institutions within the Kingdom (see Figure 2) suggests that the number of applicants for majors in tourism, hotel industry, arts, visual production and culinary arts has increased. In contrast, there has been a decline in language and literature majors. This finding may be a preliminary indicator of a reduced supply within the Kingdom of the first group, where the number of applicants for foreign scholarships increases, in contrast to the adequacy of the offer and the abundance of programs in the second group, where numbers of applicants are decreasing.



**Figure 11:** Numbers of applicants to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program by fields of specialization related to culture and arts in the period from 2019 – 2021



While the percentage of applicants to study in one of the programs related to culture and arts within the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program in the period extending from 2019 – 2021 represented 11% of total

applicants (see Figure 12), the number of those admitted, which came to 16.9% of the total number of those admitted into the program, indicates the official attention to the fields of culture and arts in recent years.



**Knowledge and Skills**

**Figure 12:** Numbers of applicants admitted into the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program by the relationship of the discipline to culture and arts in the period from 2019 – 2021

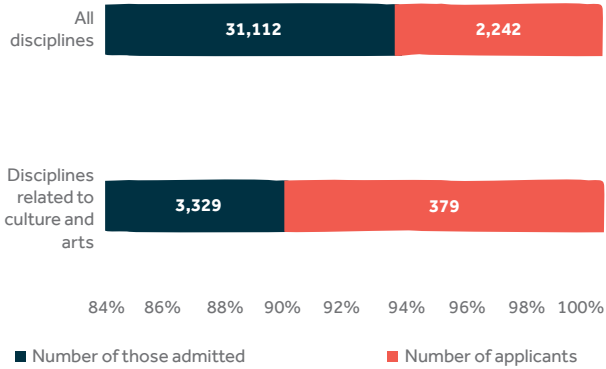
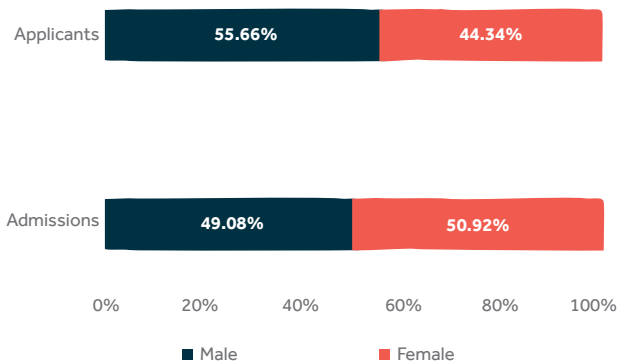


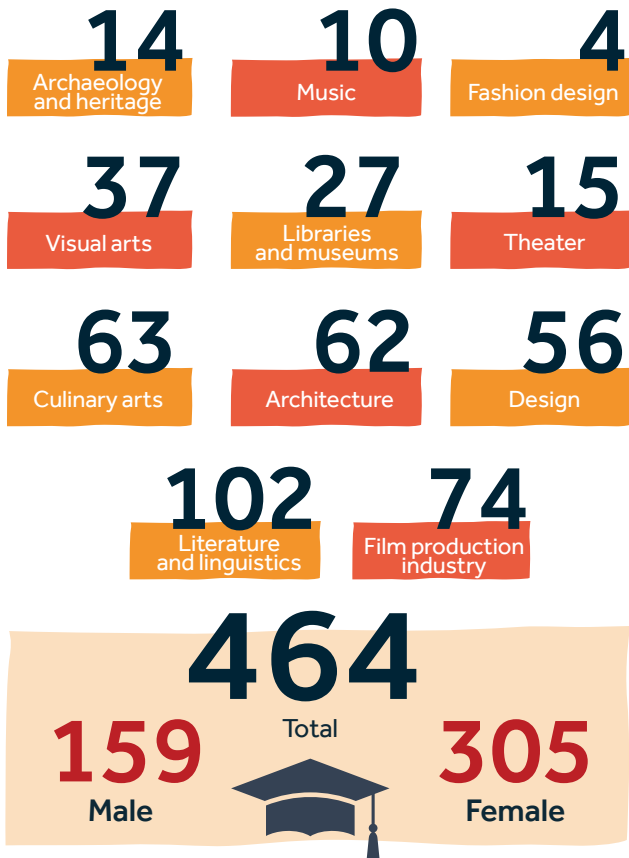
Figure 13 provides a clue to the size of the actual representation of females in the disciplines related to culture and arts within the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program. As can be seen in the figure, the percentage of female applicants to study in one of the programs related to culture and arts surpassed the percentage of males by a slight proportion. However, this proportion takes on significance if one compares the percentage of the disparity between the two genders in the numbers of applicants, which are predominantly male, as previously mentioned.

**Figure 13:** Percentage of applicants and those admitted of both genders to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program in the disciplines related to culture and arts between 2019 – 2021



Similarly, the data for cultural scholarships for 2021 reflects a higher representation of female students, as their percentage rose to 65.7%, or double the number of their male counterparts, which did not exceed 159 scholarship recipients (see Figure 14).<sup>(19)</sup>

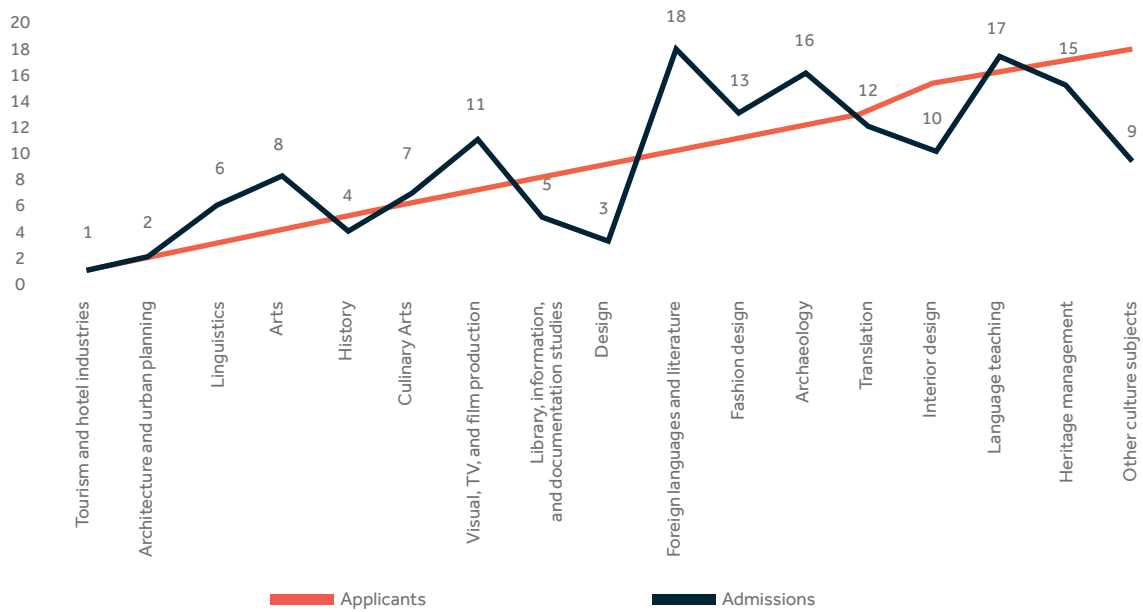
**Figure 14:** Numbers of applicants admitted for the Culture Scholarship Program in 2021 by specialization and gender



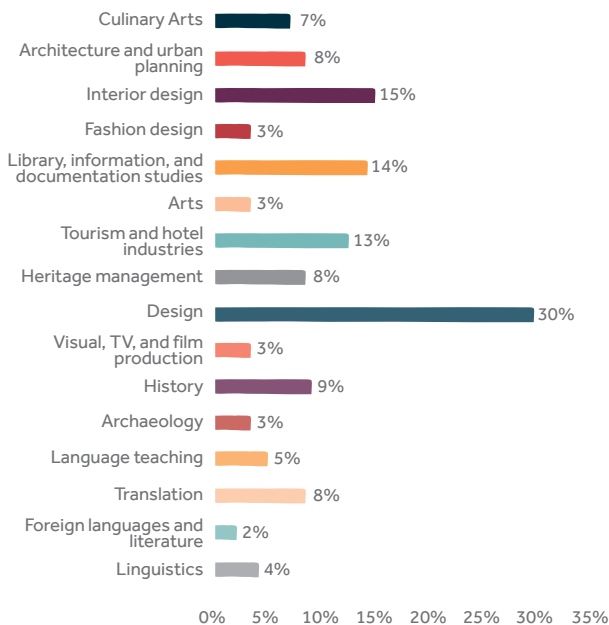
While the majors of tourism and architecture ranked the first and second in terms of the number of admissions and applicants, other majors declined, and their places

were overtaken by other majors, such as design, which ranked the third in the number of admissions and recipients of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program in the period from 2019 – 2021 (see Figure 15).

**Figure 15:** Ranking of specializations related to culture and arts by the numbers of applicants and recipients of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program in the period from 2019 – 2021



**Figure 16:** Percentage of applicants admitted to cultural majors in the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program between 2019 – 2021 by discipline



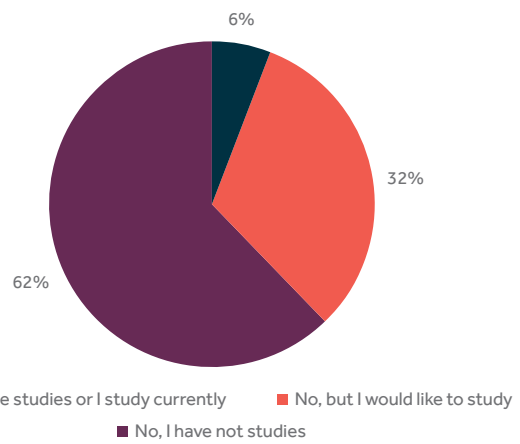


**General trends toward cultural and artistic disciplines in the Kingdom**

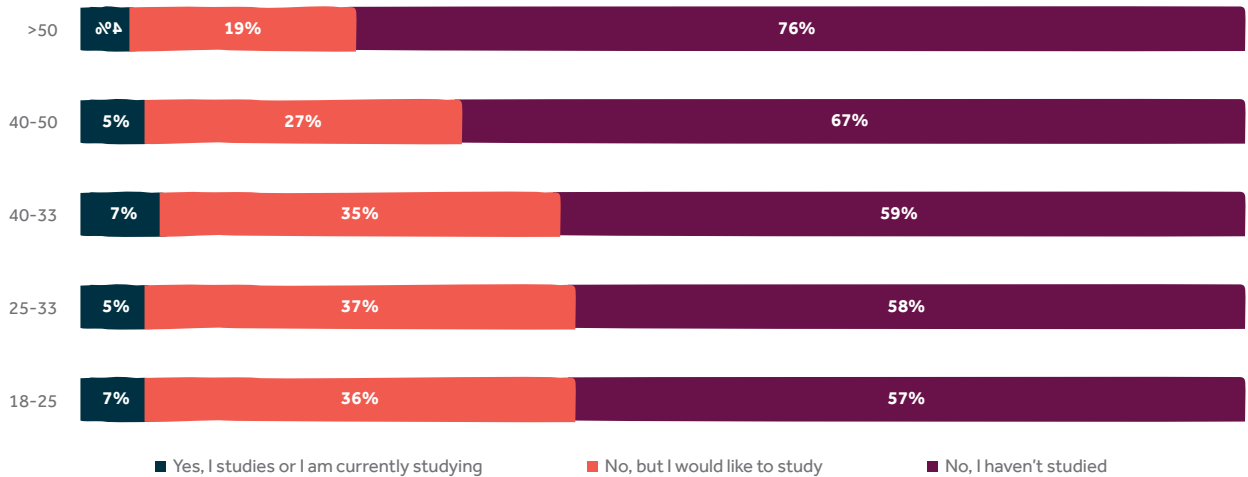
The Cultural Participation Survey, which included a representative sample of 3043 respondents from different regions of the Kingdom, monitors the attitudes of community members toward cultural and artistic disciplines as an indicator of the attractiveness of those disciplines. The results also allow for an extrapolation of individual motives and tendencies towards the study of cultural and artistic disciplines in the Kingdom. The 2021 Cultural Participation Survey provides a promising picture characterized by a positive change in the perceptions of community members about cultural and artistic disciplines. In particular, the results show that more than a third of the sample, 32%, would like to study a cultural or artistic discipline (see Figure17), and that in close proportion between the two genders and with a steady increase in the younger groups (see Figure 18). These results suggest the growing interest in cultural and artistic disciplines, as well as their ability to attract students as compared to other subjects that attracted only 6% of the respondents. There is a remarkable disparity of 26% between those who studied a cultural or artistic discipline and those who would like to

study a cultural or artistic discipline. This calls for optimism about the future of cultural and artistic education in light of efforts made to enhance the influence of culture and arts in the public sphere.<sup>(20)</sup>

**Figure 17:** Percentage of survey respondents who have obtained academic degrees (Bachelor's or postgraduate) in cultural or artistic disciplines

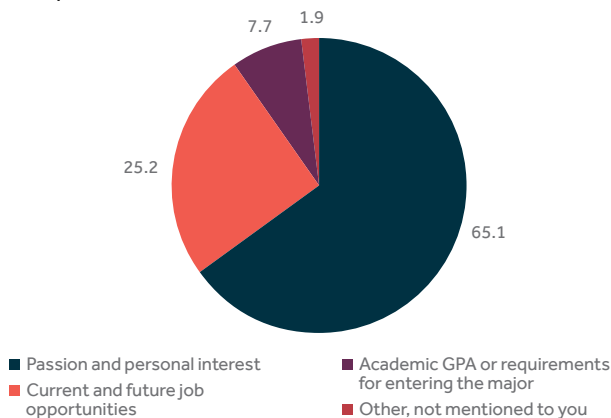


**Figure 18:** Percentage of survey respondents who have received higher education degrees (Bachelor's or postgraduate) in one of the cultural or artistic disciplines by age group

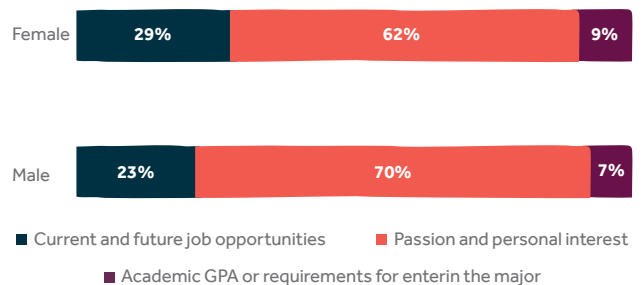


The survey provides an initial glimpse into the intricacies of this positive change. A look into the motives to study among survey respondents who have studied or would like to study one of the cultural and artistic disciplines suggests that passion and personal interest are the primary motives for most of the interviewees (65%),<sup>(21)</sup> a result corroborated in data collected from a focus group conducted with a group of male and female students studying a cultural or artistic discipline.<sup>(22)</sup> Current and future job opportunities took second place (25% of the respondents; see Figure 19). The latter motivation was particularly true for females, with a disparity of 6% from their male peers (see Figure 20). This casts optimism about the future of jobs and cultural and artistic professions among female students.<sup>(23)</sup>

**Figure 19:** Percentage of motivations for studying cultural and artistic disciplines among survey respondents who have studied or would like to study one of the cultural and artistic disciplines



**Figure 20:** Percentage of motivations for studying cultural and artistic disciplines among survey respondents who have studied or wish to study a cultural and artistic discipline by gender



With regard to specific cultural fields of specialization, the results of the survey showed that the majors in literature, language and translation topped the list at nearly half (43%; see Figure 21), with females constituting the majority of respondents (see Figure 22). Remarkably, the survey shows that the field of architecture, which came the fifth in the ranking of fields, did not exceed 1.8% for females, as compared to 6.8% for males (see Figure 22).<sup>(24)</sup> This pattern could be due to the fact that architecture departments are often concentrated in private universities, as pointed out earlier, while public universities have not offered architecture to females until recently. The Culture Scholarship Program data for 2021 reinforces the results of the survey with respect to the field most studied. Out of the 464 students who received scholarships in 2021, literature and linguistics topped the list in terms of numbers of students, which came to 102, or 21.9%.



Figure 21: Percentage of specializations among survey respondents who have studied or are studying a cultural or artistic discipline

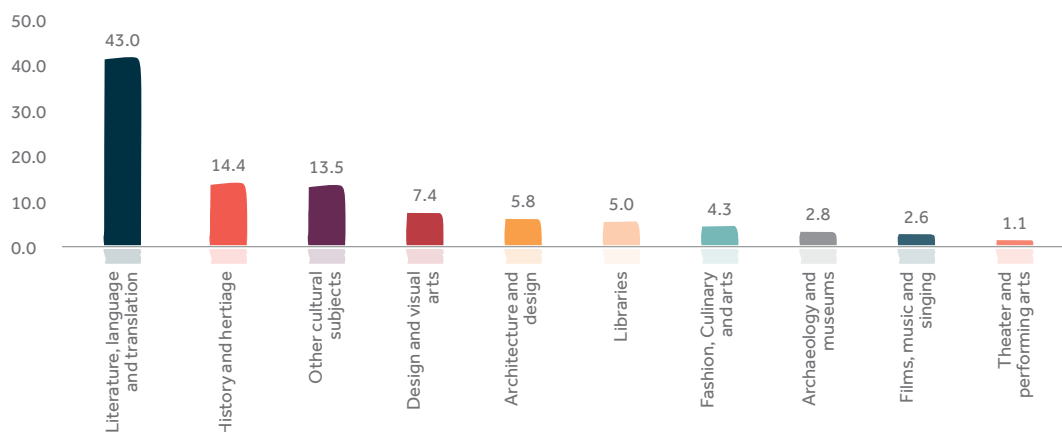
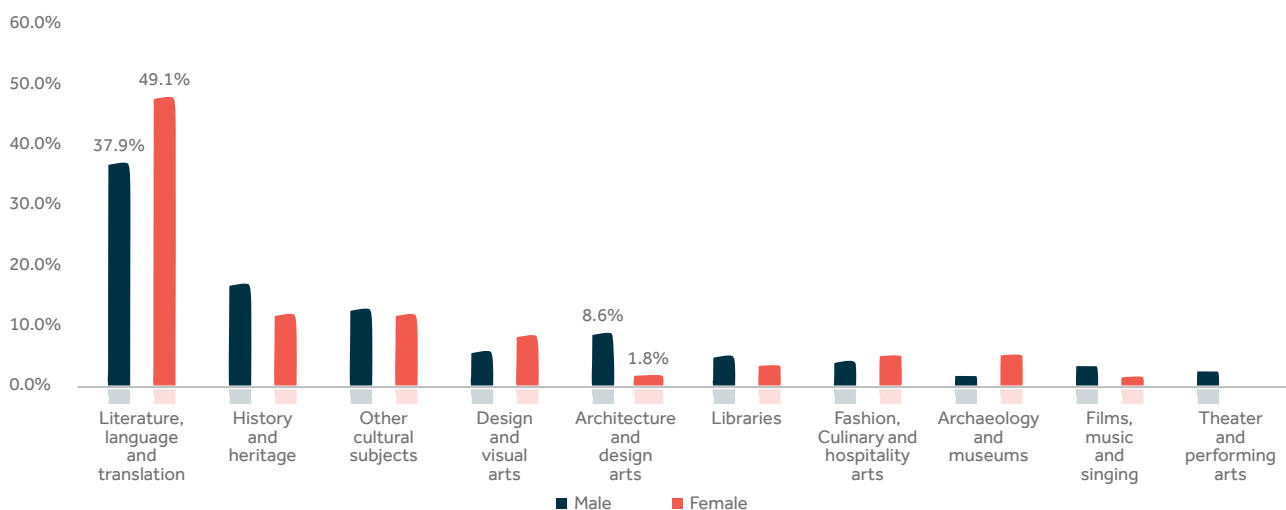


Figure 22: Distribution of specializations among survey respondents who studied or are studying a cultural or artistic subject by gender

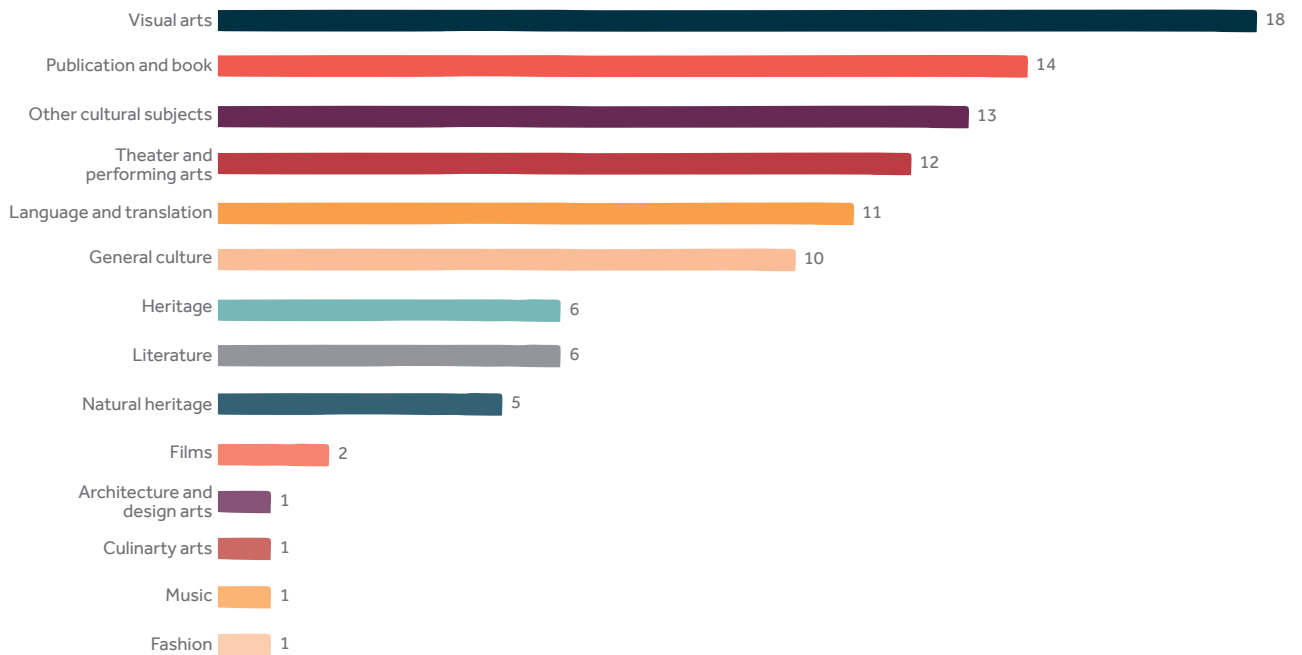


**Presence of culture in student activities within Saudi universities**

The presence of culture in educational institutions is not exclusive to the curriculum or specialized subjects. Culture also prominently features among extracurricular activities that, if sufficiently well-supported, provide a space for the enhancement of the student experience and allow students to discover their talents, as well as providing them with opportunities to contribute to the cultural and artistic scene in public spaces, whether within the university and college or outside the institution through student clubs and activities.<sup>(25)</sup> The interests of student clubs at colleges and universities in the Kingdom vary. Some specialize in

culture and arts, while others do not. However, they do offer activities related to culture and arts, according to a survey of universities that included a sample of 18 public and private universities, in which student cultural clubs numbered 101. The visual arts sector took the lion's share of activities at these clubs, with 18 clubs for visual arts, and book clubs ranked second place with 14 clubs, which reflects the popularity of reading activities in general, as almost all universities in the survey have a reading club or book-related activities. Theater and performing arts clubs ranked fourth (see Figure 23).<sup>(26)</sup> Overall, Saudi universities have a history with the art of theater and the formation of the theater movement in the Kingdom.<sup>(27)</sup>

**Figure 23: Number of student clubs related to culture and arts in local universities by sector**





## Cultural and Artistic Training and Qualification in the Kingdom

In the context of the lack of specialized educational programs, the training sector in the Kingdom has made many contributions, particularly through its filling the need for the building of cultural knowledge and technical skills. This has allowed a wide range of beneficiaries to enroll in programs and workshops with cultural and artistic orientation, at a time when university education in culture and arts was limited, or when universities did not allow the study of cultural or artistic disciplines at all. For example, while the culinary arts major in the professional sense was not available in the list of cultural specializations at local universities except to a limited extent, the training sector was offering various training programs and workshops in culinary arts through several institutes and centers for professionals and amateurs alike.<sup>(28)</sup>

With the growth of interest in culture and arts, the cultural and artistic training and qualification sector is witnessing many developments. These developments coincide with the activities of the Ministry of Culture and its authorities and institutions in various cultural sectors and are reflected in the emergence of specialized training institutes that offer a number of training programs and workshops in various cultural and artistic fields. With the involvement of the Ministry of Culture in organizing the cultural and artistic training and rehabilitation sector in the Kingdom, the sector is steadily witnessing more organization, specialization and transformation.

## Organizational developments in the cultural and artistic training and qualification sector

A discussion of the organizational aspect of cultural training, three bodies, which work in an integrated manner according to their various competencies, ought to be emphasized: the Ministry of Culture, the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation, and the Education and Training Evaluation Commission. In recent years, the cultural and artistic training and qualification sector in the Kingdom has witnessed a number of changes. Accordingly, in order to raise efficiency and improve the quality of outputs, responsibility was redistributed among these authorities in the area of cultural and artistic training and qualification.

To achieve this integration, the Ministry of Culture signed an agreement with the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation in the second quarter of 2021 to reorganize the licensing system and the accreditation of training institutions and programs. This is to be accomplished by distributing the relevant powers between the Corporation and both the Ministry of Culture and cultural commissions<sup>(29)</sup> in such a way as to allow the latter two bodies to govern the technical aspects of the licensing process, such as the approval of programs, in concert with the Education and Training Evaluation Commission and the National Center for Training Assessment & Accreditation (MASAR), which remain responsible for approving training programs and measuring their quality and output.<sup>(30)</sup> In addition, it would issue and approve training certificates with the approval



of the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation. The agreement sets out a mechanism for cooperation among the three parties to facilitate the licensing process for training facilities, where all licensing applications pertaining to them would be submitted through the Ministry of Culture's electronic platform, "Abde'a." Agreements of this nature aim to raise the quality of training facilities that offer cultural and artistic programs, improve their outputs, and set standards for evaluating cultural and artistic training. These agreements also seek to arrange an environment in the Kingdom at the technical and administrative levels for cultural and artistic training and qualification.<sup>(31)</sup> This coincided with the Ministry of Culture's launch, in cooperation with the Public Institute of Technical and Vocational Training, of the first and second phases of the "Abde'a" licensing platform, which aims to facilitate the issuing of a license to engage in cultural and artistic activities for individuals and institutions alike. At present, the platform provides licenses for training activities not to exceed four weeks in duration. The Ministry will be working soon on issuing licenses to facilities that will offer courses or programs exceeding four weeks in duration and which culminate with the receipt of a diploma or academic certification.<sup>(32)</sup>

**Figure 24:** Types of licenses for cultural and artistic training activity for institutions<sup>(33)</sup>



### Active training institutes and academies and the training programs that they offer

The Technical and Vocational Training Corporation determines which training programs can be accredited. These programs vary in type, duration, and degree of qualification. The training diploma is the longest, and the development course is the shortest (see Figure 25).

**Figure 25:** Types and levels of offered training programs

#### Forms of approved training programs.<sup>(34)</sup>



According to the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation's data, most training centers and institutes are general and non-specialized, meaning that they offer courses and programs in various fields where culture and arts are only a part. Most of these institutes also focus on offering development courses (not exceeding one month in duration).<sup>(35)</sup> Yet, there are some licensed institutes specializing in cultural and artistic training which offer qualification classes and higher-level programs (over a month in duration). Most of them focus on culinary arts, fashion, and tourism, and are located in major cities. Table 5 shows the most notable of these institutes and the type of training programs they offer.



Table 5: Most notable licensed training programs related to culture and arts

A sampling of licensed culturally and artistically oriented programs and courses<sup>(36)</sup>

Program	Facility	Type	Gender of beneficiaries	City
Qualification course on pastries and sweets	ZADK Culinary Academy	Qualification course	Males	Al-Khobar
Professional cooking	Tamimi Academy	Qualification course	Males	Dammam
Qualification course on costume design	Vogue Institute	Qualification course	Females	Madinah
Hospitality services in cooking	The Saudi International Academy for Tourism & Hospitality	Qualification program	Males and females	Jeddah
Visual communication design	Raffles Design Institute	Diploma	Females	Riyadh
Jewelry design	Raffles Design Institute	Diploma	Females	Riyadh
Fashion design	Raffles Design Institute	Diploma	Females	Riyadh
Applied technology of fashion design diploma	Arts and Skills Institute	Diploma	Females	Riyadh
Visual arts	Arts and Skills Institute	Diploma	Females	Riyadh

**Modern cultural and artistic institutes and academies**

In recent years, along with the academies and training institutes licensed by the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation, other academies and training institutes (both civil and private) more connected to the cultural and arts sector have offered more specialized programs in various cultural and artistic fields. The Royal Institute of Traditional Arts, MBC Academy, Art Jameel, and Misk Art Institute stand out among these modern institutes and academies and are relied upon to provide promising programs and educational models. The Royal Institute of Traditional Arts is at the forefront of the newly-established cultural academies in terms of importance and specialization. Likewise, the Ministry of Culture inaugurated one of the institute's headquarters in Riyadh and another one in Jeddah in the third quarter of 2021.<sup>(37)</sup> The institute is currently providing educational and training courses, as well as programs in traditional arts. These include embroidery and weaving, traditional performing arts, and cultural heritage, as well as the traditional building apprenticeship program, the Sadu Apprenticeship Program, and a diploma in building arts and architectural heritage. The institute seeks to qualify its students to get to know and practice traditional arts with the aim of raising the awareness level and enabling graduates to preserve and develop the Kingdom's <sup>(38)</sup>rich cultural heritage in all its various shades and diversity

Some governmental authorities participate in the provision of training programs. In 2021, for example, the Royal Commission for Al-Ula inaugurated the Al-Ula Language

Institute, which offers courses, some of which are aimed at helping the people of the province develop their language skills in English, French and Chinese. It also offers courses in Arabic aimed at tourists who want to develop their Arabic. The institute also offers an interesting course in the Nabatean language, in light of its close connection to the city's history. The institute seeks to develop and enrich the local scene and to open horizons for communication between residents and tourists.<sup>(39)</sup>

Qualitative attempts to offer cultural training to beneficiaries are not limited to governmental efforts, non-profit organizations also play an integral role in this respect. For example, Art Jameel offers several innovative educational initiatives aimed at both artists and amateurs alike by means of Hayy Jameel, a qualitative arts complex. Ever since its opening in late 2021, the Hayy has sought to offer special programs, public seminars, and training workshops in various artistic fields such as painting, film and music. The Hayy is set to include the Aysh Academy for baking arts, an art gallery, and a stand-up comedy club. This reflects the institute's endeavor to become an integrated and sustainable project in terms of its cultural and physical dimensions.<sup>(40)</sup> Hayy Jameel is an addition to other institutes which had made strides in the field, as exemplified in the Misk Art Institute, a non-profit institute that specializes in supporting artists, holding art shows, and giving annual grants. The institute provides training programs and workshops throughout the year, some of which are only for artists and others for all interested parties. The institute

seeks to be a leading cultural organization supporting artists and promoting art to all segments of society.<sup>(41)</sup> Likewise, Ithra Academy, belonging to the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra), offers numerous programs through various majors, most related to culture and arts, through short courses that include creative writing arts, music, design arts, film, and performing arts. These courses are conducted in conjunction with local and international trainers and artists. Through these training programs, the academy seeks to develop and build the skills that will contribute to the growth of the various cultural ecosystem at large.<sup>(42)</sup>

Furthermore, the private sector also contributes to raising the level of professionalism in training options. One of the relevant examples here is the MBC Academy, launched in mid-2020 to discover emerging talent and support creators and those interested in cinematic arts, television programs, and visual production; it also offers a training program in the workplace that aims to conclude with employment in a number of professions related to the visual production sector, especially television and film.<sup>(43)</sup>

Finally, the cultural commissions are also active in providing training courses throughout the year in various cultural and artistic fields. Some of these courses are offered on the sidelines of international fairs and festivals, such as the courses that were presented at the Red Sea International Film Festival, the Saudi Film Festival, or international conferences like the Translation Forum of the Riyadh International Philosophy Conference. Similar training activities are provided by the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts, and literary clubs in various parts of the Kingdom.

## The state of cultural and technical training and the attitudes of the beneficiaries towards training programs

This section reviews the reality of cultural training, especially with respect to short courses and programs. The specific focus is on the diversity of cultural topics and the sectors it deals with, the institutions active in it, the number of programs and training workshops offered, and the number of beneficiaries. To this end, we use the data of training centers and institutions licensed by the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation, as well as authorities and institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Culture which provide training programs in their respective fields, as well as a list of the most prominent private and nonprofit training institutes and academies.

The total number of advanced courses of training institutes and centers licensed by the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation is 127, with a total attendance of about 13,031 beneficiaries (See Figure 26).<sup>(44)</sup> In contrast to this density in the number of participants, the number of training programs and courses offered by the Ministry of Culture and its affiliated commissions exceeded those provided by licensed institutes, with a total of 235 courses and a decrease in the number of beneficiaries to about 8,382 (see Figure 26).<sup>(45)</sup> Similarly, the number of courses offered by private institutes was 226, with a total of approximately 4264 beneficiaries. This is the highest in terms of the number of courses and the lowest in terms of the number of beneficiaries.<sup>(46)</sup> This discrepancy in the number of programs as compared to their beneficiaries can be attributed to the fact that the programs

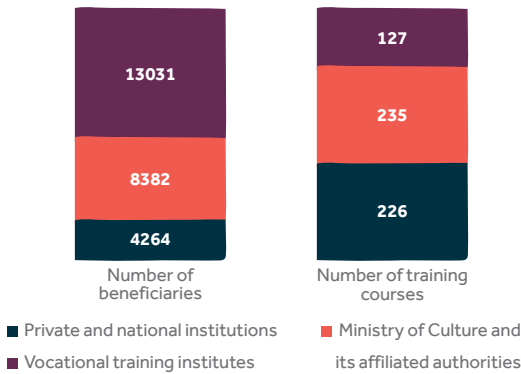




**Knowledge and Skills**

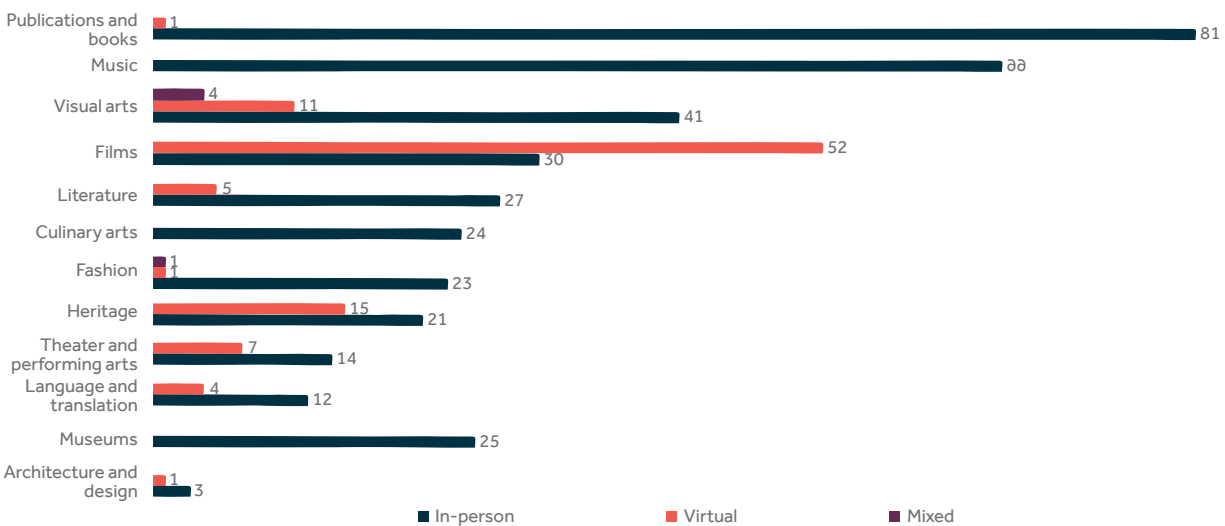
that cultural institutes and private training institutes provide tend to be content-specific. The focus is usually on the technical and applied fields, which mandates that the beneficiaries be fewer in number. This gives rise to optimism with respect to the future demand for cultural training, if one takes into consideration the newness of some of these institutes and centers.

**Figure 26:** Numbers of training courses and those benefitting from them by type of providing institute



By shedding light on the most active sectors operating training programs and workshops, the data indicates a varied distribution of the respective share of cultural sectors in training programs by institution type. A look at the programs offered by the Ministry of Culture and its affiliated commissions and private and nonprofit training institutes reveals that, in terms of the number of courses offered, the topics covered by the publishing and books sector are particularly large (see Figure 27). This is followed by the music sector, then visual arts, then films, and then literature. This distribution is due to the fact that many of these courses take place on the sidelines of international fairs and conferences sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and its affiliated commissions, such as the Riyadh International Book Fair, the Translation Forum, and the Red Sea International Film Festival, which provided many outstanding training courses. It is worth noting here that most of these training workshops, programs and courses were conducted in person, with the exception of those given in the film sector, which were mostly done online. These numbers are an indicator of the return to in-person cultural and artistic activities, confirming the importance of personal attendance in the field of cultural and artistic training.

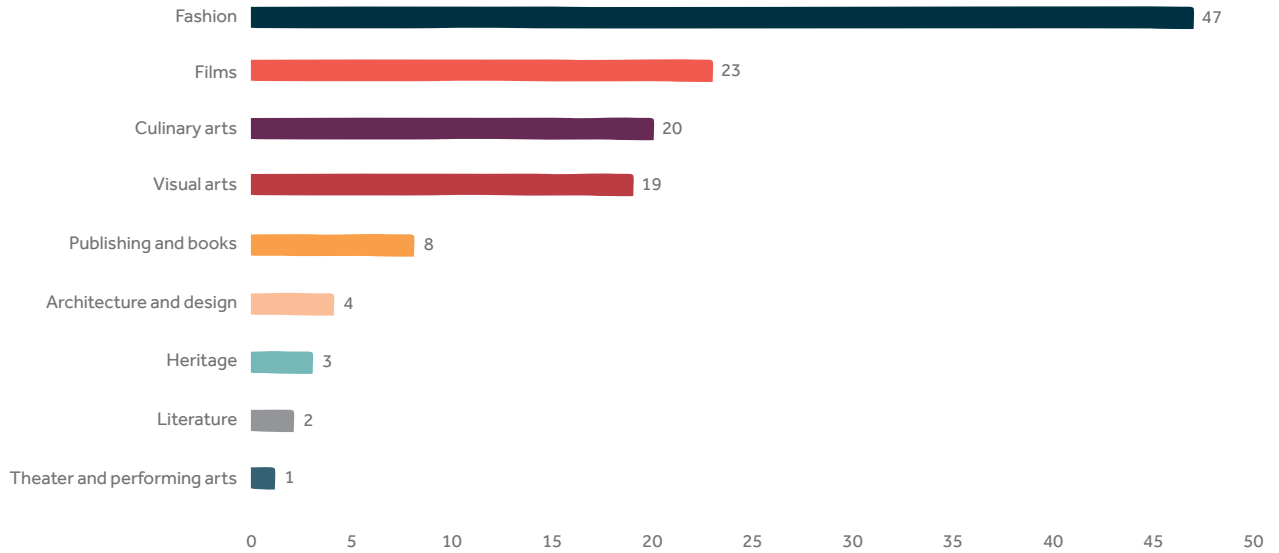
**Figure 27:** Distribution of training programs and workshops offered by the Ministry of Culture and its affiliated commissions and institutes, by private and nonprofit training institutes, and by sector and method of attendance



There is some variance in the order of the sectors through which institutions licensed by the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation provide their training courses. As shown in Figure 23, most of these courses focus on fashion, film, culinary and visual arts sectors, though film is clearly distinguished as one of the most developed sectors (see

the Report on the State of Culture for further detail). The fashion, culinary and visual arts sectors are those in which institutes and centers have been active since the beginning of the provision of cultural and artistic training in the Kingdom, which began with the culinary arts, fashion design, and photography.

**Figure 28:** Number of training courses provided by institutes licensed by the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation by sector

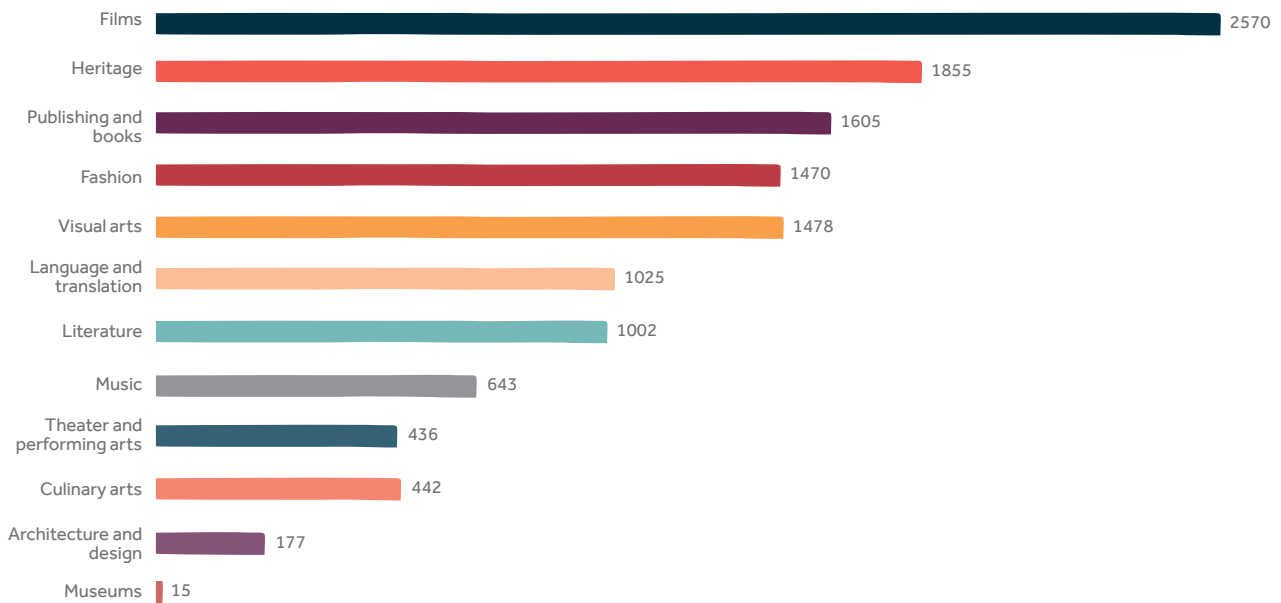


In line with the growth in the film industry sector, the training programs and workshops provided in this sector have the highest attendance rate by far for beneficiaries of the programs provided by cultural authorities affiliated with the Ministry of Culture and the private training institutes. Next comes the heritage sector, followed by the publishing and

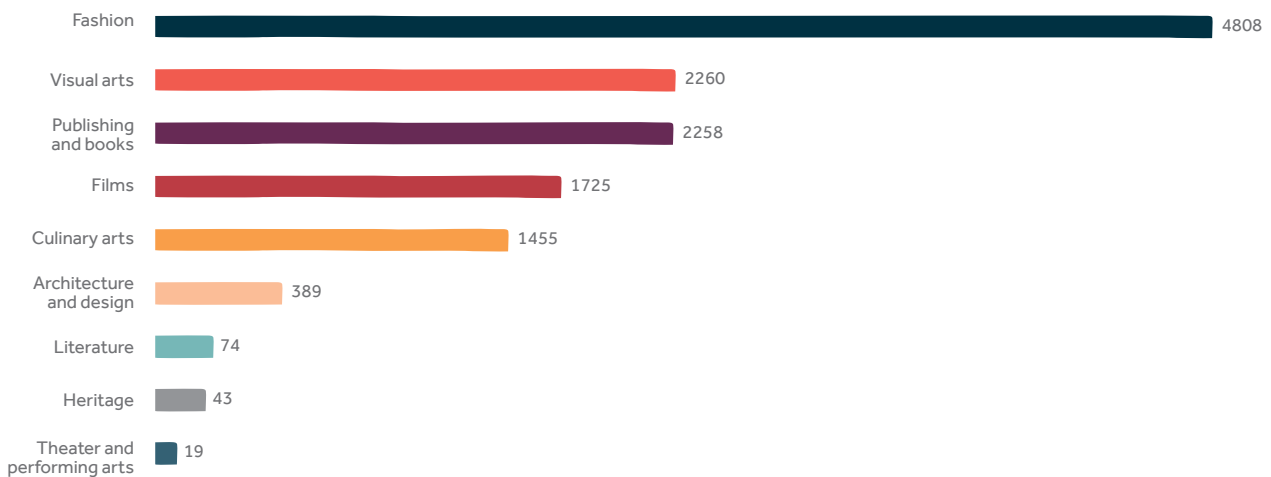
books sector, and then the fashion and visual arts sectors (see Figure 29). As for the institutes licensed by the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation, the fashion sector has the greatest number of beneficiaries—namely, double the number of those in the visual arts sector, which ranked second (see Figure 30).



**Figure 29:** Number of beneficiaries of training programs provided by the Ministry of Culture and its affiliated commissions and institutions, as well as private and nonprofit training institutes and academies



**Figure 30:** Number of beneficiaries of courses offered by academies licensed by the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation



### Challenges and opportunities within the cultural and artistic training field in the Kingdom

Although the cultural and artistic training sector in the Kingdom has witnessed a remarkable development and improvement, it nevertheless grapples with challenges. The most notable of which is regulatory in nature, as seen in the difficulty of determining the authority responsible for permits and obtaining credits.<sup>(47)</sup> This is due to the fact that

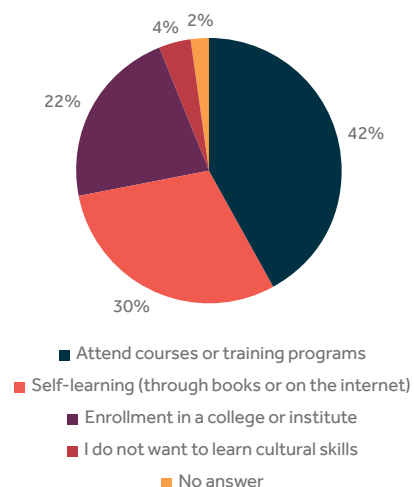
culture and creative industries are going through a sector-wide reorganization, thereby causing gaps that persist until the process is complete and the reassignment of jurisdictions and powers among the responsible bodies is ironed out. In the light of the difficulties faced by practitioners and trainers, many modern training academies and institutes move toward obtaining international accreditation that is characterized by clarity of its procedures, lack of complexity, and compatibility with their new models, both with regard to the level of content provided or to the education and training methodology used.

Similarly, some practitioners and actors in the field point to difficulties in establishing local partnerships, especially with the governmental regulatory agencies of the sector. Partnerships between the public and private sectors are still weak and tainted by numerous bureaucratic obstacles. This pushes training centers and institutes toward establishing outside partnerships.<sup>(48)</sup>

However, despite these challenges, the cultural and artistic training sector provides opportunities, as seen in the large demand for training programs of all levels.<sup>(49)</sup> This is consistent with the results of the Cultural Participation Survey, which showed that 42% of the sample prefer to attend training courses and workshops to learn artistic and cultural skills, compared to 22% who prefer enrolling in a university or institute (see Figure 31).<sup>(50)</sup> This could be due to the fact that the cultural and artistic training sector is more able to respond to the requirements for specialized programs in the various cultural and artistic sectors, especially when it comes to the abundance and diversity of training programs compared to academic programs in universities. The cultural and artistic training sector also has relatively higher flexibility in establishing local and international partnerships, in addition to the fact that it targets a wider audience of

beneficiaries and has easier requirements for enrollment. In the midst of the ever-increasing demand for human capital for the various cultural and artistic projects of the sector, it is expected that the importance of cultural and artistic training will increase in the Kingdom day after day.

**Figure 31:** Percentage distribution of the method by which individuals prefer to learn cultural skills and creative arts





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# Creative Economy



# 5

## Creative Economy

- Distribution of Cultural Enterprises
- Spending on Cultural Products and Services
- Determinants of Demands on Cultural Products and Services





In recognition of the fact that creative economy is one of the most rapidly growing sectors across the world, comprising 3% of global GDP,<sup>(1)</sup> UNESCO declared 2021 the International Year of Creative Economy. This interest stems from the awareness that culture and creativity can meaningfully contribute to sustainable development. In addition to its social value, culture functions as a means of livelihood, with an economic dimension that manifests itself in cultural goods and services as well as in tourism and the contemporary city economy. This chapter presents and analyzes a number of indicators that measure this economic dimension of culture and creativity, including the disruptions of cultural enterprises, the rate of household spending on cultural commodities and activities, as well as determinants of demand.

## Creative Economy

Creative economy has multiple definitions and dimensions, some of which extendedly include activities such as programs, electronics manufacturing, and video games. In this report, the term “cultural economy” is used in a sense that is more specific and directly related to what are known as the cultural industries. It does so by deriving guidance from the classification of cultural subsectors that have been adopted by the Ministry of Culture and taking into consideration the standards and frameworks proposed by UNESCO, which divides creative economy into seven cultural domains in order to simplify the presentation and classification of data. This division includes classifications of activities where creativity constitutes a large part of its production, such as advertising and promotion, in addition to a broader range of economic activities such as restaurants, hotels, clothing, and textiles whose production includes creative cultural activities.

According to the data presented throughout the chapter, indicators of status of cultural enterprises reveal that almost half of such enterprises are active in the field of design and creative services followed by the sector of books and the press. These enterprises are concentrated in large cities of the Kingdom, as is globally the case with creative economy being intimately linked to urban areas. The report also looks at household spending on recreation and culture through a number of measures. The chapter includes a more focused view on the performance of a rapidly growing film industry, as well as domestic cultural tourism which was able to absorb the impact of the pandemic and continued to grow. Finally, this chapter also presents an analytical view of determinants of demand through the 2021 Cultural Participation Survey, which measured public participation in heritage festivals,

cultural events, as well as lectures and seminars. Additionally, the survey offers insights into consumption preferences for audiovisual content, revealing a close relation to age group in addition to other determinants.

## Distribution of Cultural Enterprises

Commercial enterprises whose activity are either directly or indirectly related to the creative cultural sector vary in terms of their specializations. In different stages of the cultural cycle, these enterprises involve activities, practices, and materials required to transform creative ideas into commodities and cultural services available for supply, dissemination, and consumption. In general, over 36,000 active commercial registrations in the Kingdom engaged in cultural activities. The chapter identifies two salient features regarding the distribution: (1) the concentration of cultural enterprises in regions with big cities and (2) the high representation of enterprises that specialize in design and creative services, in addition to those active in the sector of books and the press.

### Distribution of Cultural Enterprises by region

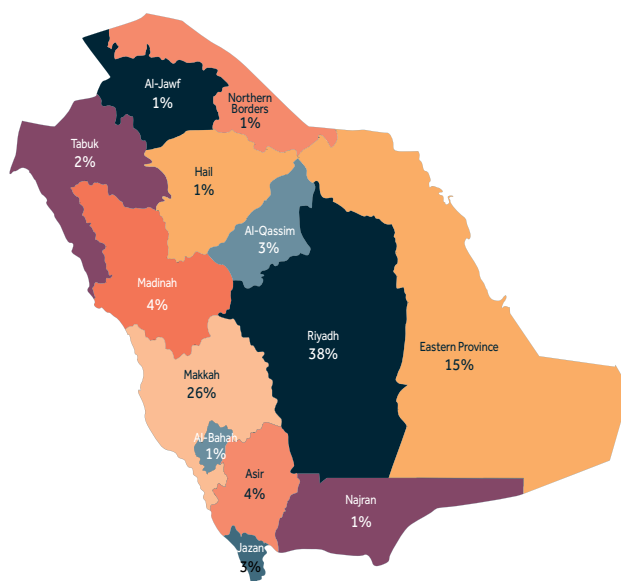
The distribution of cultural enterprises depends on the size of cities, their population, and supply and demand. This is because creative economy, across the world, is linked to cities. In the Kingdom, this trend is very explicit, as such institutions are concentrated in major regions: 38% being based in Riyadh and 26% in Makkah. However, a considerable part of the cultural contribution to the economy is linked to tourism. This provides opportunities for the various regions to showcase their distinctive cultural, environmental, and geographic identities, as well as to emphasize their

archaeological significance that differentiates them from cities (such as some mountainous areas in Asir and coastal areas in the northwest of the Kingdom). It is expected that the market share of these regions will increase in the coming years with the commencement of cultural, environmental, and commercial development projects there, and the intensive marketing of their geographic and environmental diversity as well as the potential for activities. As examples, the launching of Soudah Development Company in Asir this year aims to develop infrastructure for the tourism and recreation sector, which highlights the Rijal Almaa governorate, unique in its culture, as the go-to location for mountain tourism. Neom focuses on the northwestern region of the Kingdom to develop tourism, sports, recreation, and energy-related projects. Similarly, the Red Sea Development company aims to develop tourism and recreation projects in Umluj and Al Wajh, while The Rig project focuses on developing the Gulf area.<sup>(2)</sup> In addition, these regions are also selected for certain international events such as the Ha'il International Rally, cultural festivals such as the Souq Okaz, as well as agricultural festivals such as the Al-Jawf Olive Oil Festival.

### Distribution of Cultural Enterprises According to Activity

By classifying cultural activities under seven main domains in accordance with the UNESCO classification<sup>(4)</sup> that includes

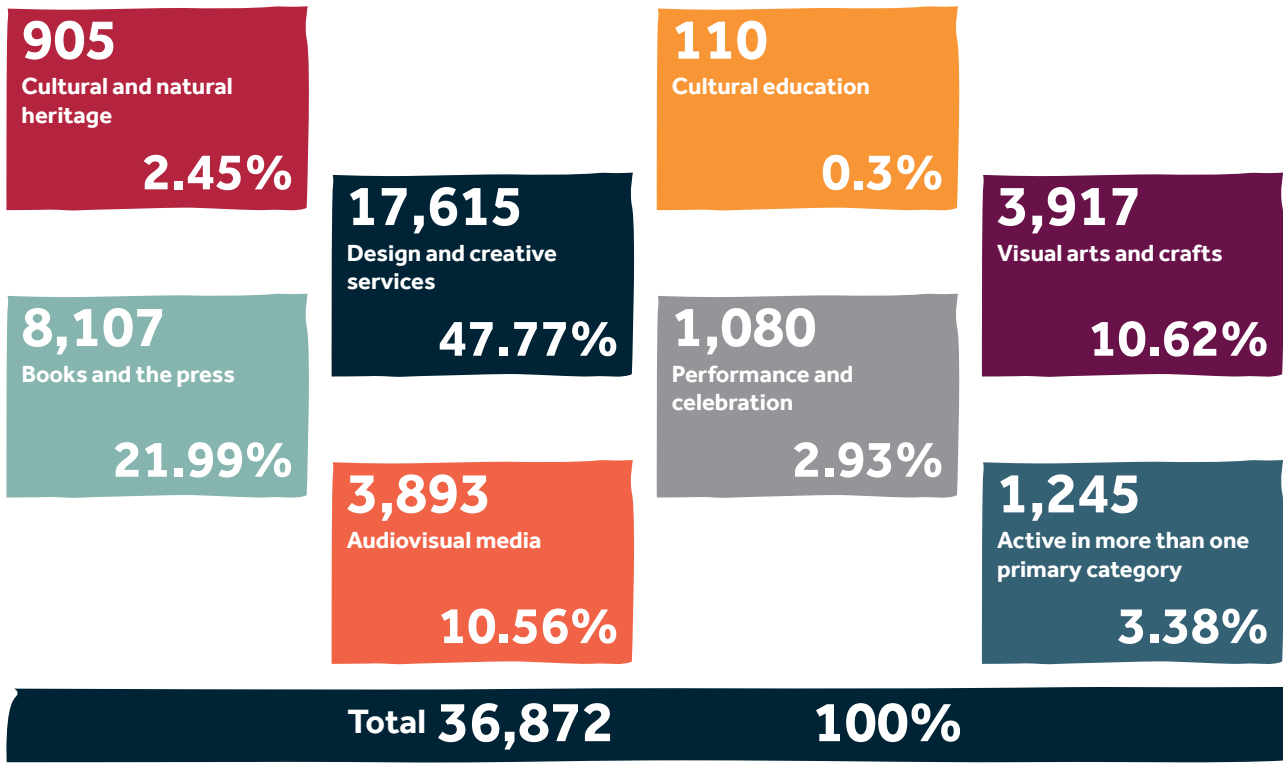
Figure 1: Distribution of cultural/creative commercial enterprises in the Kingdom by region in 2021<sup>(3)</sup>



wide areas of economic activities related to culture,<sup>(5)</sup> we find that almost half of all cultural enterprises in the Kingdom are active in the design and creative services field, followed by books and the press with about 20% then visual arts and crafts and audiovisual media with a little more than 10% each.



Infographic 1: Percentage distribution of cultural enterprises based on the 2021 classification



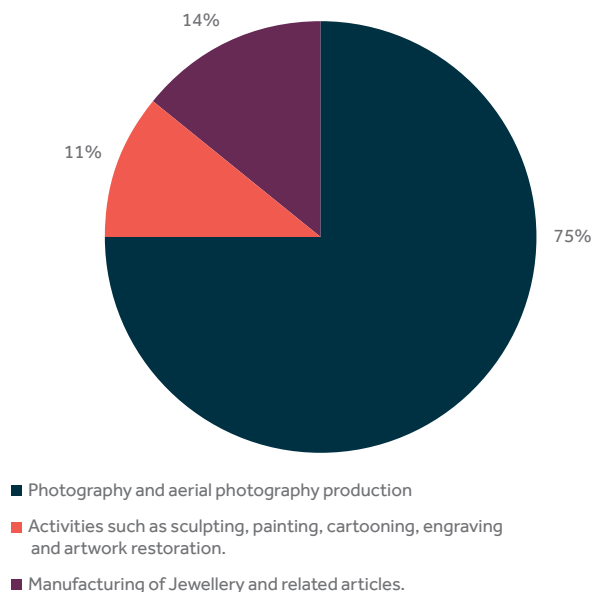
The enterprises that are active in the sector of design and creative services, which embraces a total of 6,684 commercial registrations, are active in advertising. The remaining enterprises are engaged in various other activities such as engineering and architectural consultancies, interior design, clothing, footwear, jewelry and related categories, as well as other design-related activities.

Commercial enterprises engaged in the sale of books, newspapers, and stationery amount to 50% of commercial institutions in the field of books and press. Furthermore, the shares of enterprises in publishing and translation services are 10.21% and 4.25%, respectively. Activities related to libraries and archiving include the services of freelance journalists and editors.

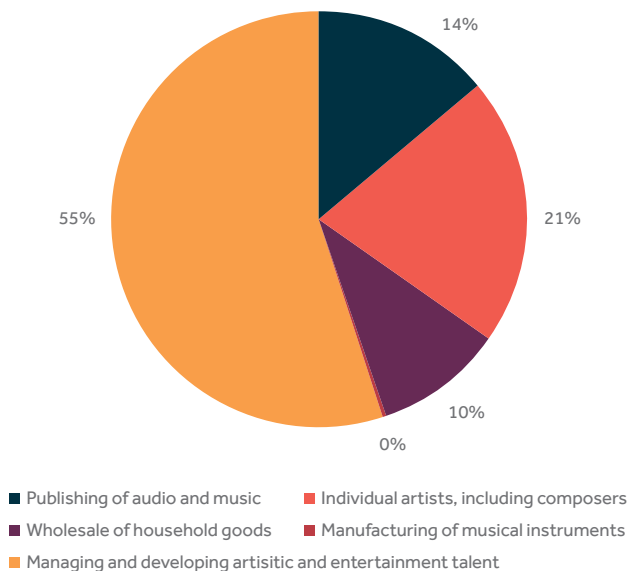
Commercial activities falling under the wide umbrella of visual arts and crafts are concentrated in the field of photography. The share of jewelry manufacturing and related categories is 13.96%. This is an industry where the Kingdom aims to become among the top manufacturers and exporters of diamond products and jewelry, in cooperation with the Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC).<sup>(6)</sup> Furthermore, there are 360 commercial enterprises engaged in activities

such as sculpting, painting, drawing cartooning, engraving, and artwork restoration.

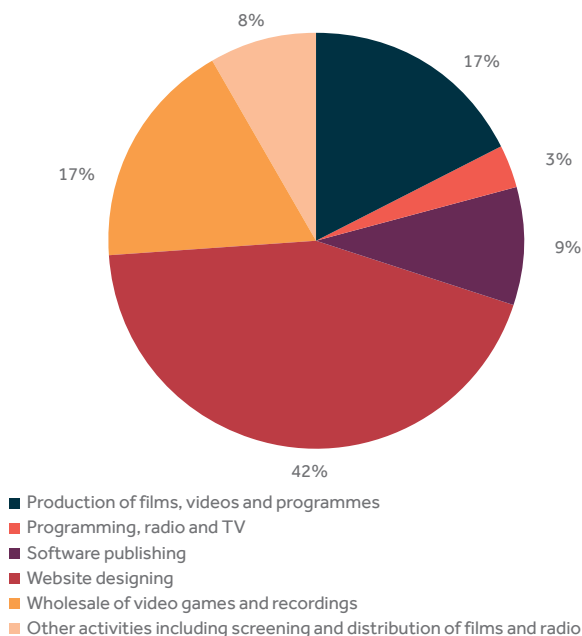
Figure 2: Distribution of visual arts and crafts activities



**Figure 3:** Distribution of performance arts and celebration activities



**Figure 4:** Distribution of audiovisual media activities



Enterprises active in audiovisual media represent 10.56% of the total number of cultural enterprises and their various activities include production, publishing, distribution, and screening. Among these enterprises, 17% are engaged in the production of films, videos, and programmes, and another 17% are engaged in the wholesale of e-games and recordings. Other activities including screening and distribution of films as well as radio constitute 8% (see Figure 4). Of note, the General Commission for Audiovisual Media, which is the relevant regulatory body, issued 45 licenses for cinematic production, and 93 for music production studios.<sup>(7)</sup>

Finally, a total of 905 enterprises are active in the natural and cultural heritage and serve the tourism, museums, and antiquities sector. Their activities include museums, operating heritage buildings and sites, zoos, botanical gardens, heritage hotels, and eco-tourist camps and lodges.

**Industries related to culture**

Before reaching the consumer, the cultural product passes through several stages. Among the most important stages is that of industrial production where a creative idea is transformed into a consumable product. The availability





of industrial production in certain sectors allows creative activities to find an integrated production environment, such as furniture, clothing, and textiles which can incorporate various creative elements such as design, craft skills, woodwork industries, and textile industries. Similarly, these factories also create job opportunities. In 2021, there were a total of 396 furniture factories, 156 clothing factories, and 113 textile factories in the Kingdom.<sup>(8)</sup>

### Spending on Cultural Products and Services

A major factor that drives the growth of the domestic cultural sector is the growth of consumption and spending on culture. In this context, spending contributes to the continuity of cultural production and provides ample opportunity to increase the range of offered products. This section establishes the statistical baseline for Household spending on culture and the value of sales in the general indicators of culture. It also reviews the steady growth in consumption of cultural services in the two sectors—movie screening and cultural tourism. The rates thereof continued to rise from 2018 through 2021, which registered the highest numbers in both sectors.

#### Monthly Household spending on recreation and culture by major expenditure groups<sup>(9)</sup>

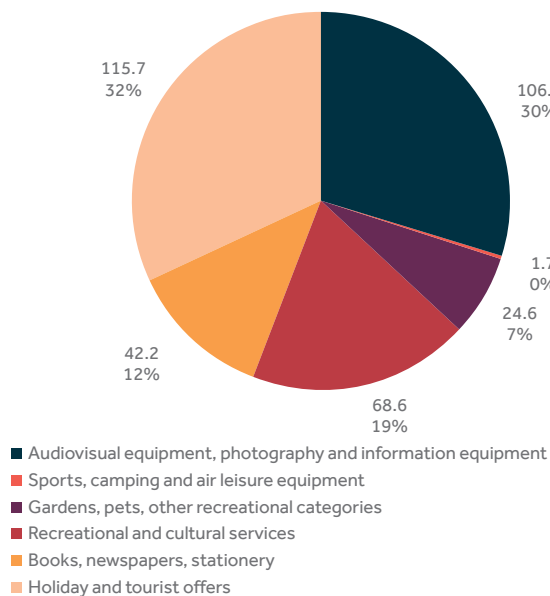
Statistics on household spending on culture and related goods and services offer an indication of demand and local spending power, as well as make it possible to evaluate the economic status of the families and their consumption preferences. In addition to family spending on recreation and culture being a direct indicator, expenditure on culture-related services and goods such as clothing, footwear, restaurants and cafes, hotels and jewelry stores provides additional indicators of opportunities for the cultural sector to grow in other sectors where cultural and creative activities are a part of their production processes.

The Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2018)<sup>(10)</sup> which provides the latest available statistics, draws a baseline for examining cultural spending levels. It was found that families spend 2.8% on the recreation and culture group (358.9 riyals) from the total monthly expenditure which is 12,818 riyals.<sup>(11)</sup> The Kingdom's Vision 2030 aspires to increase this rate to 6% by 2030. This expenditure is divided into a number of subcategories. In 2018, households spent around 30% on audiovisual equipment, photography and IT equipment, and around 32% on holiday and tourism offers.



Books, newspapers, and stationery consume 12% of the monthly expenditure (or an average of 42 riyals per month; see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Average family monthly consumption expenditure on recreation and culture (2018)<sup>(12)</sup>

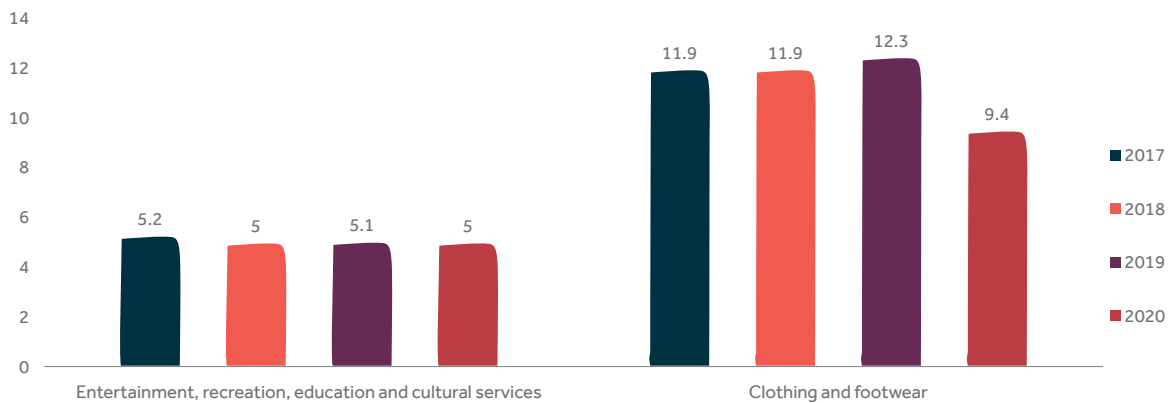


### Contribution of the Household Consumption Expenditure in the Local Market According to Expenditure Purpose

Household consumption expenditure contributes to the local market economy, and the rate of contribution varies based on the spending purpose.<sup>(13)</sup> With regard to expenditure purposes, the contributions to entertainment, recreation, education, and cultural services was negatively impacted by COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, considering that it was lower than in the year 2019 (see Figure 7).<sup>(14)</sup> The rate of contribution of these sectors is expected to rise in the local market during 2021, as an effect of the post-pandemic economic recovery.<sup>(15)</sup>



**Figure 6:** Relative contribution of household final consumption expenditure in the local market according to spending purpose at current prices<sup>(16)</sup>



With regard to services and goods related to cultural activity, despite most production operations therein not being counted as cultural activities, the relative contribution of clothing and footwear linked to the fashion sector shows relative stability with a 5% average over the last four years.

### Value of POS operations for entertainment and culture<sup>(17)</sup>

The value of sales provides an indicator of the interest and power of demand for certain cultural products and services. The method of expenditure on these products and services varies, with some transactions being digital, cash, or by POS at the location where the product is being consumed. In 2021, the value of POS operations for entertainment and culture was 14.1 billion riyals, representing 2.97% of all POS operations. This figure is close to the last available average of household spending on entertainment and culture which amounts to 2.8% of the total monthly household expenditure.





Furthermore, as concerns the goods that include cultural activities as part of their production process, such as clothes, footwear, and jewelry associated with the fashion sector, as well as restaurants and cafes linked to the culinary arts sector, the results suggest that in 2021, restaurants and cafes had the highest rate of POS value (13.22%), followed by clothing and footwear (8.04%) and jewelry (2.72%).

### Growth in certain cultural sectors: Cinemas and cultural tourism

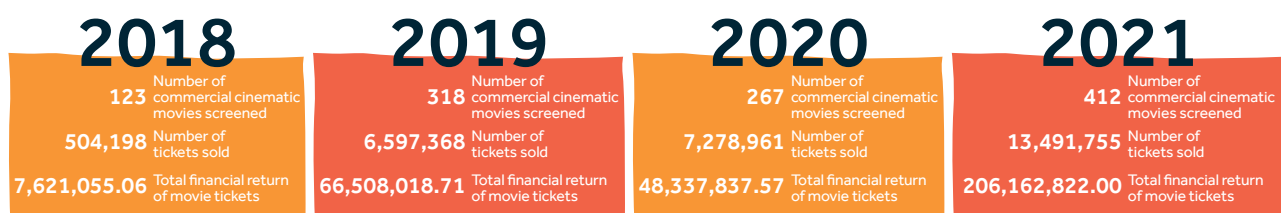
In the last five years, some indicators have achieved steady growth which has continued even during the pandemic, specifically in emerging sectors such as cinemas, which have recorded high growth rates, or activities including a number of sectors as is shown in the domestic cultural tourism data. Both indicators, which are represented in the number and value of ticket sales and the number and percentage of

domestic tourism trips that include cultural activities reflect opportunities for investment into and enhancement of these cultural sectors, which in turn, can contribute to the Kingdom's GDP.

#### Cinemas

The growth of the cinema industry is linked to the increase in cinemas and their distribution across the various regions, which now include 11 cities in six regions during the past two years as compared to four regions only in 2019. This is supported by the increased number of companies which were limited in 2018 and 2019 to just two, whereas in 2020 and 2021, the number jumped to four companies. Additionally, there was an increase in the number of commercial cinematic movies with granted clearances. This is reflected in the number of tickets sold and the value of the sales revenue in the Kingdom from 2018 through 2021, noting this notwithstanding the increased number of cinemas.<sup>(18)</sup>

Infographic 2: Financial value of ticket sales in the Kingdom (2018–2021)

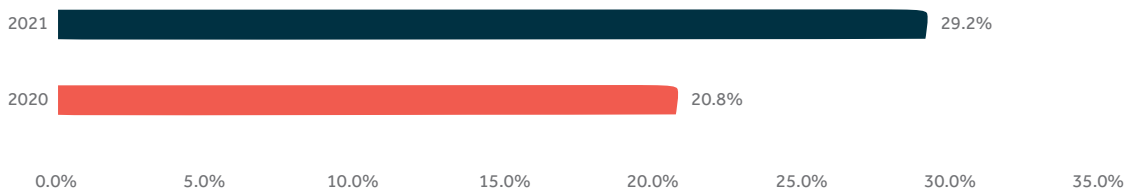




The interest in watching movies is reflected in the opinions of the sample that participated in the 2021 cultural participation survey which was conducted between December 15, 2021 and January 5, 2022 and covered a representative sample of 3,572 people. Specifically, 72% of the respondents said that they watched movies through a different means as compared to what they did in 2020.<sup>(19)</sup>

Comparing the preferences of the cultural participation survey sample of 2020 and 2021 shows that around 29.2% in the 2021 survey prefers watching movies in cinemas whereas only 20.8% preferred doing so in 2020 (see Figure 7). This suggests the growth rate of 41% which is commensurate with the increase in ticket sales in the same year (see Infographic 2).

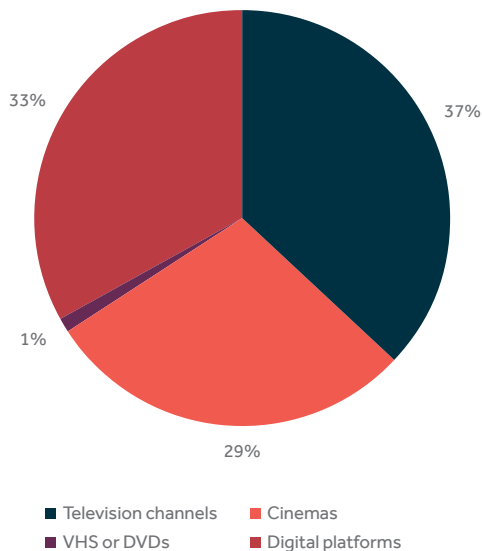
**Figure 7:** Preference for cinemas increasing among viewers who watched movies between 2020 and 2021



The most preferred method of watching movies in 2021 ranged from TV to satellite channels, digital platforms (also known as digital broadcasting) and cinemas; of note, 37% of the survey respondents preferred watching movies on satellite channels, 33% on virtual platforms, and 29% in cinemas (see Figure 8).

is found in preference to watch movies on digital platforms. Digital platform movie viewing was the most preferred option for 33% of the respondents in the 18–25 age group whereas the rate stand at 9% for those who are aged over 50. With regard to watching movies on TV and satellite channels, the preference directly correlated with age: 41% of the oldest age group preferred this method, while 11% of the youngest age group prefers it.<sup>(20)</sup> The same applied to those survey respondents who did not watch movies. Their rate increased with the age group: 43% of those who did not watch movies fell in the group of people aged over 50.

**Figure 8:** Preferred method of watching movies among movie viewers in 2021



This preference is linked to age groups of the survey sample which shows an inverse correlation with age (see Figure 9). While 34% of the youth in the 18–25 age group preferred watching movies in cinemas as their first choice, this rate fell to 7% for those who are aged over 50—where cinemas became their least preferred choice. The same correlation

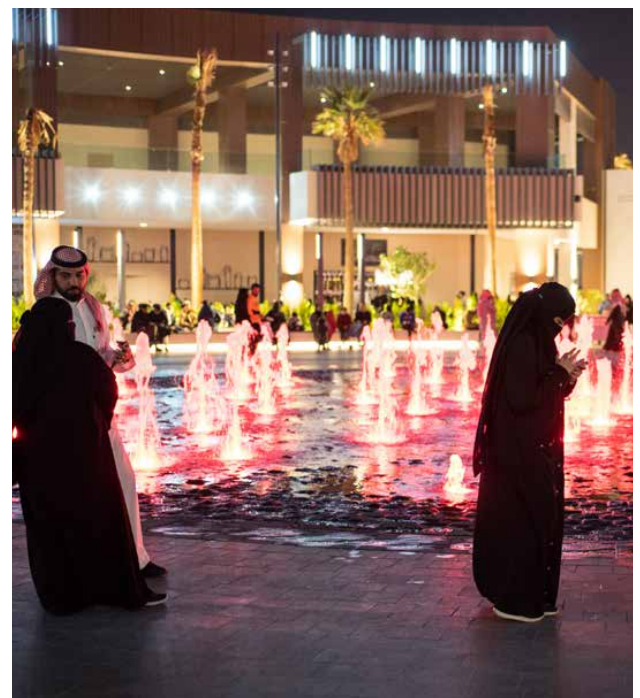
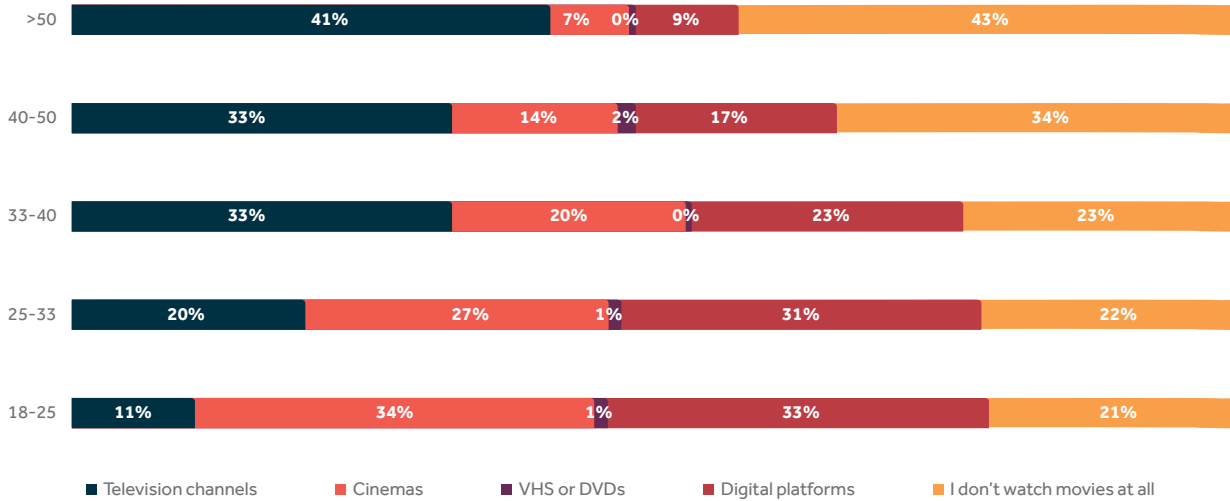




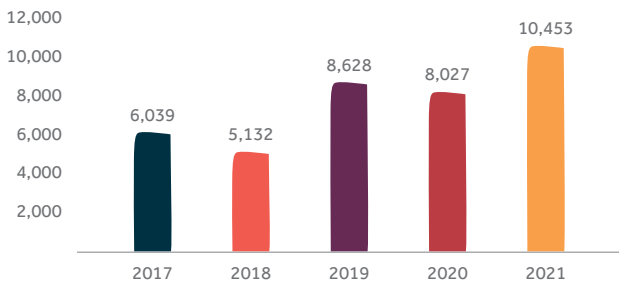
Figure 9: Distribution of the preferred method for watching movies by age group in the year 2021.



**Growth of domestic cultural tourism**

Data from cultural tourism indicators depicted a general trend showing growth of domestic cultural tourism from 2017 through October 2021. Despite a decrease of 15% in 2018 and 7% in 2020, trips that included cultural activities achieved an 18% growth in this period or 4.5% annually on average. The number of cultural activities was calculated based on the tourist participating in any kind of cultural activity at least once (e.g., visiting museums and art galleries) during a given trip, noting that one trip could include participation in more than one type of cultural activity and more than one visit to the same type of cultural activity. Trips including participation in cultural activities increased during this period from 6 million to more than 10,400,000 million trips during the first ten months of 2021 alone (see Figure 10).<sup>(21)</sup>

Figure 10: Number of domestic trips with cultural activities (in thousands) by year<sup>(22)</sup>

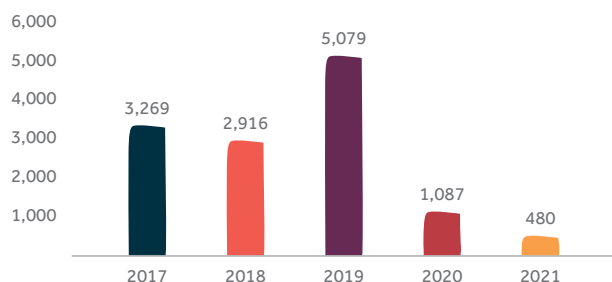


However, this trend did not persist in inbound cultural tourism. After a significant growth amounting to 74% between 2018 and 2019, inbound cultural tourism rates witnessed a sharp decrease in 2020 as a direct result of COVID-19 in the first

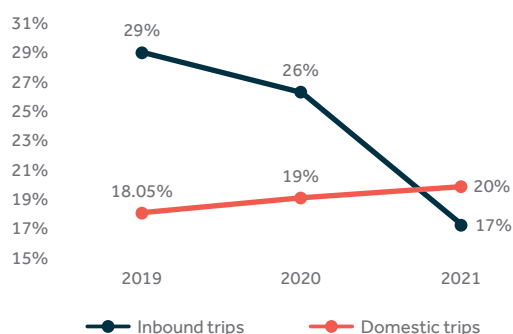
10 months of 2021 (see Figure 13).<sup>(23)</sup> Furthermore, domestic cultural tourism numbers did not experience a significant decrease in 2020. This can be explained by the revival of domestic tourism in general in the second half of the first year of the pandemic as an attractive option for the consumer in the absence of other options. The difference in growth rates between domestic and inbound cultural tourism, particularly during the first 10 months of 2021, continued to increase.



**Figure 11:** Number of inbound trips with cultural activities (in thousands) by year<sup>(24)</sup>



**Figure 12:** Market share of tourists who participated in cultural activities from the total number of tourists performing domestic and inbound trips



**Market Share of Cultural Tourism**

Furthermore, the market share of the number of tourists participating in cultural activities from the total number of tourists showed a steady growth for domestic tourists. Yet, the market share for foreign tourists was impacted by the pandemic, falling by 12% from 2019.<sup>(25)</sup> This number indicates that more domestic tourists have participated in cultural activities during their trips, reflecting a slight increase from 18% to 20% of domestic tourists. This means that during the first 10 months of 2021, one in five domestic tourists participated in a cultural activity during their trip. On the other hand, while the market share of inbound tourists was greater, amounting to 29% of tourists visiting the Kingdom in 2019, these numbers fell to 17% in 2021, i.e., fewer than their domestic counterparts (see Figure 14).

**Table 1:** Market share of domestic and foreign tourists participating in cultural activities

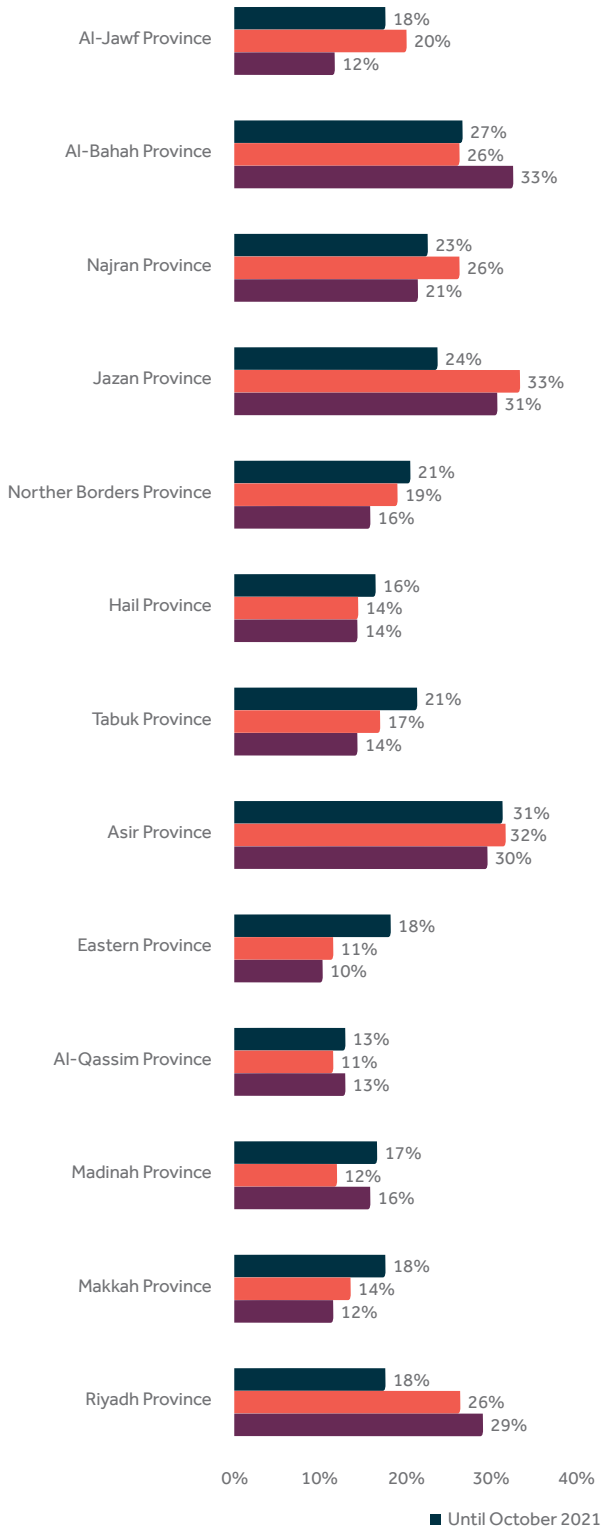
Market share of domestic tourists who participated in cultural activities from the total number of domestic tourists			
Year	Tourists who engaged in cultural activities during their tours	Total tourists	Market share (%)
2019	8,627,925	47,805,187	18
2020	8,026,765	42,106,791	19
2021	10,452,562	52,460,978	20
Market share of inbound tourists who participated in cultural activities from the total number of inbound tourists			
2019	5,079,046	17,525,636	29
2020	1,086,739	4,138,178	26
2021	480,405	2,785,799	17

**Growth of cultural tourism by region and activity**

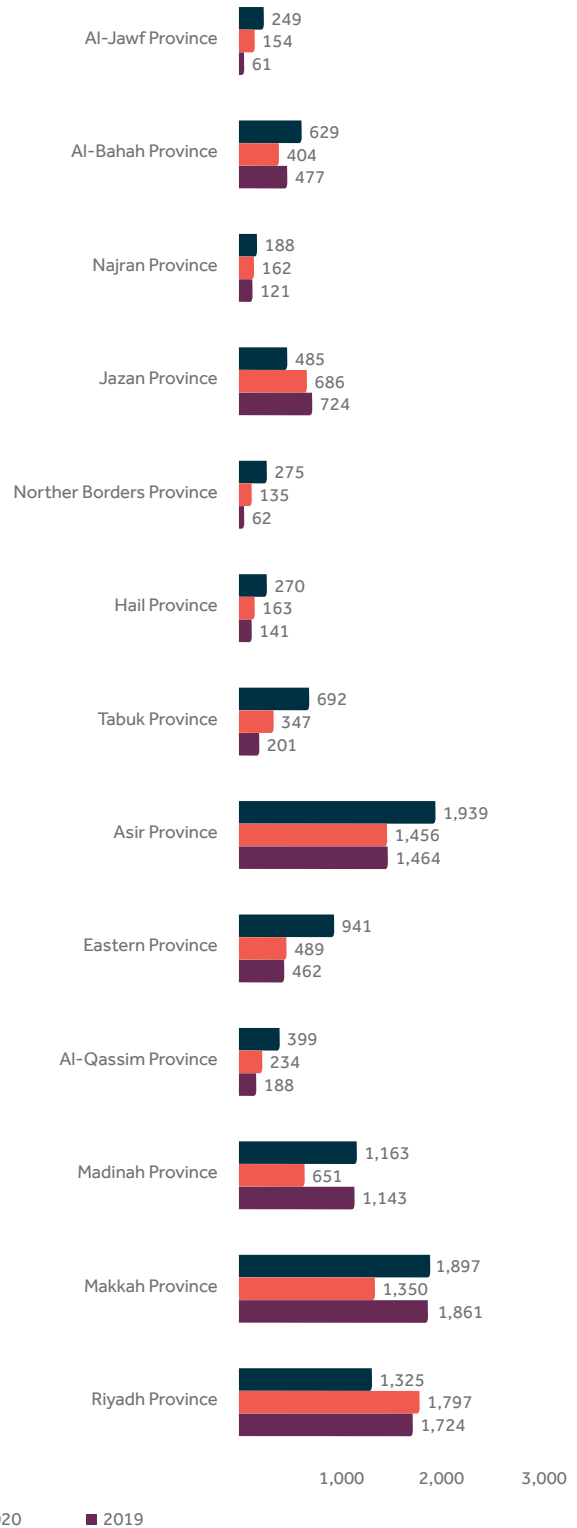
The recovery rate in the cultural tourism sector appears in view of the growth rate of the number of cultural activities in which tourists participated in each region separately. In this respect, the number of tourists who participated in cultural activities in mountainous regions such as Asir and Al-Bahah during the first 10 months of 2021 surpassed the numbers recorded during and before the pandemic. The same trend was observed in regions such as Tabuk where the Neom Project is located, the Eastern Province, and Al-Qassim, which are provinces where cultural tourism grew in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic. In the Madinah and Makkah provinces, cultural tourism returned to its 2019 level.



**Figure 13:** Market share of domestic tourists participating in cultural activities from 2019 to October 2021 by region (% of tourists)



**Figure 14 :** Market share of domestic tourists participating in cultural activities from 2019 to October 2021 by region (number of tourists in thousands)

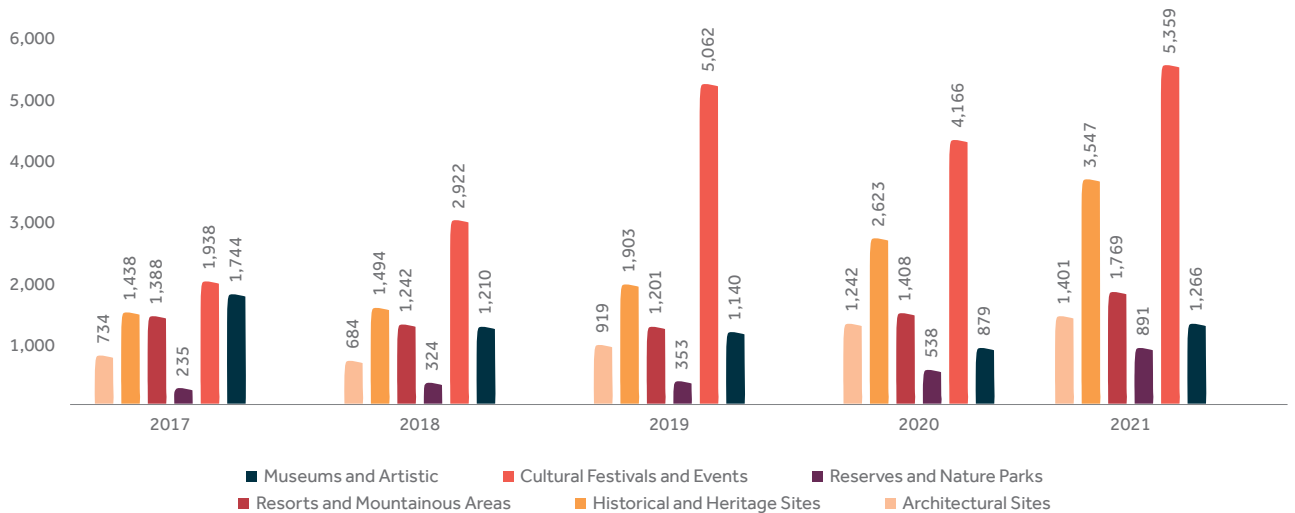




Among cultural activities, the cultural festivals and events sector is most prominent because domestic tourists have been attracted to it the most during the last five years. This

sector is followed by visits to historical and heritage sites and forts. This is a promising sector for investment that has continued to grow rapidly without disruption even during the first year (2020) of the pandemic.<sup>(26)</sup>

**Figure 15:** Number of domestic tourist trips with cultural activities from 2017–end of October 2021 (in thousands)





## Determinants of Demands on Cultural Products and Services

Understanding the social factors that determine demand for cultural products contributes to determining the ability of the cultural sector to respond to demand in accordance with its size and distribution. Understanding these factors also facilitates the identification of potential areas for investment, which depends on providing the product to the relevant consumer in an optimal manner.

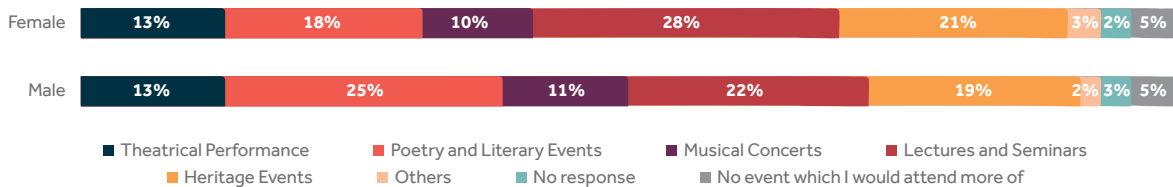


### Heritage Events, Lectures, and Seminars

The results of 2021 Cultural Participation Survey showed that the survey respondents—irrespective of gender, income levels, and social status—were interested in attending more lectures, seminars, and heritage events when compared to other cultural activities. Among the least affluent respondents, 28% reported a similar tendency toward organizing more lectures and seminars, and an equal tendency among males and females for heritage events. A slight increase was observed in the

percentage of women who were interested in more lectures and seminars (28%) as compared to their males counterparts (22%). The most important factor of attraction may be the diversity of heritage event content that is proportionate to the difference in ages and interest within a single household. The timeframe is also wide enough to allow derivation of benefit from the activity without being bound by a specific schedule, as in the case of theater or concerts.

Figure 16: Distribution of cultural events that survey participants were interested to increase based on gender

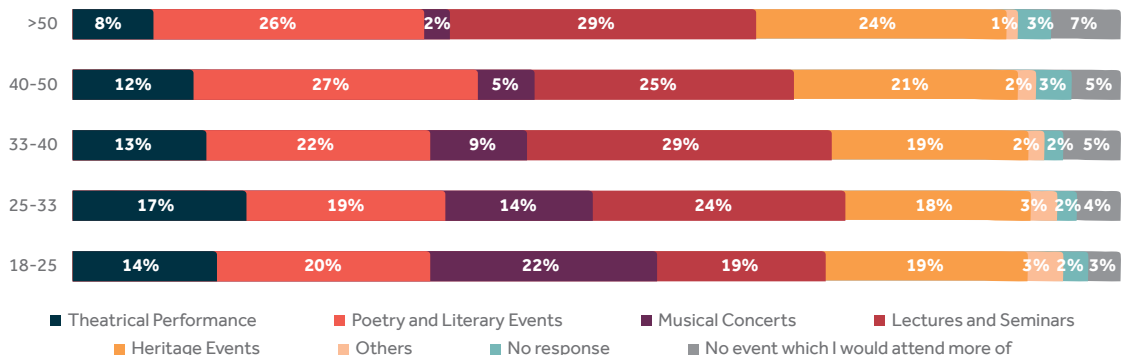




As shown in Figure 17, interest in some activities such as theatrical performance and concerts is stronger among younger age groups. Among the survey respondents aged over 50 years old, only 2% were interested in attending concerts as compared to 22% of the participants in the 18–25 age group. In the case of heritage events, the opposite was true: 24% of the

participants over 50 were interested in attending such events whereas the figure fell to 19% for the participants in the 25–33 age group. Similar was the case for lectures and seminars where the rate of respondents interested in attending amounted to 16% in the youngest age group (15–28), as compared to 29% in the 33–40 and the 50+ age groups.

**Figure 17:** Distribution of cultural events that survey participants were interested in to increase based on age group



### Poetry and literary events

The results of 2021 Cultural Participation Survey are consistent with those of previous two reports.<sup>(27)</sup> Previous reports showed that poetry and literary events in their current form attracted an older and predominantly male audience. As shown in Figs. 18 and 19, 25% of male respondents in the 2021 survey were interested in more event as compared to 18% of their female counterparts.

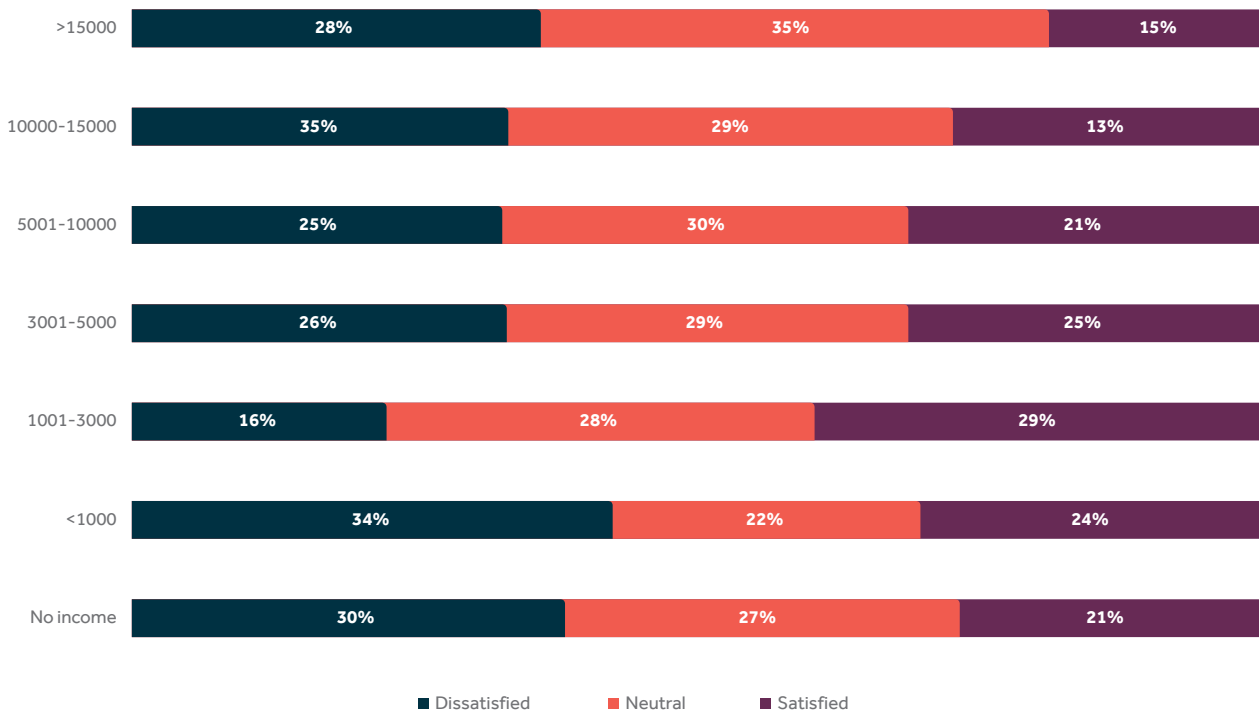
### Different attitudes toward event ticket prices

Taking into account the abundance and diversity of products on offer, and the interest of the audience (across gender, age, and social and educational status), the material weight on an individual constitutes part of the discussion on ticket prices. The results of the 2021 Cultural Participation Survey revealed the convergence of trends pertaining to the satisfaction with these prices. The survey showed no direct link between increased material income and satisfaction with ticket prices because 28% of those who earned over 15,000 riyals per month were not satisfied with prices, whereas 35% of this income group have adopted a neutral stand. However, the difference becomes apparent when the satisfied group



is compared with the dissatisfied group. The percentage of dissatisfaction rises among the two highest and two lowest income groups.

**Figure 18:** Satisfaction with events ticket prices among the survey sample based on material income

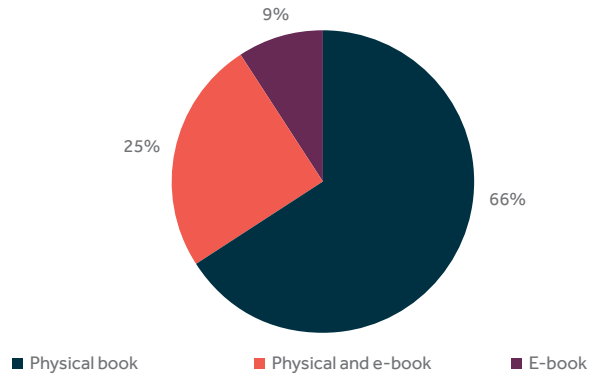




### Physical books and e-books

The results of the survey showed that physical books were preferred over e-books; in fact, 66% of those who purchased books stated that they had bought physical books during the previous 12 months. Furthermore, only 9% purchased exclusively e-books. This is consistent with the results of the 2020 survey which showed that the rate of purchased e-books amounted to only 10% of the total book purchased by customers who purchased one or more books.<sup>(28)</sup> Material income was not a factor that impacted the ability to purchase books. This is because the rate of those who purchased physical books from among limited-income groups and high-income groups is quite close according to the results of the 2021 Cultural Participation Survey (see Figure 18).<sup>(29)</sup>

**Figure 19:** Percentage of respondents who purchased books for non-study or non-work purposes over the last 12 months by book type<sup>(30)</sup>



**Figure 20:** Percentage of respondents who purchased books for non-study or non-work purposes over the last 12 months by income

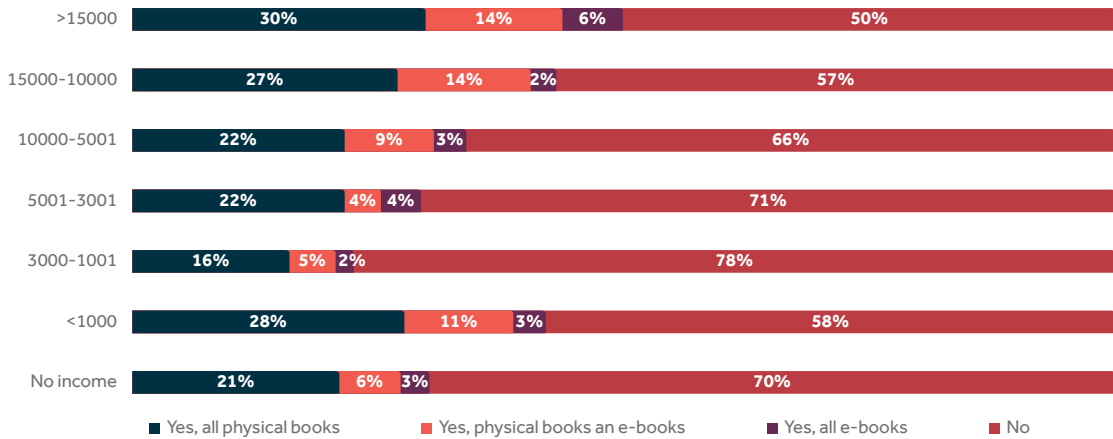
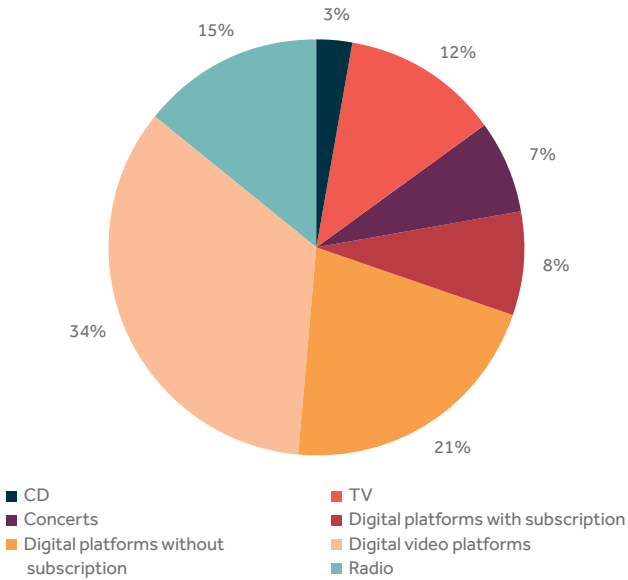




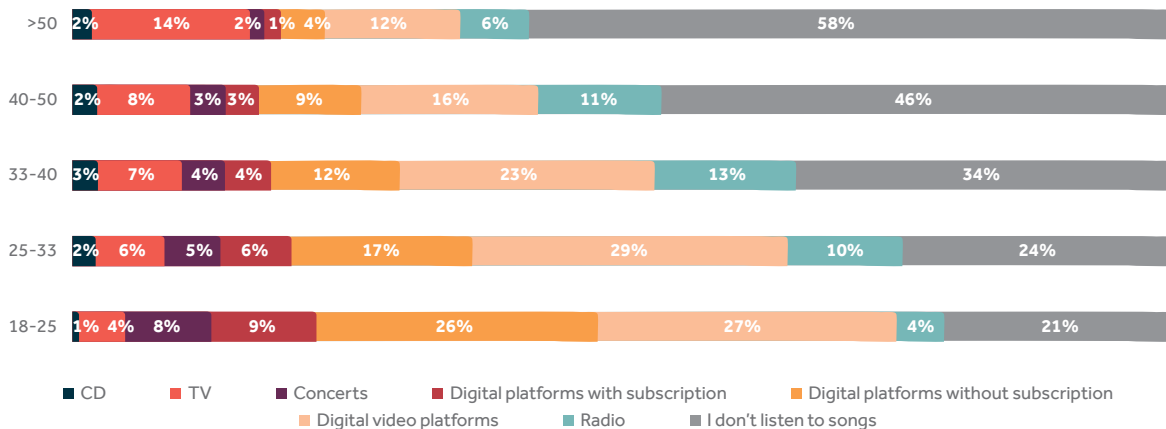
Figure 21: Preferred method of listening to music among respondents who listened to music/songs in 2021



The results showed that age had a strong inverse relationship with this style of consumption. With an increase of age, the use of digital platforms to listen to songs decreased, while the preference for satellite channels increased; accordingly,

15% of the survey participants aged over 50 years old listened to songs on the TV as compared to only 5% who used digital platforms (with or without subscription; see Figure 22).

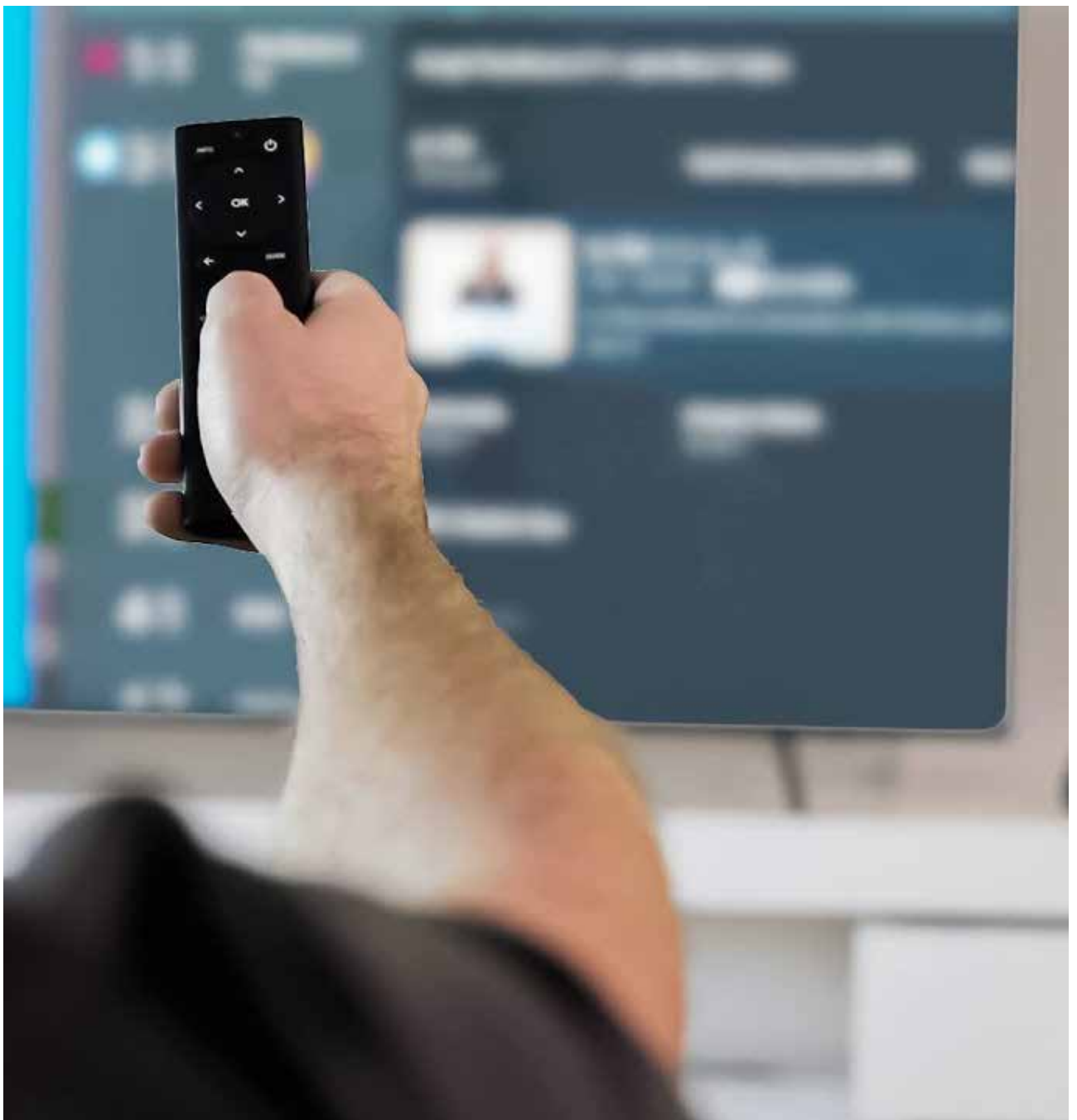
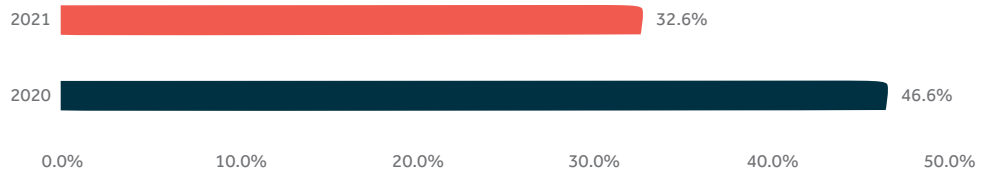
Figure 22: Preferred methods of listening to music by age group, 2021



Overall, the survey respondents' preference for watching movies through digital broadcasting media over all other methods decreased in 2021. While 46.6% of the survey respondents preferred this channel in 2020, only 32% did so in 2021. The factor that could have influenced this outcome could be the easing and thereafter lifting the restrictions after the COVID-19 pandemic, as, in 2021, the percentage of the survey respondents who preferred

viewing movies in cinemas grew in 2021 (see Figure 7). Overall, age correlation pattern between preferring digital broadcasting media for consuming audio and video content applied to movies as well. The youngest age group (18–25 years old) preferred digital broadcasting the most (33%). This rate then gradually decreased with older age to fall to mere 9% among the survey respondents aged over 50 years old<sup>(31)</sup> (see Figure 9).

Figure 23: Digital broadcasting preferences for movies among movie viewers in 2020 and 2021



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- (2) Data Received from the Public Investment Fund on February 14, 2022.
- (3) Data from the Ministry of Commerce (February 8, 2022).
- (4) Cultural enterprise activities were determined based on the general guidelines for cultural statistics issued by UNESCO based on its corresponding activities in the national classification of economic activities (ISEC-4). The standards have been accurately defined according to the third level of activities. Within the wide framework of UNESCO, activities that are unrelated to the cultural field have been sorted and excluded. For details and classification components, see the methodology appendix.
- (5) Data from the Ministry of Commerce (February 8, 2022).
- (6) Data from the National Competitiveness Centre (February 14, 2022).
- (7) Data from the General Commission for Audiovisual Media (March 8, 2022).
- (8) Data from the Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources (January 23, 2022).
- (9) General Authority for Statistics, Household Income and Expenditure Survey, a report which contains data on expenditure according to major expenditure groups, issued every five years. Reference has been made to the latest issue (2018).
- (10) Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2018).
- (11) This group includes consumption of audiovisual equipment, photography, and IT equipment, other major durables intended for recreation and culture, other recreational equipment and elements, gardens, pets, recreational and cultural services, newspapers, books, stationery, and tours.
- (12) General Authority for Statistics, Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2018).
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- (14) General Authority for Statistics, GDP and national accounts indicators, national accounts annual bulletin of 2020 [www.stats.gov.sa/ar/823](http://www.stats.gov.sa/ar/823)
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- (16) The scope of this purpose extends to include spending on cultural services (consumption of audiovisual equipment, photography, and IT equipment, other major durables intended for recreation and culture, other recreational equipment and elements, gardens, pets, recreational and cultural services, newspapers, books, stationery, and tours) and educational spending (education, training, secondary school education fees, institution fees, skill education expenses) and
- (17) Saudi Central Bank, weekly POS operations [www.sama.gov.sa/ar-sa/Indices/Pages/POS.aspx](http://www.sama.gov.sa/ar-sa/Indices/Pages/POS.aspx)
- (18) Data received from the General Commission for Audiovisual Media (March 30, 2022).
- (19) Figure 4, chapter on cultural participation.
- (20) 2021 Cultural Participation Survey. For details, see the methodology appendix.
- (21) Data from the Ministry of Tourism (January 18, 2022) and from the Tourism Information Research Centre ("Cultural Tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2018," Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage); Tourism Information Research Centre ("Cultural Tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2017"); Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage.
- (22) Includes Bedouin regions.
- (23) Data from the Ministry of Tourism (January 18, 2022) and from the Tourism Information Research Centre ("Cultural Tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2018," Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage); Tourism Information Research Centre ("Cultural Tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2017"); Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage.
- (24) Includes Bedouin regions.
- (25) Data from the Ministry of Tourism (February 21, 2022).
- (26) For more details, see the chapter on cultural participation and the chapter on management and conservation.
- (27) Report of the Cultural Status in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2020; see the chapter on digitization of culture and the chapter on literature.
- (28) Ministry of Culture, Report of the Culture Status in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for 2020, chapter on translation and publication.
- (29) 2021 Cultural Participation Survey. For details, see the methodology appendix.
- (30) 2021 Cultural Participation Survey. For details, see the methodology appendix.
- (31) 2021 Cultural Participation Survey.

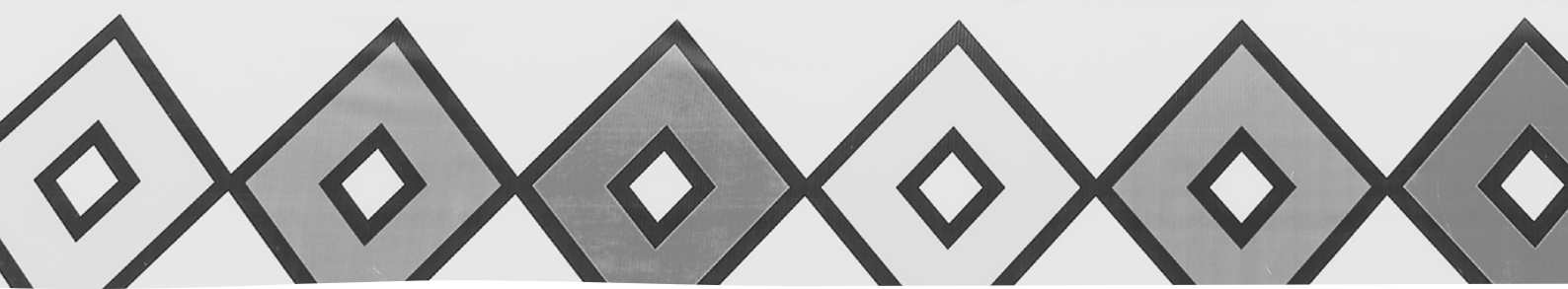








# Culture in Public Space





# 6

## Culture in Public Space

- Post-Pandemic Cultural Life Overview
- Features of the Cultural Sector in the Kingdom in 2021
- Culture in Public Spaces



The Cultural Status Report of 2020 dealt with a reality that was both unique and challenging; cultural activities grappled with unfamiliar terrain, while anachronistic growth indicators could no longer be used to monitor their development. It was an attempt to discover features that were unique to that particular year. Similarly, the 2021 Report is an attempt to read into the ongoing exceptional reality and identify recovery levels. It remains to be seen whether the pandemic was a passing phase or an event that had an impact on creative production operations, forms of cultural activities or behaviors of cultural participation. This chapter deals with culture in public space as a special theme, tracing the transition of cultural activity from virtual to public spaces. It also presents general features of the cultural state during 2021 and the key conclusions from the Report's various chapters. Lastly, it analyzes cultural vitality in the urban spaces of Saudi cities in all of their richly diverse facets.

The selection of this theme is driven by two main levers: the first being a need to trace the recovery from the pandemic and the resumption of cultural events in public life, and the second, perhaps more integral dimension, is to consider the importance of the spatial aspect of culture, especially the public space that is shared by all individuals. The vitality of culture depends on its ability to contribute to the formation of the daily life of individuals. Therefore, without underestimating the importance of those cultural activities that are practiced individually (such as reading a book or drawing), the public social manifestations of culture have assumed significant functions, such as enhancing one's identity. They also serve to increase the depth of communication and the association of individuals through cultural expression, in addition to the importance of the presence of cultural expression in public spaces. There is also growing awareness of the importance of direct and indirect economic contribution which can be provided by the presence of culture in daily urban lifestyle.<sup>(1)</sup> This can be achieved either through increasing the number of cultural activities for urban residents or through establishing points of attraction for investments and tourists.

Whereas the term "public space" covers broad meanings that may include all social interactions that occur outside the scope of family and personal relations, the Report interprets the meaning of public space as the general open space, or public spaces that are available to be used by all individuals. At the same time, the Report defines "cultural presence" in a manner that extends to the practice of cultural activities, the organization of cultural events and the presence of cultural elements in the identity of the public space as well as its contribution to the formation of its features. In this way, it is possible to evaluate the status of cultural presence in the public space by looking at the provision of open spaces that can be

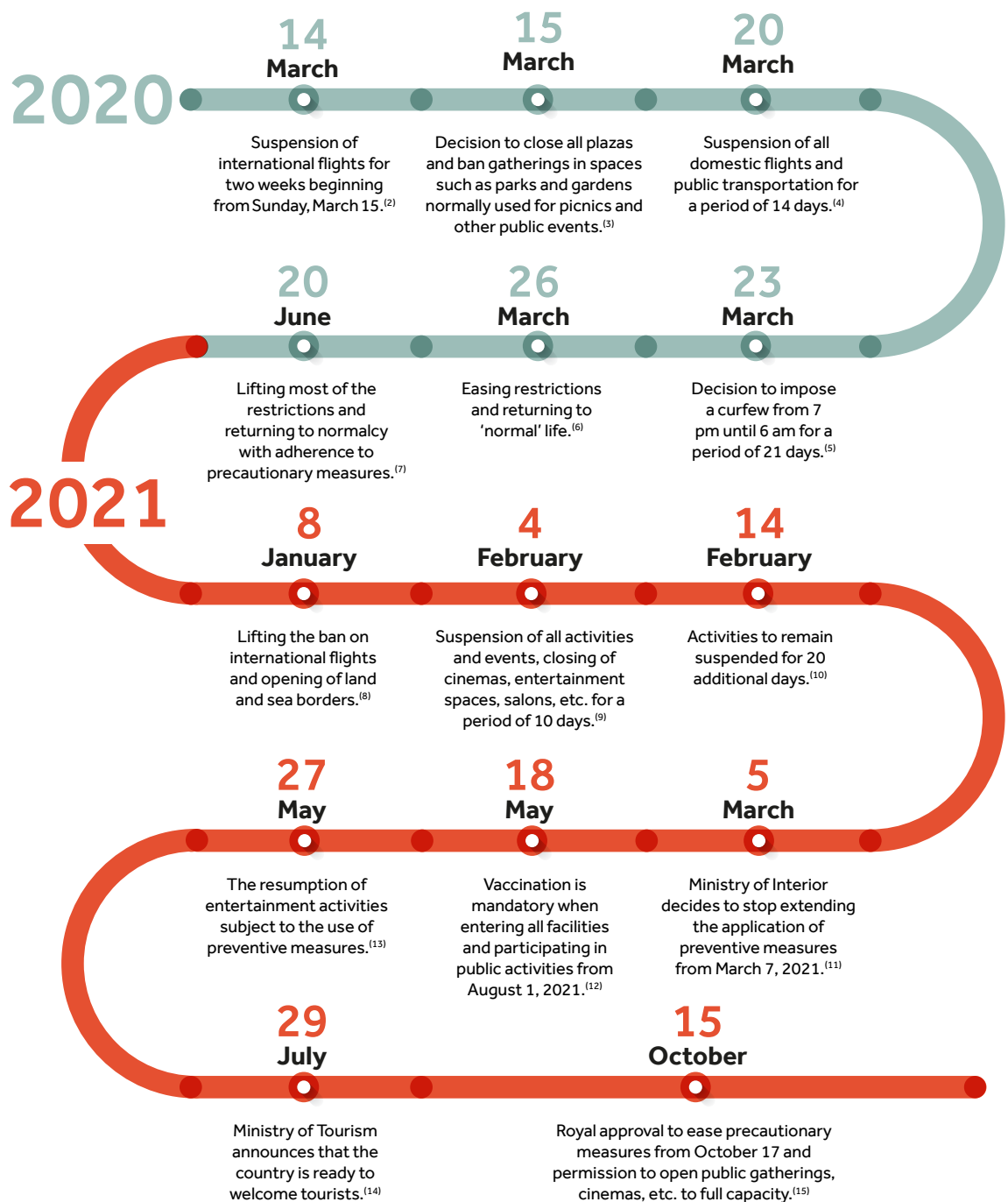
deployed for cultural purposes, the extent of their inclusion of the various social classes, the intensity of the association of society's individuals, and the extent of variety in the forms of such cultural presence. As an introduction to address these three dimensions of cultural presence in the public space, the chapter provides an overview of the reality of post-pandemic cultural life in addition to the most prominent conclusions regarding the cultural situation in 2021 represented in cultural tourism and the features of cultural participation, as well as the developments in the field of support and empowerment, and the organizational movements witnessed by the cultural landscape in the Kingdom.

## Post-Pandemic Cultural Life Overview

Most months of the year 2021 were spent under preventive health measures aimed at safeguarding public health while successfully navigating recurring waves of the Covid-19 pandemic. The transition to normal life began once more from March 7. This process was enhanced by the availability of vaccines and a mandatory requirement to be vaccinated to be able to participate in activities and enter commercial and public facilities. It was only in mid-October that the easing of restrictions reached its zenith, and entertainment, cultural events and facilities were reopened fully. It is therefore glaringly clear that the first half of 2021 was animated by a gradual return to the baseline of cultural engagement prevalent prior to the pandemic and its corresponding ramifications. This trend continued until the last quarter of the year, which witnessed Riyadh Season take full force marking a substantive uptick in cultural engagement. The year ended with Formula 1 in Jeddah as an international event open to visitors from abroad.



Figure 1: A timeline of preventive measures.





The improvement in health conditions that was primarily driven by COVID-19 vaccination resulted in the improving levels of activity and participation in the cultural sectors. As the Report shows by way of example, theater and performances rebounded to pre-pandemic levels during the year. The same is observed in the number of art exhibitions. Furthermore, the recovery is most profoundly seen in the continuous growth of ticket sales at cinemas, as well as in the revenue and the number of films shown. These obvious signs of recovery directly show that the emergency has passed. However, there are some other less obvious aspects, and through them the Report attempts to probe the medium- to long-term impact of the pandemic. Those aspects are: the challenges and opportunities faced by cultural sectors, cultural tourism, and the overall rates and components of participation.

### Culture in the Post-Pandemic Period: Opportunities and Challenges

The digital space became the alternative for the public space in the various fields during the past two years. Cultural life across the world faced a number of challenges that varied from sector to sector and from country to country. For instance, a report by UNESCO pointed out that sectors that were impacted the most by the pandemic were those which largely relied on human interaction and physical experience such as festivals, live exhibitions, and museums. On the other hand, other sectors adapted more flexibly to the new reality of the pandemic such as music, arts, design, and literature because they adopted digital patterns of production and participation.<sup>(16)</sup> This is consistent what was indicated in

the previous edition, Report on the State of Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2020: Digitalization of Culture, on the digital infrastructure of cultural sectors and the various methods of virtual participation. However, aspects that started out as necessities imposed by the pandemic continue to remain as available options in certain cultural activities and practices. For example, in its third wave, the Cultural Participation Survey showed that 62% of respondents were interested in having virtual alternatives available. However, this does not signify that virtual activities are superior to physical ones in terms of attendance levels (as recorded in the chapter 'Cultural Participation').

As life returned to normal after the pandemic, cultural sectors were confronted by an idiosyncratic juncture point suffused with ubiquitous opportunities but equally important challenges. Increased investment in digital and virtual avenues of culture is widely considered to be the most important byproduct of the pandemic. As such, cultural seminars and forums were successfully hosted virtually – training sessions swiftly followed suit despite being fewer in number than in-person sessions and workshops (as recorded in the chapter 'Knowledge and Skills'). Promising opportunities also presented themselves in the realm of cultural production such as innovation in digital arts, digital publishing, digital archiving. For example, the chapter 'Production and Creativity' indicates an increase in complex artistic works—that rely on digital or audiovisual technology—in artistic exhibitions organized during the year such as the Nour Riyadh Exhibition and the Diriyah Biennale; these accounted for 84% of the artistic works hosted in the Diriyah Biennale. The chapter 'Management and Conservation' reviews the initiatives in relation to digital publishing and archiving, such



as those found in the Literature, Publishing, and Translation Commission (Digital Publishing Program), and the Libraries Commission (Digitization and Access to Manuscripts). These opportunities are not purely a result of the pandemic; investing in digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI) is an inevitable development of the technological revolution in the current age. Although the conditions created by the pandemic were conducive for such technologies, the future of these cultural trends is not certain. However, it is anticipated that they will continue to mature until they successfully evolve into an established cultural phenomenon. Among the opportunities provided by the return of cultural activity to the public space is the enhancement of human interaction with the physical space and environment—something that is absent in the virtual space. Such opportunities are more clearly seen while physically experiencing museums, art exhibitions, heritage sites, and cultural festivals.

The most prominent challenges for culture returning to the public space post-pandemic include weak infrastructure, and more specifically the variance in regional infrastructure distribution. The chapters 'Management and Conservation' and 'Cultural Participation' measure the indicators of the provision of cultural facilities and their distribution in the various provinces of the Kingdom, as well as their accessibility. It was observed that there was a centrality in the distribution that resulted in attendance and participation levels varying from province to province. Virtual activities could overcome this, because they are not affected by geographic limitations and are able to attract participants interested in cultural products and activities. Likewise, the economic cost to develop the infrastructure and organize in-person cultural events and activities is considered to be an essential factor in revitalizing the cultural movement and strengthening the presence of culture in the public space. At the same time, this does not count as a burden when we talk about virtual cultural activities that were undertaken during the pandemic. The strategic plans of the cultural commissions announced in 2021 point toward the importance of developing infrastructure, considering this to be one of the main challenges faced by the various cultural sectors.

## Features of the Cultural Sector in the Kingdom in 2021

The different chapters of the Report record a number of general characteristics of cultural life in 2021 that were not affected at all by the impact of the pandemic. These can be categorized into four major developments or trends that related to multiple aspects of culture and are as follows:



(1) growth of cultural tourism; (2) impact of the income level on cultural participation; (3) expansion of support and empowerment opportunities for culture and creativity; (4) continuation of the regulatory and organizational development of culture in the Kingdom.

## Growth of Domestic Cultural Tourism

One of the most significant pieces of information in the Report is that the number of trips made by domestic tourists, that included cultural activities, reached unprecedented levels—approximately 10.5 million trips during the first 10 months of 2021, surpassing the total trips made in 2019 which were around 8.5 million during the entire 12 months. Here, the growth rate was almost 24%. Cultural tourism data also indicate that a recovery was seen in participation levels. This means a rise in demand for cultural offerings in sectors that are most connected with tourism. For example, the attendance and participation levels in cultural festivals and events exceeded pre-pandemic levels. The same was observed in relation to visits to heritage and archaeological sites. The impact of the pandemic here was limited—considering that their open spaces provided an alternative to activities in closed spaces which were, in any case, closed for long periods as a result of preventive health measures. This very phenomenon applies to domestic tourism in general, which proved its versatility in countering the pandemic and maintained its visitor levels as compared to international

tourism, and even raised them in certain provinces directly due to the fact that they had become the most viable option for tourists due to the pandemic. However, data for the first 10 months of 2021 support the assumption that growth in domestic tourism was unrelated to the pandemic—despite the suspension of (international) travel being lifted—accompanied by a rise in the number of cultural tourists.

The most important observation pertaining to domestic cultural tourism goes beyond the rise in the number of trips because the rise in the number of tourists engaging in cultural activities during their trips was not merely a result of the general revival in the domestic tourism sector. In fact, this is also linked to a higher proportion thereof of the total trips. It is quite likely that the domestic tourist was more inclined to participate in cultural activities as compared to before, considering that the percentage rose from 18% to 20%, i.e. one-fifth of all tours included participation in one or more cultural activity. This is a general positive indicator of growing interest in cultural activities, and transcends the mere numerical growth seen in the statistics for cultural tourism.

### Impact of Income Levels on Cultural Participation

Whereas the tourism indicators point toward a growing rate of participation, the obvious question is: who is participating? The Report attempts to identify the factors that impact cultural participation and how it is linked with the demand for cultural services and the distribution of related facilities and services. Some chapters of the Report extrapolate the social groups that were most interested in participating in cultural activities, consuming cultural products and services, and using cultural facilities. Looking at the overall results presented by the 2021 Cultural Participation Survey regarding

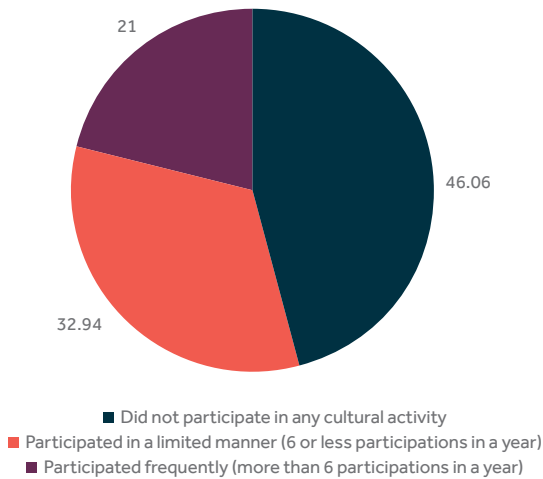
the rate of those who participated in cultural activities during the year—regardless of activity type—the sample indicates that more than one-half of the population (54%)—of those who are above 18 years of age—participated in at least one cultural activity, whether it was a visit to a museum or watching a play or another cultural activity, as compared to 46% who did not participate in any cultural activity included in the survey. Moreover, a majority of those who participated in cultural activities did not do so more than six times. Those who participated regularly—among those who participated more than six times—constituted 21% (Fig. 2).

In a pattern similar to the previous two reports, age and income levels stand out as the most important determinants for cultural participation. Younger display a greater proclivity for cultural participation vis-à-vis other age groups. This trend is also evident when comparing the 18–25 and the 26–35 age groups. The difference becomes wider between those who regularly (more than six times) participate in cultural sectors, where the possibility of a person in the 18–25 age group participating regularly in cultural activities is double that of a person doing so in the 56+ age group (26% vs. 13%) (Fig. 3). In contrast with this observation – namely, that the cultural sector is not limited to the older age groups and is not detached from the interests of the younger generation – the distribution of participation according to income shows varied interaction with cultural activities between the categories of different social levels. While the rates of divergent participation (six times or fewer) are not different between these groups, the possibility of a person belonging to higher income-groups participating regularly in cultural activities is higher than that of a person belonging to lower income groups. This observation elucidates importance of making the cultural offering varied and easily accessible to less advantaged social groups so that cultural practice is not deemed inherently elitist

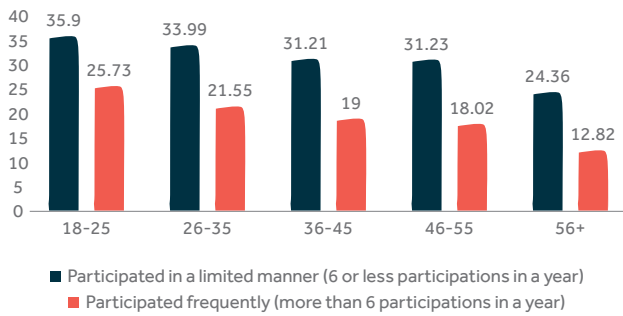




**Figure 2:** Percentage distribution of participation in cultural activities during the last 12 months.<sup>(17)</sup>



**Figure 3:** Percentage distribution of those who participated at least once in a cultural activity during the last 12 months, by age group.<sup>(18)</sup>



**Figure 4:** Percentage distribution of participation levels in cultural activities during the last 12 months, by income level.<sup>(19)</sup>



## Support and Empowerment

It could be said that the conducive environment for creativity and culture is the inevitable result of regulatory development and institutional cultural work in the Kingdom. One can observe that a number of cultural and academic institutions as well as civil sector organizations compete to create a more stimulating and empowering environment for creatives and cultural practitioners in the various sectors. This comprehensiveness—in terms of sectors—and variety—in terms of the nature of programs and the targeted groups—are the most prominent developments highlighted in the chapter ‘Management and Conservation’ of support and empowerment programs. The chapter documents various forms of these programs that include grants and funds, literary and art residencies, cultural competitions, incubators, and business accelerators. The most prominent of these was the establishment of the Cultural Development Fund by Royal Decree, which launched its first program, “The Cultural Projects Incentive Program,” and supported four different projects during 2021. There was a significant revival in art residencies after their suspension in 2021 as a result of the pandemic. Six art residencies were established, benefiting 74 artists (54% of whom were women).



Figure 5: Major forms of cultural support in 2021.



### Organizational Developments During 2021

In continuation of the institutional regulation of culture in the Kingdom, which commenced with the creation of the Ministry of Culture in 2018 and the establishment of cultural commissions at the beginning of 2020, 2021 witnessed more regulations of cultural functions and policies as well as a clearer implementation of institutional roles. This is reviewed in the chapter 'Management and Conservation' and can be summarized and categorized in terms of two primary processes: firstly, decisions to regulate and organize the functions and responsibilities and transfer authority of institutions concerned with cultural affairs. The most prominent of these is the Council of Ministers' approval of the amendment of Article III of the Antiquities, Museums and Urban Heritage Act, the Council of Ministers' approval of the regulation of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Center for Language Planning and Policies—formerly the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Serving

the Arabic Language, and the Council of Ministers' approval of transferring authority over the Historic Jeddah project Program from the (former) Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage to the Ministry of Culture. Secondly, implementing manuals and executive regulations for the laws that have been issued in 2020, such as the Guide to Acquiring Artworks in Government Buildings, Headquarters, and Offices. This Guide was published in fulfillment of the Supreme Order issued in 1441/2020 directing government institutions to acquire national artworks. Similarly, the seven executive regulations of the Environment Law issued by Royal Decree in 1441AH/2020 were implemented in 2021.

It is also possible to carve out a third pathway that leads to the role played by cultural institutions in regulating and strategically planning to develop the various cultural sectors. For example, the Ministry of Culture launched a strategy to develop the non-profit sector in March 2021. It re-classified the non-profit cultural organizations into five, instead of

two, levels: civil institutions, professional associations, specialized associations, cooperative societies, and amateur clubs.<sup>(20)</sup> The chapter 'Cultural Participation' discusses the extent of the impact made by these regulations on enhancing the engagement of non-profit organizations in cultural practices and records a huge increase in the number of such organizations between 2020 and 2021. Nine cultural bodies also announced their strategic plans and initiatives to develop cultural sectors: the Fashion Commission,

Libraries Commission, Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission, Architecture and Design Commission, Theater and Performing Arts Commission, Museums Commission, Heritage Commission, Film Commission, and the Music Commission. The main focus areas for most of the strategic plans by these commissions are developing training and education programs, improving infrastructure, supporting and empowering talents, facilitating investment in the sector, and developing policies, regulations, and licenses.

**Table 1:** Strategies of cultural commissions launched during 2021 and the most prominent projects and initiatives that were announced.

Strategy	Most prominent projects and initiatives
<p><b>Strategy of the Fashion Commission<sup>(21)</sup></b></p>	<p><b>20 initiatives, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing infrastructure and creative complexes</li> <li>• Investing in research and development of sustainable textile technologies</li> <li>• Developing education and training</li> <li>• Establishing a fashion center</li> <li>• Launching the Saudi Fashion Professionals Society</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy of the Libraries Commission<sup>(22)</sup></b></p>	<p><b>35 initiatives, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing and building a digital public library</li> <li>• Automating public libraries</li> <li>• Mobile libraries</li> <li>• Organizing and declaring a national day for Saudi libraries</li> <li>• Developing a database for the library sector in the Kingdom</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy of the Literature, Publishing &amp; Translation Commission<sup>(23)</sup></b></p>	<p><b>15 initiatives to develop the three sectors, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the global presence and recognition of Saudi writers</li> <li>• Developing education, training, and talent discovery</li> <li>• Developing legislative and regulatory frameworks for the publishing industry and the translation sector in the Kingdom</li> <li>• Increasing the magnitude of investment in the Saudi publishing market</li> <li>• Developing career tracks for translation in the Kingdom</li> <li>• Boosting the translation movement and translating Saudi works in various languages</li> </ul>
<p><b>"Al-Murabba" Strategy of the Architecture and Design Commission<sup>(24)</sup></b></p>	<p><b>33 initiatives within six strategic programs, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing the policies of the sector</li> <li>• King Salman Charter for Architecture and Urbanism</li> <li>• Developing education and training programs and establishing the Najdi Architecture Academy</li> <li>• National Center for Documentation of Architecture and Design</li> <li>• Encyclopedia of Architecture and Design</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy of the Theater and Performing Arts Commission<sup>(25)</sup></b></p>	<p><b>26 initiatives within six strategic axes, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing the infrastructure for theater</li> <li>• Developing education, training, and talent discovery</li> <li>• Incubator for cultural works</li> <li>• Multiplex and Innovation Support Program</li> </ul>

<p><b>Strategy of the Museums Commission<sup>(26)</sup></b></p>	<p><b>12 strategic goals, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing major museums in main cities and local museums in provinces with diverse heritage</li> <li>• Opening leading museums such as the Royal Complex Arts Museum, the Digital Arts Museum, and the Prince Mohammed bin Salman International Center Museum for Arabic Calligraphy</li> <li>• Increasing museum visitor rates</li> <li>• Safeguarding and preserving collections of acquired items</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy of the Heritage Commission<sup>(27)</sup></b></p>	<p><b>33 initiatives within eight strategic focus points, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting and empowering brands of Saudi artisans</li> <li>• Documenting folk art and music, traditional dance, heritage cuisine, and poetry, and calligraphy arts, and promoting related events</li> <li>• Registering, protecting, and restoring heritage sites</li> <li>• Developing and investing in heritage sites as cultural tourist destinations</li> <li>• Introducing a professional training program specializing in heritage</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy of the Film Commission<sup>(28)</sup></b></p>	<p><b>19 initiatives within eight strategic focus points, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing the infrastructure for cinematic production and creating a network of studios for regional production</li> <li>• Documenting Saudi cinematic production and launching the National Film Archive</li> <li>• A program to stimulate the film industry, and the Saudi film incentive program</li> <li>• Programs for training, education, and talent attraction and growth</li> <li>• Local and international Saudi film events</li> <li>• Creating an electronic platform to facilitate services and regulations for those who are working in the sector</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy of the Music Commission<sup>(29)</sup></b></p>	<p><b>More than 60 initiatives within eight strategic focus points, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing music education and training centers, establishing the Higher Institute for Music, the Arab Music Academy, and the Music Research Center</li> <li>• Developing the necessary infrastructure for the music sector</li> <li>• Documenting traditional Saudi music</li> <li>• Supporting the efforts of the Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property, and facilitating the process to obtain licenses for those working in the music sector</li> </ul>



## Culture in Public Spaces

Culture is inextricably tied to public life, in its various facets and across a plethora of societal manifestations. Therefore, Culture – when understood as habits, proclivities, arts, and practices – is indeed a social phenomenon. In its most fundamental form, culture was expressed spontaneously, while modern and complex urban life has hindered this expression. Safeguarding cultural features and empowering individuals to associate with their culture in the physical space is therefore indispensable, and necessitates strategic policies, local will, and impact-oriented investments. This means that taking urban planning, public life regulation, and the provision of urban spaces for practicing cultural activities into consideration is an imperative condition to vitalize a city and bring about individual connection therewith. Since the dawn of the twentieth century, an assortment of cultural and urban policies has emerged that established the consideration of culture as an integral part of the growth of a city or province, and not mere complementary or ornamental additions to basic services.<sup>(30)</sup> In this context, there has been growing interest in the Kingdom to revive public life through culture by way of initiatives related to quality of life, within a wide system of ministries, government bodies, municipalities as well as contributions of civil institutions.

What is the meaning of cultural relation with space? It is possible to view this relation through three axes: firstly, the extent of available open urban spaces that can be utilized for cultural purposes. This is the primary condition for bringing culture into public space. The second is about the connection of the people with these spaces in terms of frequency of visiting and accessibility. The third axis attempts to trace the manifestations of culture and the interaction of people with it in the public space.

### Provision of Open Spaces for Cultural Purposes

Using the Urban Observatory data of 2019, this part of the chapter monitors and assesses the availability of open spaces for cultural activities and events, their distribution across the Kingdom's provinces, and the degree to which they are accessible. Those open spaces include public gardens, urban centers, town squares, festival grounds, and children's playgrounds. Data shows a relative disparity between the various provinces of the Kingdom in terms of the number of these spaces, which are largely concentrated in central, eastern, and western provinces, and decrease as we get closer to the borders. For example, data shows that



the highest number of children's playgrounds and public gardens are found in Makkah Province, the Eastern Province, and Riyadh Province, while Al-Qassim Province surpasses the forgoing provinces in terms of the number of town squares. The provinces of Asir, Makkah, and Riyadh lead the charts in terms of the number of urban centers and festival grounds. The Northern Borders Province trails the rest in terms of the number of urban centers, festival grounds, and town squares, while Najran Province scores lowest in the number of public gardens and children's playgrounds, as seen in Fig. 7. However, when these spaces are compared to the population of each province, it is seen that the Northern Borders province, followed by Al-Qassim and Hail provinces, show a rise in the number of open spaces, amounting to 1,142, 1,082, and 993 per one million people, respectively. On the other hand, the number falls from the average with a visible difference in Riyadh Province where the number of open spaces is 279 per one million people as in Fig. 8.

The chapter also compares the number of registered traditional and heritage markets, representing examples of public spaces which can be used for organizing local cultural festivals, and which showcase an appropriate urban environment for interaction between various sectors of society. It is difficult to obtain an accurate number of such markets because of the difference in classification standards, and the development of structural organizations in the heritage and tourism sectors in the Kingdom. In general, there are an estimated 48 traditional and historical markets registered in the Kingdom, 29% of which are located in Makkah Province, followed by Asir Province which hosts 23% of them; the provinces of Riyadh and Madinah, and the Eastern Province each host around 11% of such markets (see Fig. 10).



Figures 6 and 7: Number of open spaces available for cultural activities and their distribution by province. <sup>(31)</sup>

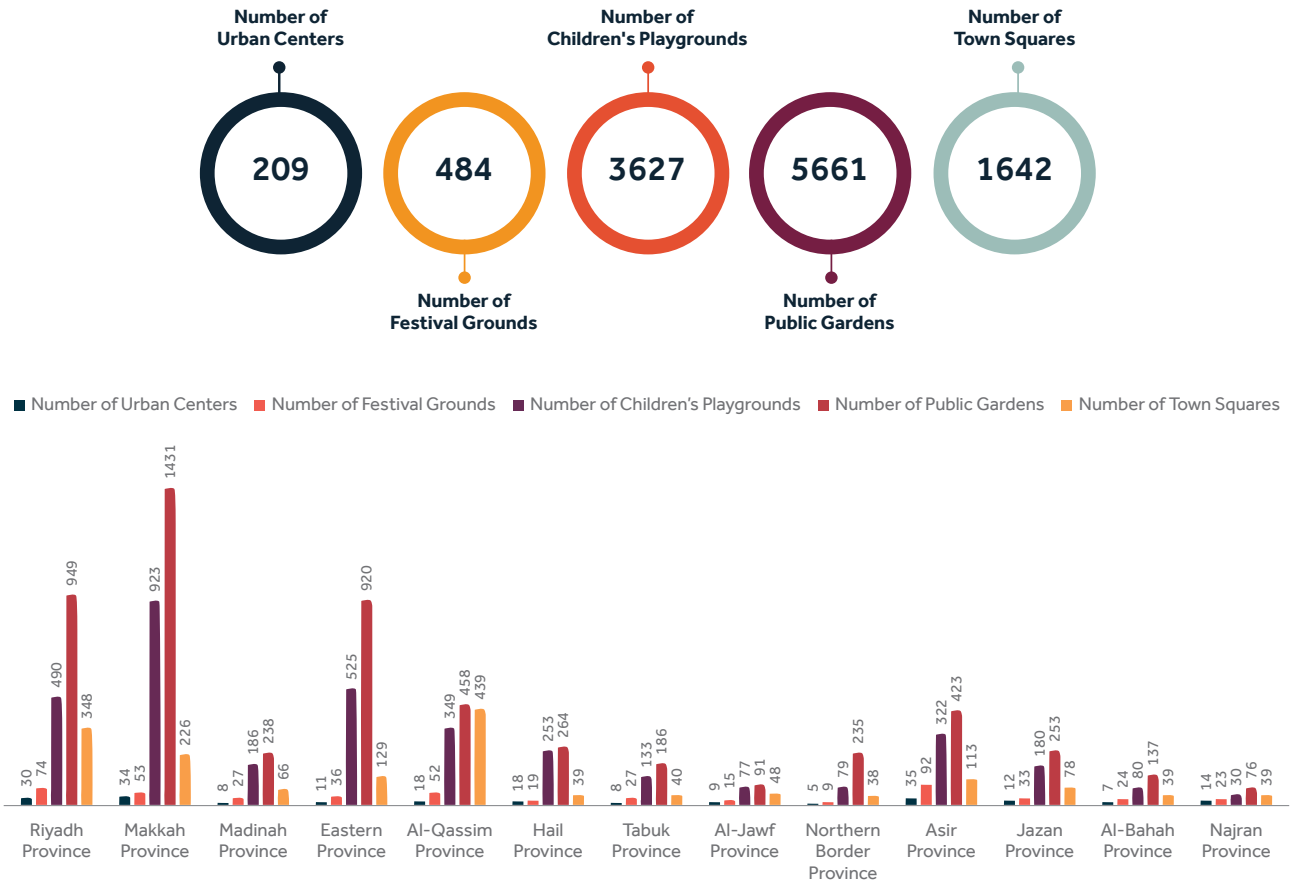


Figure 8: Total number of open spaces available for cultural activities per one million people, by province.

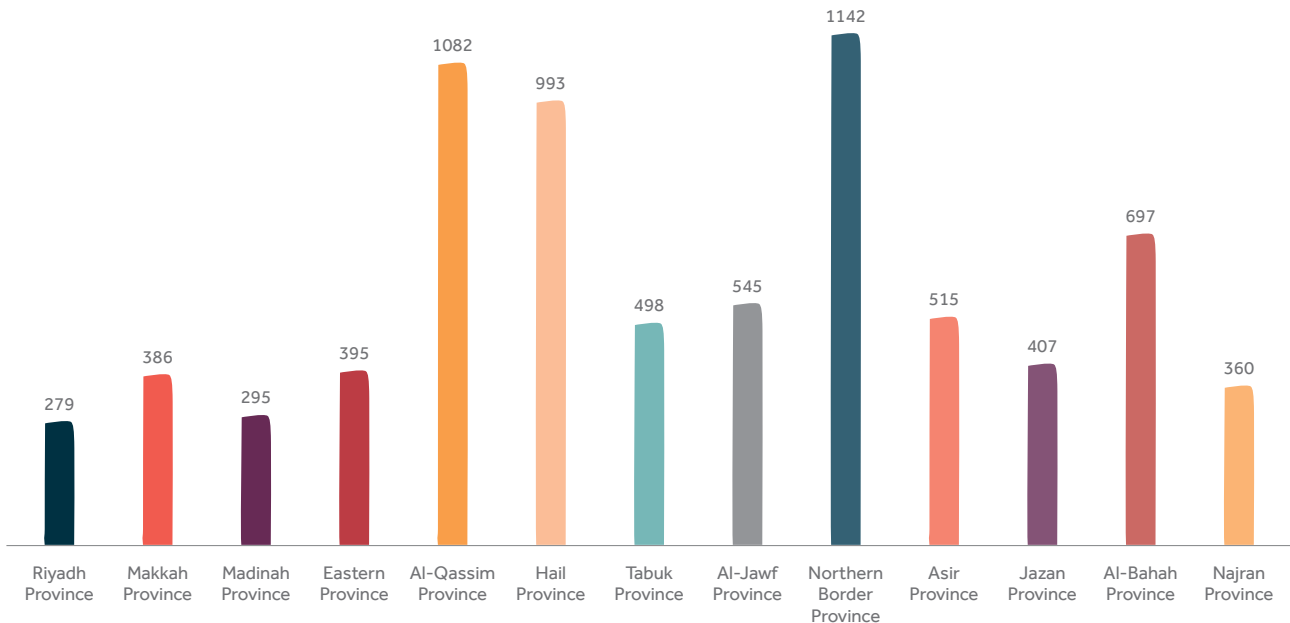


Figure 9: Area of public gardens and their distribution by province.<sup>(32)</sup>

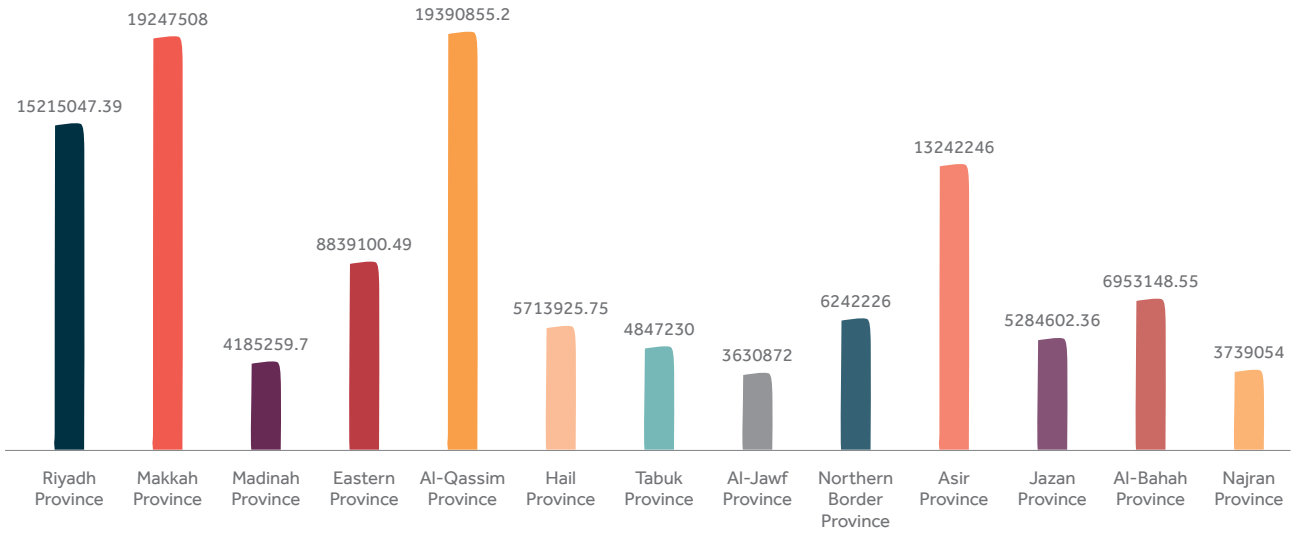
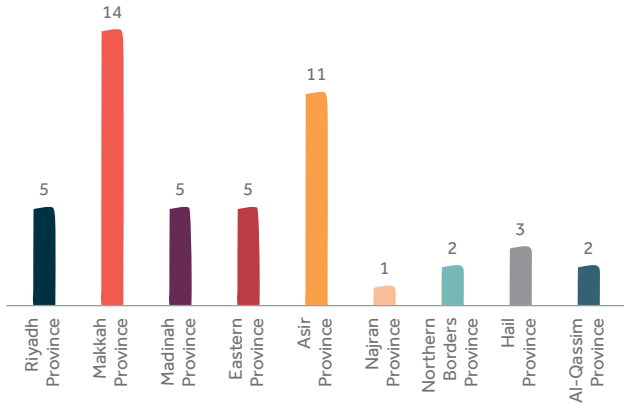


Figure 10: Number of registered traditional and heritage markets and their distribution by province.<sup>(33)</sup>



### Cultural Participation in Open Spaces

Monitoring the accessibility of public spaces for cultural purposes alone does not suffice to identify the relationship of culture with open public spaces because the main element in the equation is the city’s residents and their relation with such spaces, and the likelihood of their participation in events organized in them. The Cultural Participation Survey elucidates the relationship between people and open public spaces such as gardens, squares, and beaches, and the implications of that relationship on cultural engagement. For instance, it shows that 47% of the survey sample visited open spaces regularly, that is, once to three times a week, or more than that—as shown in Fig. 11—which is close to the rate of those who generally participated in cultural activities—54% approximately—as in Fig. 2. This means that one who visits open spaces regularly has participated in at least one cultural activity per year, which confirms the relationship between open spaces and cultural participation.

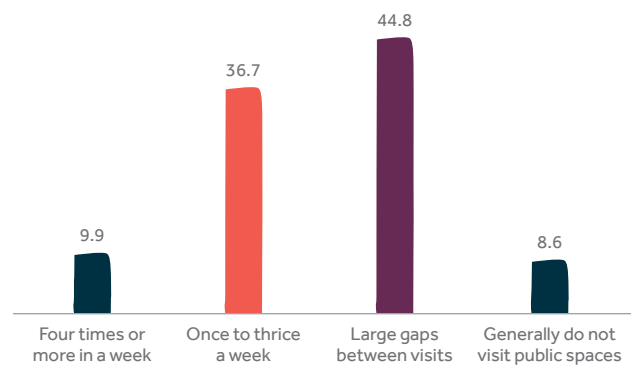
However, contrary to cultural participation levels which are higher in younger age groups, there is a higher likelihood of regular open space visits among members of the 36–45 age group, and this likelihood decreases in the younger and older age groups. The income factor plays a primary role in cultural participation, as discussed previously, or in visits to open spaces. Of lower-income groups, 59% do not visit open spaces weekly, whereas most of those who belong to higher-income groups (57%) do so (Fig. 14).

Apart from general average open space visits, the distribution of cultural events organized in these spaces in terms of their accessibility is a primary determining factor for the participation of residents in public manifestations of culture. According to the 2021 Cultural Participation Survey

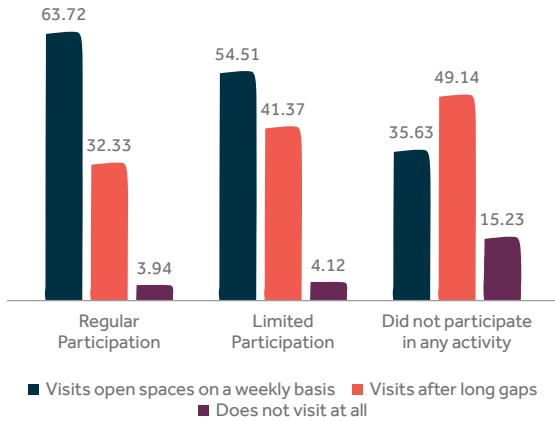


data, a large majority of the sample stated that reaching the closest cultural event in a public space never takes more than 40 minutes by car. However, the more important observation is that only one-quarter of the sample is able to reach these events in fewer than 20 minutes. This leads us to an important point that is affirmed by another observation recorded in the survey; that practice of culture in public space is concentrated in urban centers and points of attraction and gathering. It is likely that the daily life of neighborhood residents does not include participation in public cultural activities, which include visiting neighborhood gardens, centers or even participating in events targeted at or organized by neighborhood residents. This is because the percentage of those who are able to reach a cultural event in under 20 minutes is close to the percentage of those who participated in a cultural event held in the neighborhood where they reside. And most of the survey sample did not participate in any activity of this type (Fig. 15).

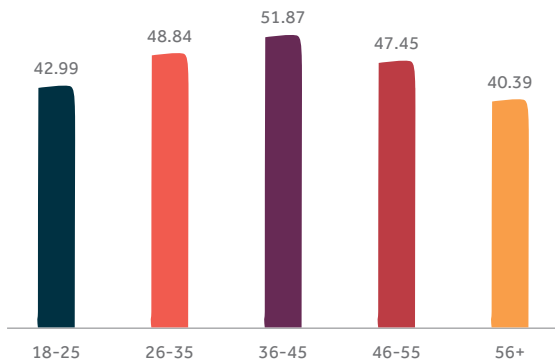
Figure 11: Percentage distribution of open space visits (e.g. public gardens, public squares, promenades, public beaches).<sup>(34)</sup>



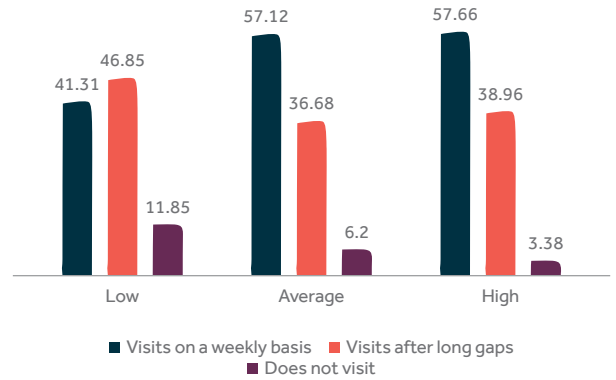
**Figure 12:** Relationship between participation levels and public space visits' averages.<sup>(35)</sup>



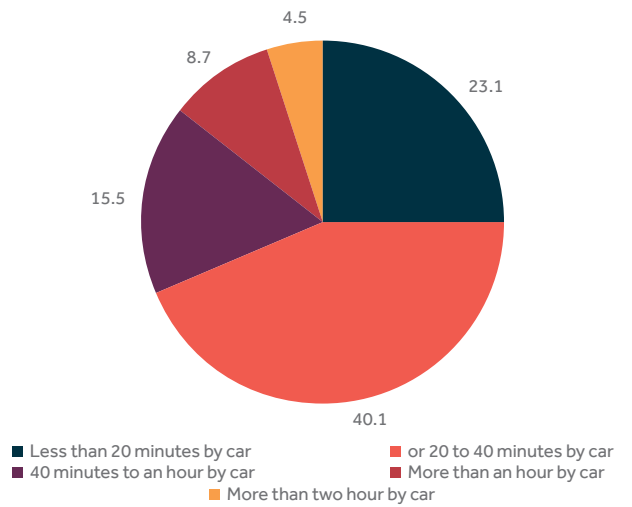
**Figure 13:** Percentage distribution of those who visit public spaces, by age group.<sup>(36)</sup>



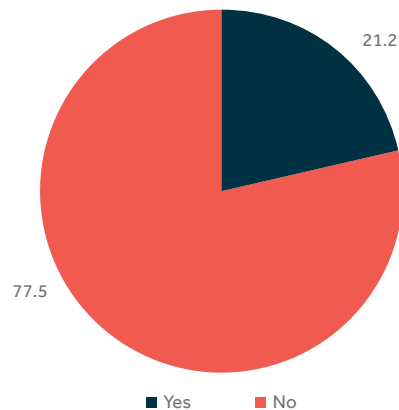
**Figure 14:** Percentage distribution of open space visits by income level.<sup>(37)</sup>



**Figure 15:** How long does it take for you to travel from your home to a site in your vicinity where events are being held?<sup>(38)</sup>



**Figure 16:** Are there gardens or open spaces in your neighborhood where cultural events are held?<sup>(39)</sup>





## Cultural Presence in Open Spaces

After evaluating the distribution of open spaces and average visits to them, this part of the report reviews the different manifestations of cultural presence in the public space. Such presence is not exclusive to cultural events; instead, forms vary, some of which rely on interaction between individuals, spaces, and culture such as mobile libraries and literature platforms, others are related to the aesthetic and physical form of culture in space, such as murals. Cultural presence in the public space has witnessed development in recent times, some of which coincided with the pandemic recovery phase. However, it is expected that this presence will continue to expand in the future. The chapter discusses these examples of cultural presence in public space monitoring their mostly central-regional distribution, and attempting to measure, as much as is possible, the related participation levels.

### Mobile Libraries

A constant among a litany of definitions of mobile libraries include one of its most important functions: increasing the dissemination and accessibility of books in rural areas and small towns. Among these definitions is the following:

A mobile library . . . that includes a collection of books, magazines and other audio and visual resources which is required by a library to serve people; and which can be transported to residential blocs in distant rural areas and small towns that do not have libraries in accordance with specific administrative arrangements in order to make such resources available to the people, the objective being not to sell or engage in commerce but to allow people to borrow. As such, it represents a mobile center for information, culture and society.<sup>(40)</sup>

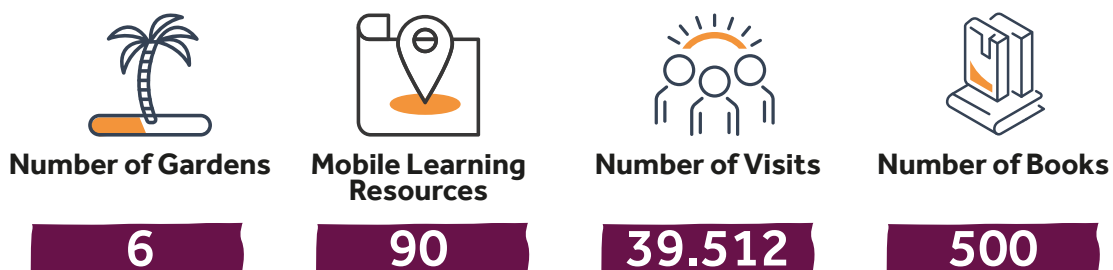
Or at least this is how the concept of mobile libraries evolved at the dawn of the twentieth century. Today, however, the reality of mobile libraries in the Kingdom is profoundly different—from a functional perspective—because they are now concentrated in cities. For example, in 2016, the King



Abdulaziz Public Library launched its project The Mobile Learning Resources in Riyadh's gardens. Also, the Ithra Library launched the Mobile Libraries project on the corniches of Khobar and Dammam in the beginning of 2022. However, in the past, several projects have come to the fore such as the Aramco Mobile Library project—which was launched in the 1980s and continued for more than two decades—aimed at providing the service to distant provinces and governorates and small centers in them. Around 500 schools in the Kingdom per year used mobile library services.<sup>(41)</sup>

The Mobile Learning Resources project launched by the King Abdulaziz Public Library - as part of the programs of the National Cultural Reading Project - aims to improve the relationship between children and reading and culture, and to promote cultural presence in gardens and public spaces. Having been suspended during the pandemic, the Mobile Learning Resources project resumed its tours in six public gardens in Riyadh and conducted a total of 90 tours. It witnessed promising interest that was in step with the post-pandemic recovery of cultural presence and achieved 39,512 visits. The King Abdulaziz Public Library's other project, The Mobile Library, also provided reading buses containing almost 4,000 books and participated in five tours during the year. They included the tour to the Hobbies Camp in the Sultan bin Abdulaziz Humanitarian City as well as to Al Kindy Square in the Diplomatic Quarter among others.<sup>(42)</sup>

Figure 17: the King Abdulaziz Public Library's the Mobile Learning Resources project during 2021.<sup>(43)</sup>





### Literature in Public Space

Fictional spaces seldom intersect with public space, with the exception of some poetry evenings organized in open spaces, literary production has mostly remained confined to the pages of books. Despite the ubiquitous presence of literature in the virtual space—such as on social media platforms—the Report’s theme is concerned with the presence of culture in the physical public and open space such as gardens, public places, grounds, and open areas. The end of 2021 witnessed a significant development in the presence of literature and reading in public space after the Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission announced its ‘Literature Everywhere’ initiative.<sup>(44)</sup> The initiative is aimed at providing readable and audio literary content in public spaces and waiting areas through two primary avenues: ‘Literature Cloud’—which provides audio literary content such as audio books and articles—and ‘Sh. S’ which stands for short stories and has a digital library of short stories. The first phase began with the distribution of 30 posters containing a QR code placed in a number of areas in Riyadh Province and Eastern Province— (Fig. 18). The Literary Partner initiative launched by the Commission in 2021 also contributed to the expansion of the literary presence in public places. Literary coffee shops represent a public space model where individuals participate in cultural activities and public discussions.<sup>(45)</sup> The chapter ‘Management and Conservation’ shows that there are 20 literary coffee shops registered in the initiative that are distributed across eight provinces across the Kingdom (Fig. 19). These coffee shops organized 241 events in which 109 authors and writers participated, and which benefited 32,902 persons during the year 2021.<sup>(46)</sup>

Table Number, description and Footnote no. 47 missing (See Arabic).

Poster locations	City	Number
King Abdullah Walk	Riyadh	3
Al Nahda Garden	Riyadh	4
Specialized Medical Center	Riyadh	1
Boulevard	Riyadh	1
Headquarters of the Ministry of Culture (Diplomatic Quarter)	Riyadh	1
Headquarters of the Ministry of Culture (Rubeen Plaza)	Riyadh	1
Main Branch of the Zakat, Tax and Customs Authority	Riyadh	1
Al-Meshari Corniche, Tarout Start	Qatif	1
Al-Shabili Corniche, Before Tarout	Qatif	1
Northern Corniche Plaza, Near Al Nawras Lake	Khobar	1
Yarmouk Walk (Prince Turki Street Walk)	Khobar	1
Aziziyah Lake Walk	Khobar	1
Old Khobar Corniche Walk	Khobar	1
New Khobar Corniche Walk	Khobar	1
Zakat, Tax and Customs Authority—Alkhafji Border	Alkhafji	3

Table 3: Sh. S posters and places of distribution.<sup>(47)</sup>

Poster locations	City
Main Branch of the Zakat, Tax and Customs Authority	Riyadh
SPL, Yasmeen Branch	Riyadh
Prince Sultan University 1 Boys Building	Riyadh
Prince Sultan University 2 Girls Building	Riyadh
Specialized Medical Center	Riyadh
Boulevard	Riyadh
Ajdan (Ramis)	Qatif
Saab Bank 2	Khobar

Figure 18: Distribution of Literature Everywhere posters.<sup>(48)</sup>

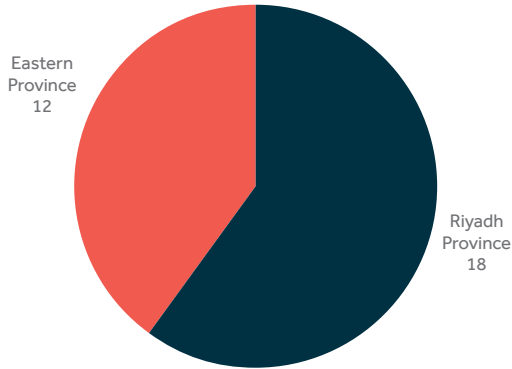
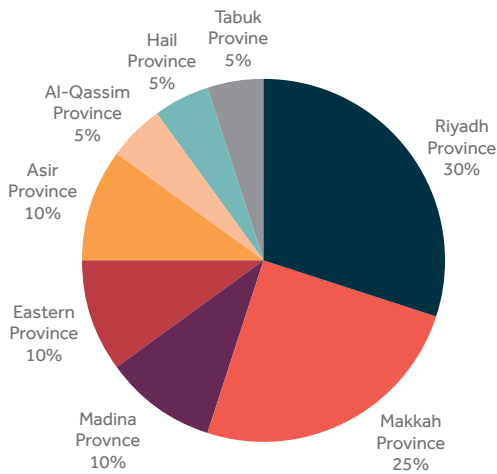


Figure 19: Distribution of coffee shops registered for the Literary Partner initiative by province.<sup>(49)</sup>



**Events Organized in Open Spaces During 2021**

Public spaces are arenas that bind individuals and culture alike – a dialogue between person and place through which culture is refined and constantly redefined. Out of this dialogue – the nexus between people, culture and public spaces – a tensile strength emerges and equips public spaces with a unique efficacy in advancing cultural development. They play a vital role in cities considering that they are accessible, publicly owned, open to all, and can present culture as a vital product through interactive cultural events that achieve one aspect of social interaction. They also contribute to providing social participation opportunities since they have the capacity to accommodate a large number of people. The year 2021 witnessed a growth in the rates of cultural event attendance.<sup>(50)</sup> Additionally, numerous cultural events were organized in open spaces that had been either postponed or suspended during 2020 due to the pandemic.

The Al-Asha event organized in Al-Farian Street in the historical Manfouha district in Riyadh welcomed visitors from a varied cross-section of society and different age groups. The biography of the Arab poet Maimoon bin Qais bin Jandal, known as Al-Asha was narrated in an innovative style. The historic district of Manfouha was selected for this event because it personified the memory of Arab poetry since it was where the icon of Arab poetry Al-Asha spent his life. The event offered a varied interactive experience to its visitors. It reviewed the life of Al-Asha as well as the rich history of Manfouha and the different aspects of cultural, social, and economic life during that period. This was achieved by taking the visitors on a tour to a number of areas, including: "The







Story” interactive theater, which narrated the biography of Al-Asha by showing five personalities of the poet during the various stages of his life; the 3D area displayed the story of Al-Asha in 3D on the main entrance wall of the event; the Al-Asha Museum area showcased the historical contents and documents of Manfouha and the important historical sites in it. It also displayed heritage manuscripts, clothes, and weapons. A virtual show of Al-Asha’s history and his most important poems were also part of the museum display. Other areas included the arts and music area where Saudi musicians performed pieces inspired by the district’s history. It also contained some artistic participations by artists, photographers, and sculptors that showed traditional crafts used during historical times. The children’s area contained activities and events specially curated for children, and there was a restaurant and café area. Performers wore historical-era clothes.<sup>(51)</sup> The event was launched after the location was redesigned and redeveloped to resemble that particular period of history. The event was held on December 23, 2021 and was organized by the Ministry of Culture as part of its efforts to revive and celebrate Arab heritage. The event was originally scheduled to be held in March 2020 but had to be postponed due to the pandemic.

The Basta (Riyadh Market) event was launched on Prince Mohamed bin Abdulaziz Street (Tahlia) in the form of an open market that aimed to support local entrepreneurs and

small-to-medium as well as family enterprises, revive empty urban spaces in the capital and enhance the social inclusion of the city’s residents. The location was chosen based on the fact that it is among the most famous streets in Riyadh. It is also a tourist destination and is pedestrian-friendly. The event was held every Saturday for three months (October–December 2021). The original date was October 16, but after Royal orders easing precautionary measures, it was decided to postpone the event so as to benefit from the increased capacity for visitors. This allowed the event to attract more than 200 entries for arts and crafts and the various entries allowed visitors to shop for vegetables, fruits, food, and drinks. The event included live musical performances which the visitors could listen to while going from shop to shop and seeing the offerings, as well as knowing more about small and family enterprises that produce Saudi goods.<sup>(52)</sup>

The Al-Suwailem Street event was organized in downtown Riyadh, enhancing cultural attendance in social life. In effect, the event is best described as a celebration of the rich history of this street which, to Riyadh residents, is a spatial experience synonymous with happiness, games, and gifts. This was achieved through a package of events aimed at uncovering the identity of the street and its historical value and position. In implementation of the event, the street was fully closed to vehicles from 4 pm to 11 pm on Saturday, with only pedestrians allowed. This event, aimed at children,





included 112 artistic and educational workshops which were presented in a joyful manner to children of different ages. The event also contained theatrical plays, tours, and clowns. Additionally, children were given gifts and balloons as well as face painting for free. The event was organized by the Ministry of Culture, its cultural commissions, and various civil society institutions on October 30, 2021 and continued for 24 weeks;<sup>(53)</sup> 32,153 visitors participated in the event in addition to 82 children; 42 people organized the event with the help of 151 workers, and 307 cultural experts also participated.<sup>(54)</sup>

### Cinema in Open Spaces

Merely one year after the first cinema opened in the Kingdom, the Cinema ElHoush initiative was launched in 2019—one of the first independent cinema initiatives in the Kingdom—an outdoor cinema in Al-Dhahab Street in the historic city of Jeddah. With a capacity of 80 seats,<sup>(55)</sup> the initiative aimed to transfer films from indoor cinemas to open public spaces. After a hiatus of nearly two years coinciding with the pandemic, the end of 2021 witnessed the announcement of a new season of Cinema ElHoush in Al-Jadidah, Al-Ula. Despite the return of cinema to the public space with the first drive-in cinema opening in January 2021 under the name Flash of Riyadh,<sup>(56)</sup> along with Cinema Al-Hara, this presence remained limited in terms of area and spatial distribution, perhaps due to the novelty of the sector in the Kingdom in general.

The first edition of the Cinema Al-Hara initiative provided a unique opportunity for individuals to contribute to strengthening cinema culture and the film industry, through which, The Red Sea International Film Festival aimed to engage specifically the Saudi youth in filmmaking.<sup>(57)</sup> The concept of the initiative was focused on the cinema accessing the people instead of people accessing the cinema or cinematic festivals;<sup>(58)</sup> this is a paradigm shift in cultural participation as it pertains to the film sector and its importance could be attributed specifically to the nascency of the role played by cinema in the Kingdom and its limitations in terms of number and geographical and urban distribution. The initiative is uniquely positioned to provide opportunities for social cultural practice and eliminating corresponding obstacles, not to mention raising sector-specific awareness by engaging the youth in filmmaking activity through roles such as assistant photographer, camera assistant, actor, voice engineer and organizer. Acting scenes were filmed in open public spaces, including spaces dedicated to funerals, wedding halls and football grounds, to make it easy to reach and participate in the initiative's spaces. These were held in a number of neighborhoods in Jeddah: Al-Hindawiyah, Al-Sabil, Al-Ruwais, and Historic Jeddah Town. These neighborhoods were selected because they had not received sufficient opportunities for cultural participation. The initiative

also provided an opportunity for the residents of these neighborhoods to participate in programs, sessions, and performance experiments. The initiative contained six shows, each of which included the shooting of one scene. The first show began on October 9 and the last one took place on October 30, 2021.

**Art in Open Spaces**

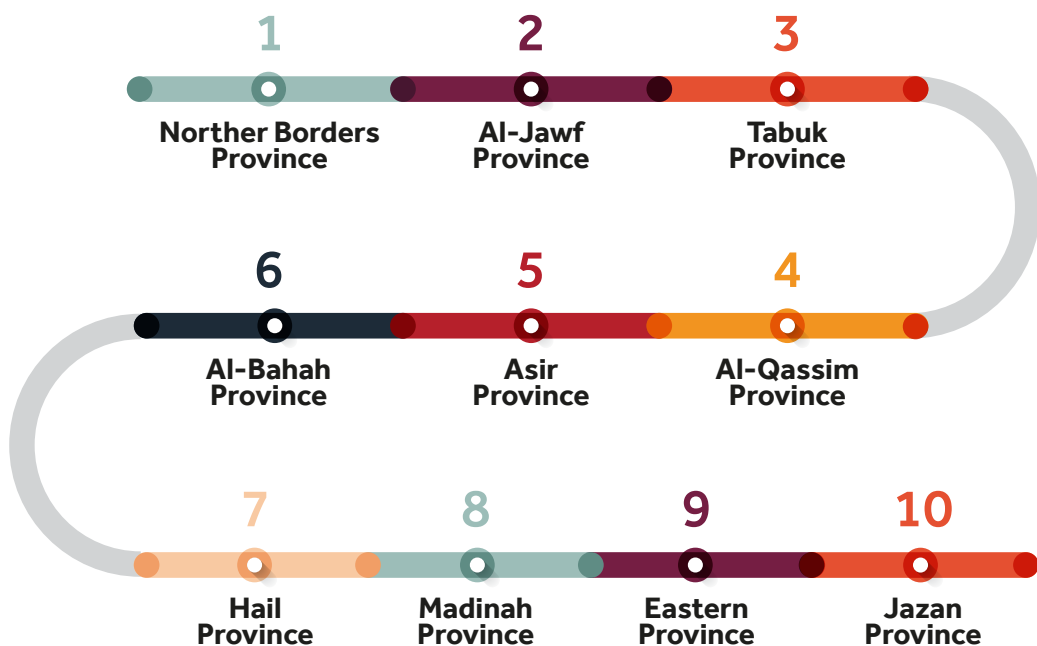
The dissemination of art in public spaces takes various forms with art being found in public grounds, squares, and parks. Similarly, it is found in the form of open art museums or exhibitions at the city level—or in a part of it—similar to the Nour Riyadh festival, which was launched on March 18 and witnessed the participation of more than 30 local and international artists displaying works inspired by light. This event was spread across 13 different areas within the city of Riyadh. The 'Light Upon Light' exhibition was held in the King Abdullah Financial District as part of the Nour Riyadh and had more than 318,000 visitors,<sup>[59]</sup> indicative of the level of exposure to the public achieved by artworks when displayed in open spaces, especially considering that the event targeted those spaces which the people visit for work or recreational purposes, according to the organizers. Similarly, the winning sculptures of the Tuwaiq International Sculpture Forum—one of the programs in the Riyadh Art Project—were distributed in different locations in Riyadh to enhance the artistic and aesthetic

presence in the city's spaces.<sup>[60]</sup> This is because the value of disseminating art and artwork in open spaces is not limited to making it available and expanding the magnitude of its audience. Instead, it extends also to add an aesthetic aspect to cities and enhance the presence of culture in the vital public space.

**Arabic Calligraphy Murals**

The Year of Arabic Calligraphy initiative launched by the Ministry of Culture in 2020–21 had a tangible effect in highlighting the aesthetics of Arabic calligraphy and its arts and enhancing its presence in the public space. For example, the murals of Arabic calligraphy event commenced in August 2021 and lasted until January 2022. It was organized by the Ministry in partnership with the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and Housing, as completion of Arabic calligraphy murals that began in 2020 in public spaces in Riyadh, Diriyah, Jeddah, and Khobar.<sup>[61]</sup> The year 2021 witnessed an expansion of the mural framework to new provinces in the Kingdom beginning from Arar in the Northern Borders Province until Jazan Province. Artists and calligraphers from each province participated in creating murals in open spaces with the help of residents and visitors.<sup>[62]</sup> Similarly, three male and five female artists participated in creating murals on two facades measuring 86 meters wide and 3 meters tall in Riyadh Park,<sup>[63]</sup> as part of a number of Arabic calligraphy events organized by the Ministry during the year.

Figure 20: Implementation phases of the Arabic Calligraphy Murals event in the Kingdom's provinces in 2021.<sup>[64]</sup>



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## Conclusion

The issue of post-pandemic recovery, around the world and in various sectors, has been at the forefront of policymakers' concerns and public debate. The year 2021 represents a period of transition between the two phases of anticipation, continued precautionary measures, and phasing out of the 2020's extraordinary situation in organizing public life. The cultural sector was not immune to these processes; as the report shows, the theme of recovery was a vital characteristic of the state of culture for 2021. The recovery was reflected in the growth of participation indicators and cultural tourism, in production statistics in several cultural sectors, and in cultural events and festivals returning to the spotlight in public spaces. These changes come in a broader context of dynamic cultural policies since the launch of Vision 2030, whose outcomes have started to appear this year with the growth in support and empowerment programs and continued organizational reforms seeking to develop and stimulate the cultural sector.

While monitoring the manifestations of recovery, the report stresses the importance of looking at the state of culture not as a mere return to a previous state, but rather as a new reality with its challenges and opportunities, which include the emergence of the parallel digital option at low costs and virtual education and virtual training with its advantages and limitations. Uneven rates of cultural participation across different social groups also present a challenge, especially as pandemic-related considerations have continued to impact participation behavior, as the 2021 Cultural Participation Survey has showed. The experience of the pandemic and the subsequent return of public life also compounded the importance of enhancing the presence of culture in public spaces. The data reviewed in the report support the assumption that a close link exists between access to public spaces and cultural contact at the individual level.

Despite the description and analytical insights provided by the third edition of the Report on the State of Culture, it does not claim to provide a comprehensive account of the recovery and the impact of the previous year's disruption, as long-term trends take time to unfold. This is particularly since most months of the year witnessed a continuation of the exceptional manifestations of the pandemic before sufficient vaccine coverage allowed for relaxed preventive measures. It is also too early to talk about the "post-pandemic" period with any certainty, as the world is still dealing with waves of the spread of the virus, albeit with greater flexibility. Beyond gauging the impact of the pandemic, the report, in the course of its development and the expansion of its data range year after year, demonstrates the importance of building a solid data ground for cultural policies, as the availability of information enlightens the way to move forward in redressing pitfalls, facing challenges, and enhancing the effects of successes. One of the key objectives of the report is to stimulate further research initiatives to support cultural policies and empowerment efforts, and to critique, document, and highlight the ambitious cultural experiment that the Kingdom is going through.



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## Appendices





# Appendices

- **Appendix 1:**  
Methodological Framework  
and Data Sources
- **Appendix 2:**  
2021 Cultural Participation Survey
- **Appendix 3:**  
Glossary





## Appendix 1: Methodological Framework and Data Sources

### Overview

In planning for the third edition of the report on the state of culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, continuity in building on the frameworks established by the previous two reports was a major determinant in shaping the features of the 2021 report. This stemmed from the concern for consistency in concepts and cumulative data collection and presentation, as the report continues to define the “culture cycle” as a perspective through which it monitors the reality of cultural sectors, as indicated in the definitions and sub-definitions of cultural indicators. However, in the course of its continuous development, the State of Culture Report revised and developed the methodology based on previous experience, mainly by restructuring the chapters of the report to reflect a thematic division that articulates the methodological framework more clearly and increases the focus on analysis rather than dividing the report by sections.

This new structure adds a new division to the third edition for 2021 and addresses the broad substantive aspects derived from the methodological framework of culture indicators so that each chapter covers an aspect of cultural dimensions such as participation or production in various cultural subsectors, providing a coherent picture of the reality of culture in the Kingdom.

#### First: Methodology of the Third Cultural State Report for 2021

The models developed by previous versions of the report represent the primary material used by the third report in developing its methodological framework, specifically the 2009 “Culture Cycle” and the 2019 “Thematic Indicators of Culture” models. The two models provide statistical references developed by UNESCO over a decade. The previous two reports have adapted them according to the data of the local reality in the Kingdom as well as the scope and objectives of the report. Whereas the 2020 report methodology employed the two models separately (the methodology used the culture cycle to build the components

of the chapters and the thematic indicators of the indicators framework). The methodology of the third report adopts a synthesis that combines the two models in a theoretically coherent manner, as the new perception stems from thematic indicators of culture, before adding elements and definitions from the culture cycle model, including adding the full dimension of creativity and production. Accordingly, the framework of the report is established to address the cultural state qualitatively and to measure it statistically through five dimensions (see Figure 1 below).

Based on this synthesis, the report addresses the cultural reality in the Kingdom through the following dimensions: creativity and production, cultural participation, knowledge and skills, management and conservation, and the creative economy. A chapter has been dedicated to each dimension, and a sixth chapter provides a space for analysis and discussion of the broader picture and general trends of the state of culture based on the data provided in the previous



chapters, in addition to directly addressing data relevant to the theme of this year's report, as the 2021 report continues what it started in the second report of having a specific dedicated theme for the year's report; however, unlike the second report, the third edition addresses the report's theme separately in the general trends chapter.

In developing the model adopted by the report and its five components that divide its chapters, planning for the report was guided by the following considerations.

#### Methodological integration

One of the most important aspects of development that the 2021 report sought to achieve is the documentation of the link between the chapters of the report and cultural indicators. Although previous reports dealt with indicators and data in chapters, this approach remained scattered by sector, with limited benefit from having a chapter specifically on indicators. The new vision allows for a focused treatment of the reality of the cultural sectors through the use of indicators and metrics and their incorporation into the chapters, especially in dealing with vital indicators that summarize more than one sector. In this way, the "cultural indicators framework" becomes identical to its division of the report chapters, instead of being a parallel and separated framework. As noted in the title of the main indicators in the attached framework, each of the five indicators falls under a separate chapter of the report.

#### Analysis and evaluation

The thematic structuring of the report's chapters and the methodological integration between the frameworks of chapters and indicators together offers a fertile ground for providing deeper analysis and coming up with a descriptive assessment of the state of culture. While the third report continues the purpose and scope established in the first two reports, it places greater emphasis on monitoring trends and evaluation, as opposed to documentation (it is worth noting that these three elements, as defined in the project proposal since the time of the first report, fall within the scope of the report).

#### Participation is not consumption

One of the most important conceptual revisions on which the report's methodology was based was the avoidance of reducing cultural participation to cultural consumption, meaning that the measurement of cultural participation is not limited to the "levels of participation" indicators, or attendance and visitation, such as the frequency of going to the movies. Therefore, sub-indicators were added to the levels of participation to measure equal opportunities for participation among different social groups and the extent



of diversity of attendance, in addition to the measurement of integration and effective participation levels in civil associations, amateur clubs, and cultural volunteering. Therefore, the redefinition of participation is an example of the framework development level that transcends the mere mention of the main elements to a detailed definition, as also reflected in the division of the individual chapters.

### **Second: The five dimensions and the new structure of the report chapters**

While mindful of the need to achieve a measure of balance in covering all cultural fields without any disturbing disparity, the report is organized into six chapters in addition to a data appendix. The first five chapters deal with five cultural dimensions.

#### 1. Creativity and Production

This dimension is based on two stages of the culture cycle: creativity and production. The chapter employs the definitions that were used in the previous editions of the report; production means everything related to cultural production processes, which includes a quantitative measurement of production levels (for example, the number of published titles) and its diversity. An exception is made from previously stated definitions, in that "the availability of enabling structures for production" (for example, film production studios) will be addressed in the chapter on management and conservation and "sponsoring institutions, clubs and artistic groups" (for example, chef clubs) that will be dealt with in the chapter on cultural participation.



Creativity means to create and compose ideas and content in the cultural field, that is, the core of the unique creative work and its technical and subjective aspects. Given that the scope of the report does not include providing a technical evaluation of the content and the state of creativity, it identifies local and international cultural awards as criteria that give indications of excellence in creativity. In addition, the 2021 report provides a review of the topics and artistic content of the winning works during the year, to add another dimension that fits the nature of the creative element.

2. Cultural Participation

This element of the culture cycle has been redefined to include dimensions of social participation that go beyond the production and consumption cycle; it expresses the extent to which the cultural field is able to engage the community in its diversity, the effectiveness of the presence of culture, and the ease of access to its activities in cities and other destinations. Measurement tools include an indicator for the levels of participation, which is based

on visitor numbers and the cultural participation survey, in addition to accessibility and social integration indicators. The chapter also includes the practices and processes that were mentioned in the “presence and dissemination” element in the second report, implicitly discussing the presence of culture and the availability of its activities as an expression of opportunities for participation.

3. Knowledge and Skills

In light of the importance of education in disseminating culture and heritage, and building creative capacities, a chapter has been devoted to cultural education. It discusses the features and trends of cultural education and training in the Kingdom during the course of the year, and the opportunities and capabilities it represents for the various cultural sectors. The chapter also highlights the readiness and efficiency of the educational system in the transfer of cultural knowledge and skills and capacity-building, in all stages of education and training, whether in basic education, specialized cultural qualification, or non-formal education. The chapter makes use of



UNESCO definitions of thematic indicators of culture, and bears the title of one of its indicators.

4. Creative Economy (Culture)

This chapter is concerned with the economic dimension of culture, or what is known as cultural industries, as it reviews the indicators of the cultural economy. Within a longer list of the main indicators, the chapter in the current report for 2021 deals with a number of them according to the availability and regularity of data, as it deals with expenditure indicators, such as the average household spending on cultural services and products, in addition to the number and distribution of commercial establishments in the cultural sectors, and levels of cultural tourism. The chapter also introduces—drawing on the cultural participation survey—a discussion of the determinants of demand for cultural goods and services. Therefore, the chapter in its current form does not cover all the main elements of economic indicators related to culture, and it is hoped that in coming years the report will expand to cover more indicators, such as the contribution of culture to the gross domestic product, the state of the labor market, and growth trends in the labor force in various cultural fields, in addition to the relevant foreign trade indicators.

5. Management and Conservation

The dimension of culture management and conservation refers to the system of preserving culture and supporting creativity, whether in the practices of sustainable development of heritage resources or the availability of infrastructure, including facilities or open spaces for the practice of cultural activities. This dimension also includes the institutional aspect of culture in terms of entities, systems, and support programs. The chapter also focuses on the components of protection, sustainability, and contribution to development, which intersect with one of the dimensions of UNESCO’s thematic indicators of culture. It also addresses the theme of the report directly by measuring the availability and distribution of public spaces dedicated to culture.

6. Culture in Public Space: Trends and Features

In the new conception of the report, a chapter is dedicated to outlining the features of the cultural state, allowing for the collection of various conclusions from the data and the trends and main observations presented and that include the cultural sector. As a whole, in addition to addressing the subject matter of the 2021 report, as it builds on what was started in the 2020 report, the report addresses a particular subject each year, in addition to a basic review of the state of culture in its five dimensions.

The Theme of the Report on the State of Culture 2021: Culture in the Public Space

This year’s theme highlights the manifestations of the return of culture to the live space in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, in complementarity with the topic of the previous report (Digitalization of Culture). The 2021 report deals with culture in physical spaces compared to 2020 when cultural activity was linked to the digital space. The report evaluates the availability and distribution of open spaces for cultural activities, and the extent to which urban residents frequent these spaces, as well as reviews different forms of cultural presence in public space. The “Management and Conservation” and “Cultural Participation” chapters address the subject of culture in public space in a limited fashion, in order to deal with the data of the theme in a more integrated manner in the chapter specifically designated for the theme.

**Third: Data sources**

In its monitoring of the reality of the cultural sectors through the different cultural dimensions covered by the chapters, the report employed data derived from the framework of culture indicators to organize the collection of quantitative data from cultural institutions and bodies related to culture, in addition to qualitative data obtained from focus group discussions, and a number of small surveys conducted to obtain a closer look at the reality of some cultural activities and actors.

The report also used information collected from open sources published by official media centers or other reliable media sources to provide a more comprehensive survey of the developments throughout the year in a way that is not limited to the activity of a specific institution.

**1. Preliminary data from the relevant authorities**

The report’s data were collected from 151 entities, which included the 11 cultural commissions, actors in the culture system, as well as a number of ministries, universities, governmental, public, and private sector bodies, as shown in Table 1.

The report was also keen to review the data and ensure its safety from any conflict with other sources and indicators before the data was used; it therefore subjected the data to numerous rounds of updating, using supplemental requests and holding a number of meetings with representatives of the relevant entities. In limited cases, the report merged some of the data used and collected from a number of sources for presentation purposes—see Seventh. Although some of the data and statistics included in the report do not rise to the level of a comprehensive inventory due to their decentralized nature, they nevertheless provide the best available measurement indicator, as pointed out in relevant sections.

**Table 1:** List of data contributors in the 2021 report.

Sequence	Entity
1	National Competitiveness Center
2	Technical & Vocational Training Corporation
3	MBC Academy
4	Saudi Heritage Preservation Society
5	Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts
6	The General Presidency for the Affairs of the Grand Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque
7	National Events Center
8	The National Center for Archives & Records
9	The Royal Institute of Traditional Arts
10	Saudi Tourism Authority
11	Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property
12	General Commission for Audiovisual Media
13	General Authority for Statistics
14	General Entertainment Authority
15	Telfaz11
16	King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives (Darah)
17	Rawaq
18	Rotana Audio Visual Company
19	Myrkott Company
20	Public Investment Fund
21	Jameel Art
22	King Salman Global Academy for Arabic Language
23	King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST)
24	King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra)
25	King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Center for Language Planning and Policies
26	King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies
27	Misk Art Institute
28	King Abdulaziz Public Library
29	King Fahad Public Library in Jeddah

Sequence	Entity
30	King Fahd National Library
31	The Red Sea International Film Festival
32	Saudi Film Festival
33	Thunaiyat Ad-Diriyah Foundation
34	Literature, Publishing & Translation Commission
35	Fashion Commission
36	Film Commission
37	Heritage Commission (including the National Architectural Heritage Register)
38	Visual Arts Commission
39	Museums Commission
40	Theater and Performing Arts Commission
41	Libraries Commission
42	Music Commission
43	Sharqia Development Authority
44	Diriyah Gate Development Authority
45	Development of Madinah Authority
46	Education & Training Evaluation Commission
47	Culinary Arts Commission
48	Architecture and Design Commission
49	Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
50	Ministry of Investment
51	Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (Including the National Wildlife Development Center)
52	Ministry of Commerce
53	Ministry of Education
54	Ministry of Culture—Events Administration
55	Ministry of Culture— VRO, Planning and Performance General Department
56	Ministry of Culture— Project Management and Delivery General Department
57	Ministry of Culture— Non-profit Sector Organizations General Department
58	Ministry of Culture—Public Development Fund
59	Ministry of Culture -Cultural Strategies and Policies Deputyship



Sequence	Entity
60	Ministry of Culture—Cultural Assets and Centers Deputyship
61	Ministry of Culture—Communication and Media Deputyship
62	Ministry of Culture—National Partnerships and Development Deputyship
63	Ministry of Culture—Legal Affairs and Regulations Deputyship
64	Ministry of Culture- International Cultural Relations Deputyship
65	Ministry of Sport
66	Ministry of Tourism (including the Tourism Intelligence Centre)
67	Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance
68	Ministry of Municipality and Rural Affairs, and Housing (including Urban Observatory)
69	Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources
70	Ministry of Energy
71	Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (including the National Volunteer Portal)
72	Jazan University
73	University of Hafr Al Batin
74	Al-Baha University
75	University of Prince Mughrin
76	University of Jeddah
77	University of Taibah
78	Prince Sultan University
79	Dar Al-Hekma University
80	Shaqra University
81	University of Hail
82	Institute of Public Administration
83	University of Tabuk
84	Al-Jouf University
85	Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University
86	Majmaah University
87	King Saud University
88	Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University
89	King Khalid University

Sequence	Entity
90	Al-Qassim University
91	Saudi Electronic University
92	King Faisal University
93	Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University
94	Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University
95	Najran University
96	King Abdulaziz University
97	Taif University
98	University of Bisha
Survey of Translation Projects	
99	MANA Cultural Platform for distributing knowledge and arts
100	Atharah Website: Jurisprudence of Knowledge Management
101	Athra Translation Portal
102	Traajim Portal
103	Ollemna website
104	Hekmah Journal
Survey of Literary Clubs	
105	Literary Club of Hail
106	Al-Ahsa literary club
107	Al-Bahah Literary Club
108	Al-Jouf Literary Club
109	Northern Borders Literary Club
110	Riyadh Literary Club
111	Taif Literary Club
112	Al-Qassim Literary Club
113	Madinah Book Club
114	Abha Literary Club
115	Tabuk Literary Club
116	Jazan Literary Club
117	Jeddah Book Club

Sequence	Entity
118	Makkah Book Club
119	Najran Literary Club
Partial Survey of Art Galleries	
120	Abstract ART Gallery
121	Hewar Art Gallery
122	NM Art Gallery
123	Zawaya Expo
124	Pure Art Gallery
125	Medad Art
126	3D Gallery
127	Adham Art Center
128	Zaitia
129	Fine Arts Training Center
130	Ahlam Studio
131	Azfalhorof Gallery
132	Dawi Gallery
133	SAMA Creatives Hub—Gallery 015
134	Al-Maha Arts
135	Mishaal bin Saad for Fine Arts
136	Saudi Center for Fine Arts
137	Darat Safeya Binzagr
138	Alajlan Art Gallery
139	Lift
140	Dama Art Gallery
141	Saudi Society for Fine Arts
Survey of Libraries	
142	Library of Imam Ibn Al Qayyim
143	Dar Al-Uloom Library (Abdul Rahman Al-Sudairy Cultural Center)
144	Al-Rahmaniya Public Library (Abdul Rahman Al-Sudairy Cultural Center)
145	Saud Al-Babtain Charitable Center for Heritage and Culture

Sequence	Entity
146	Saudi Library (The General Presidency of Islamic Research and Ifta)
147	Public Libraries of Salhiya in Unaizah (Saleh bin Saleh Social Center and Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Al-Rahman Al-Faisal Social Library)
148	King Abdulaziz Complex for Endowment Libraries
149	Sulaiman Al Rajhi Public Library
150	Library of the General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf
151	Darat Safeya Binzagr Gallery

2. Focus group

On the premise that quantitative indicators alone are not sufficient to provide an accurate approach to the state of culture, the report, in its general plan, employs qualitative data to enhance the understanding and analysis of the state of the different sectors and changes in trends, as it opens a window to the actual reality in the cultural fields through the experiences and perceptions of its actors. In continuation of last year’s report, the 2021 report employs focus group discussions (or focus groups) in light of their importance in enabling the report to include the expertise, experiences, and opinions of broader groups. Most of the focus discussions were devoted to addressing the subject matter of the report that dealt with culture in the public space, in addition to other topics covered in the chapters of the report, such as social integration, cultural participation, and cultural training. The focus group sessions were conducted in December 2021, and there was a total of 10 sessions, attended by 71 participants and experts, officials, practitioners, and actors in various cultural fields.

3. Cultural Participation Survey: Third Wave 2021

The third wave of the survey, implemented in the last quarter of 2021, aims to provide accurate and comparable data on the participation rates of citizens and residents of the Kingdom in the various fields of culture. The survey metrics were designed using the widely applied European Framework for Community Engagement, which is compatible with the UNESCO framework in this regard, in order to establish comparable standard measurement methods, with modifications and additions to suit the needs of the report and local realities. The survey questionnaire consisted of 32 variables or questions, in addition to 7 demographic variables. The cultural participation survey employs the same methodologies as followed in the previous report, with an expansion of the range of variables, as in addition to the range of attendance rates (reception) for cultural activities in the 12 variables focused on in previous reports, new variables were included in this survey. In 2021, a template was devoted to the determinants of demand for cultural goods and services (6 variables), a





template for culture in public spaces (8 variables), and a fourth template dealing with trends in cultural training and education (6 variables). Many questions, especially on the question of attendance rates, focused on defining the time period for repeat attendance as “the past twelve months,” which is used in a number of similar surveys to measure cultural participation (see “Measuring Community Participation,” 2009, UNESCO).

• **Third wave survey data collection**

The 2021 survey data were collected in cooperation with the Saudi Center for Public Opinion, through phone interviews with a random sample that was

selected by the simple random sampling method from a sample frame specific to the Center using a computer program that generates numbers. The sample included 3,047 individuals with a margin of error of 1.81%. The survey was conducted between December 15, 2021 and January 5, 2022.

• **Survey community and sample characteristics**

The survey population consists of Saudi individuals or Arab residents, male and female, who reside in the 13 regions of the Kingdom, and who are 18 years of age and above. The proportion of Saudis in the sample was 70.2%, compared to 29.8% for Arab residents.

Table 2 describes the number of participants according to their distribution in the regions of the Kingdom and the percentages thereof. Weights were also applied to the variables of gender and age.

Region	Frequency	Percentage
Riyadh Province	710	22.8
Makkah Province	689	22.1
Madinah Province	210	6.7
Al-Qassim Province	154	4.9
Eastern Province	479	15.4
Asir Province	267	8.6
Tabuk Province	110	3.5
Hail Province	82	2.6
Northern Borders Province	44	1.4
Jazan Province	184	5.9
Najran Province	67	2.1
Al-Bahah Province	58	1.9
Al-Jawf Province	58	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,112</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The data were analyzed using statistical processing applications, dealing with non-response cases on the assumption that their distribution is similar to that of responding cases, which means excluding missing values from all proportions presented in the chapters and statistical appendices.

4. **Special surveys**

In this year’s edition, the report expanded its use of special surveys, which provided a close-up of some cultural activities and sectors last year. In addition to

repeating the survey of art galleries, the report conducted three new mini surveys in the first quarter of 2022, which included a survey of libraries, literary clubs, and a survey of several prominent translation projects.

• **Partial survey of art galleries**

Comprehensive lists of active art galleries or their records are not available, and in an attempt to estimate the level of exhibition activity in the visual arts sector, the 2021 report resumed what the previous two reports had begun in listing the largest possible number of active galleries in various regions of the



Kingdom. The survey benefited from the list that last year's report developed using the information about exhibits available from books, media sources, and the Internet, and then surveyed the exhibits in the initial list for any other exhibits that cooperate with them, with the aim of adding more exhibits to the list.

The partial survey of art galleries was carried out via email and by phone, and the survey included a list of 46 galleries, of which 22 responded, while 20 other galleries could not be reached, and 4 others reported that they are no longer active or do not carry out any exhibition activities. The survey data included a list of exhibitions held virtually or in person, and the number of participants, in addition to partnerships and cooperation activities with other galleries.

- **Survey of libraries**

A survey was carried out for a targeted, unrepresentative sample of public libraries affiliated with civil associations, a number of specialized and university libraries, in addition to endowment libraries in the King Abdulaziz Complex for Endowment Libraries. The sample included 10 libraries that were contacted via email and phone, and the list was built based on the information available on active libraries from open sources, including the Internet.

The survey also included seven questions about the number of libraries or their branches and holdings and the level of their digitization, in addition to the number of visits to the library and cultural activities held at the library.

- **Survey of literary clubs**

A comprehensive survey of the 16 literary clubs in the Kingdom was carried out, with the exception

of the Literary Club in the Eastern Province as it did not respond to the request for data. The survey was carried out via email and by phone and included six questions about the cultural facilities available in the club, its literary publications, and the level of cultural activity, including events, competitions, prizes, and training workshops.

- **Survey of translation projects**

A targeted survey was carried out on an unrepresentative sample of the most prominent local translation projects, consisting of five projects/platforms, which were contacted via email and phone. The survey questions aimed to identify the levels of translation activity by asking about the numbers of translated works and the numbers of female and male translators, in addition to any translation-related activities or projects.

**Published reports**

The report derived part of its information from reports published by ministries, governmental bodies, and international organizations, including periodic and special reports, statistical bulletins, and reports dedicated to events organized or held by the particular entity.

- **Media sources and social media**

In addition to the data obtained directly from entities, the report used news and data issued by official media agencies, such as the Saudi Press Agency, and media centers affiliated with official authorities, including the authorities' official websites or their verified accounts on social media, to document the results of the year. As the report is not limited to the official aspects of culture, and it tries to the extent possible to record

any forms of spontaneous cultural activities that are not organized by institutions, documented in reports, or linked to a commercial activity, based on the belief in the importance of this part of cultural practices, it documents activities by referring to links from these platforms as reference to a primary source for this data.

### **Fourth: Framework for cultural indicators of the Report on the State of Culture - Second Update**

#### Framework scope and its update

The "Culture Indicators Framework" is a guide to the report on the state of culture in that it measures the indicators of culture and is a step toward developing and maturing an integrated statistical reference for the cultural sector in the Kingdom at the broader level. From this standpoint, the Report on the State of Culture seeks to update the framework on an annual basis, according to the following data and developments:

- Developments in the quality of the available data and the range of measurement it allows as provided by the relevant authorities.
- Updates to the national statistical references.
- Change in the conceptual framework of the Report on the State of Culture.
- Development of the accuracy of the standards and their determinants based on previous data collection and analysis experiences.

The framework of the Report on the State of Culture benefited from the experience of the first edition of the report, and reviewing several frameworks and reports, the most important of which are:

- Culture/2030 Indicators, UNESCO, 2019
- 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics, UNESCO, 2009
- World Cities Culture Report, World Cities Culture Forum, 2018
- Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor, European Commission, 2019
- Culture for Development Indicators: Methodology Manual, UNESCO, 2014
- ESSnet-Culture: European Statistical System Network on Culture, 2012

The basic structure of the framework is based on the "Thematic Indicators for Culture (2030)," launched by UNESCO in 2019, with some modification, adding the dimension of cultural production as it establishes the framework for measuring the state of culture through five thematic dimensions and that are equivalent to the dimensions of UNESCO's thematic indicators. Furthermore, in the preparation of the 2021 edition of the report, the framework incorporated minor changes as follows:

- Introducing the "Heritage Conservation and Sustainable Management" dimension, which replaces "infrastructure"





in the previous version of the framework (in the 2020 report), in order to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the cultural system that includes the practices of preserving cultural and natural heritage as well as infrastructure. In addition, this brings more alignment to the UNESCO framework.

- Sub-indicators were added to the participation dimension that expanded the concept to include measurements of social integration, ease of access, and levels of participation.
- Addition of indicators that were previously excluded because it was not possible to calculate them, with a note that the previous edition of the report did not include them, which would ensure the comprehensiveness of the framework and its coverage of aspects for which data may be available in the future.

The five dimensions (which are nearly identical to the 2021 report chapters) are as follows:

1. Heritage Conservation and sustainability: A number of indicators are used to portray the state of heritage preservation and protection practices, the availability and distribution of cultural facilities, and the availability and capacity of public spaces for culture (which intersects with the issue of environment and resilience to climate change).
2. Creative economy (culture): It is concerned with measuring the economic dimension of culture (almost identical with the subject of livelihood and livelihood means).
3. Education and skills: The indicators for this dimension present a perception of the presence of culture in public education, and the outcomes of higher education in disciplines related to culture and creativity (corresponding with the subject of knowledge and skills).
4. Participation: This indicator measures three sub-dimensions on the levels of participation, inclusion, and accessibility (intersects with the topic of participation and inclusion).
5. Cultural production: It provides a statistical overview of the levels of cultural production (in terms of quantity) in a number of cultural sub-sectors.

Unlike the previous two reports, for the sake of further integration in the analysis, the chapters are detailed on the basis of the dimensions of the framework, as the data were not reviewed in a separate part from the chapters of the report, but were included in the core of the chapters' treatments, as the framework's function in preparing the 2021 report was providing the methodological basis for data collection and analysis.



#### Fifth: Notes about data collection and use

Similar to its previous editions, the report is keen on collecting quantitative data from different agencies so that it employs information that pertains to the time period covered in the report. On a small scale, the report employed, instead of the current year's data, the latest available update of the data as a baseline that can be built on in the future, in cases where the data is not collected from its source on an annual basis, as is the case for data on culture expenditure published as part of the Household Income and Expenditure Survey by the General Authority for Statistics every five years, or when some data required more time to be processed and used consistently, as is usually done for publication data issued by the King Fahd National Library whose indexing takes over a year to complete. In such cases, the report used the latest available data and noted that where appropriate. In limited cases, some of the available data were withheld because of the inability to classify and consistently process the data to ensure the accuracy of the analysis—which will be detailed later—as in the case of the data pertaining to cultural workers, on which efforts to align its classification in this transitional stage with the concerned authorities are well underway. The same is true for the data on students majoring in culture-related fields. The report instead used the number of students on scholarships within the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program and the Culture Scholarship Program as an alternative indicator for measuring the outcomes of cultural education.

Data employed from previous years' figures included:

##### 1. Cultural spending data

Statistics about household spending on culture and related goods and services give an indication of local demand and purchasing power of citizens. The report employs the data contained in the latest edition of the



Household Income and Expenditure Survey issued in 2018 by the General Authority for Statistics as a baseline for studying levels of spending on culture, given that it is the latest available statistics.

### 2. Education data (academic programs)

In its review of educational opportunities available in the field of culture and arts, the report uses lists of academic programs offered by higher education institutions in the Kingdom as of 2019. As this is the most recent data available, the data were adopted as a baseline against which comparisons could be made with any future update of these programs.

### 3. Publication data (indexed in the deposit and publication system)

The local publication data for the titles filed with the Registration and Deposit System at the King Fahd National Library provides a vital indicator of the state of publishing in the Kingdom. The process of indexing and categorizing the deposited titles takes several years from depositing to completion. This prompted the use of data filed in 2019 that provided more detailed indexed data, so that the report can paint a general picture of publishing trends that are not provided by the data for the year 2021, which is still in the early stages of indexing.

### **Sixth: Notes on classification lists and standard terms**

Stemming from its quest to establish an integrated statistical reference for the cultural sector in the Kingdom, the report developed a number of classifications based on a set of international classification lists issued by international organizations, such as UNESCO and the European Union, in order to control the process of measuring cultural indicators. The definition of culture and its activities and products presented the most pressing challenge faced by the report during the preparation of these lists, given the continuous transformations witnessed by the sector, which remain the most prominent feature of it at this stage.

Similarly, collecting data on cultural facilities such as museums, libraries, and galleries of all kinds posed an additional challenge because this data is not linked to international standard definitions. Efforts to classify these facilities in their current state are still sporadic, and this issue is expected to be addressed by the cultural licenses that the sector aspires to activate in the near future. There was also a need to develop preliminary non-regulatory frameworks for the report to define culture and the activities and products thereunder, perhaps the most urgent of which were:

#### 1. Educational programs related to culture and arts

In addressing educational curricula with a cultural dimension in higher education programs, the report relied

on the 2011 iSCED-International Standard Classification of Education and the fields defined in the 2013 iSCED report issued by the United Nations Economic and Social Council. It is the reference classification of educational programs according to levels and fields of education. While work on organizing the cultural sector is still ongoing among the concerned authorities, the report developed a list of programs related to culture and arts that depended mainly on the classification of cultural subsectors adopted by the Ministry of Culture in order to classify the academic programs available for study in higher education institutions within the Kingdom, and within the scholarship programs abroad.

#### 2. Commercial cultural activities

In order to define what constitutes a commercial cultural activity, a list was developed based on a number of international classifications, the most important of which is the National Classification for the Economic Activities (ISIC4), which is a guide to standardizing the description of economic activities. It was also determined by the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC4) issued by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, which defined as part of the 2009 UNESCO's Framework for Cultural Statistics what is considered to be cultural. This list includes the classification of activities up to the third level only based on the available data from commercial records, as detailed in Table 3.



**Table 3:** Classification of economic activities related to culture and arts.

Activity	Second level	Third level
Design and Creative Services	Specialized Design Activities	Interior decor design activities
		Apparel, footwear, and jewelry design activities
		Other specialized design activities
	Advertisements	Activities by calligraphers and painters
		Advertising agencies and institutions
		Installation and assembly of neon panels
	Architectural activities and related technical consultancy activities	Architectural and engineering consultancy activities
Audiovisual Activities	Audio activities	Radio activities
		Radio broadcasting on air, wire, or satellite
		Radio broadcasting via the internet (internet-based radio stations)
	Radio and television broadcasting activities	Television broadcasts
		Other radio and television broadcasting activities
		Channel subscription programming activities
		Television activities
		Cable and satellite programs and other services subject to subscription
		News channels subscription activities
		Movie channels subscription activities
		Movie, video and television programming production activities
	Commercial television ads production	
	Movie, video and television programming production activities	
	Television programs	
	Movies and video programs	
	Distribution of movie films, videos and television programs	Distribution of DVDs to exhibitors and television networks
		Distribution of films to exhibitors and television networks
		Distribution of videos to exhibitors and television networks
	Film screening activities	Operation of fixed movie theaters
		Film club activities

Activity	Second level	Third level
Audiovisual Activities	Post-production activities for cinema films, video films and TV shows	Effects related to film development and processing
		Cartoons and animation computer production
		Film editing, including translation, montage and subtitling
		Film and cartoons labs
	Activities of news agencies, including the activities of news companies and news agencies that provide news, images and newsletters to the media	Activities of news agencies, including the activities of news companies and news agencies that provide news, images and newsletters to the media
	Network portals	Web design
	Retail sale of music and video recordings in specialized stores	Retail sale of cassettes, video, and DVD tapes of all kinds
		Retail sale of unrecorded tapes of all kinds
		Retail sale of music and video recordings in specialized stores
	Wholesale of other household items	Wholesale of electronic games, including imported ones
	Wholesale of other household items	Wholesale of cassettes and DVDs/CDs
	Videotape and CD rentals	Rental of videotapes
	Videotape and CD rentals	Videotape, CD and digital video rentals
Software distribution	Computer games	
Cultural and Natural Heritage	Museum activities and operation of historical sites and buildings	Museums
		Archeological sites
	Zoo, botanic gardens, and natural reserve activities	Zoos
	Short-term stays (heritage and environment related)	Heritage hotel villas
		Heritage hotels
		Eco tourist camps
		Eco tourist hostels
	Retail sale of used goods	Retail sale of used books
		Retail sale of used artifacts

Activity	Second level	Third level
Performing Arts and Festivals	Creative activities, arts and entertainment activities	Individual artists, including authors, actors, directors, producers, musicians, lecturers or speakers, theater designers
		Managing and developing artistic and entertainment talents
		Group art such as circuses and orchestras
		Arts and other forms of entertainment
	Audio and music recording activities	Activities recorded in studios and other places
		Production of audio recordings on a cassette
		Production of audio CDs
		Distribution of recordings to merchants
		Production of radio programs and audio recordings
	Wholesale of other household items	Musical instrument wholesale
	Manufacture of musical instruments	Manufacture of oboes and other audio-signal instruments
		Electric musical instrument industry
		Argon machinery industry
		Accordion industry
		Wind instrument industry
		Stringed instrument industry
Tambourines and drums industry		
Manufacture of parts and supplies for musical and stringed instruments		
Books and the Press	Creative activities, arts and entertainment activities	Activities of freelance journalists and editors
	Wholesale of other household items	Wholesale of stationery and office supplies
		Wholesale of books, magazines, newspapers, and educational aids, including importing written, drawn, or illustrated intellectual productions
	Retail sale of books, newspapers, and stationery in specialized stores	Retail sale of stationery, newspapers, magazines, and libraries
		Retail sale of books, magazines, and educational aids
		Other activities of retail sale of books, newspapers, stationery, and prepaid cards in specialized stores



Activity	Second level	Third level
Books and the Press	Publication of books	Publishing paper books, dictionaries, atlases, and maps (including importing and producing written, drawn, or illustrated intellectual articles)
		Electronic publication
		Publication of books online
		Audiobooks
		Individual writers' activities in all subjects, including literary and artistic writings and stories
	Translation	Translation and linguistic proofing activities
		Translation activity
Activities of libraries and archives	Activities of libraries and archives	
Visual Arts and Handcrafts	Creative activities, arts and entertainment activities	Activities of sculptors, painters, cartoonists, and engravers
		Renovation and restoration of works and paintings
	Other publication activities	Posting of pictures and engraved shapes
	Photography and aerial production	Photography activities
		Commercial and tourist photography activities by all means and methods of photography
		Fast film development
		Photocopying activities using microfilm
		Activities of photojournalists
		Development of film slides
		Other photography-related activities
	Production of jewelry and related items	Precious and semi-precious stone production
		Lab-made diamond production
		Handmade pearl production
		Manufacture of ornaments and jewelry from platinum and other precious metals
		Production of silver jewelry
		Production of precious minerals and stones
		Manufacture of badges and medals

Activity	Second level	Third level
Visual Arts and Handcrafts	Production of jewelry and related items	Manufacture of jewelry
		Manufacture of technical or laboratory articles of precious metals
		Manufacture and assembly of jewelry from precious stones or combined with precious metals
		Coating varieties of products with precious metals
		Welding and polishing workshops for jewelers (goldsmiths)
Cultural Education	Cultural education	Teaching traditional and folk arts
		Arts and literature education
		Performing and musical arts schools
		Schools of fine arts, including (painting, sculpture, etc.)
		Photography schools
		Other cultural education activities



**Seventh: List of combined data**

As already noted, the report incorporated and collected data obtained from different sources in order to provide a more comprehensive reading of cultural sectors from various sources. This data included lists of training programs and workshops that were collected from the Ministry of Culture and its affiliated bodies and institutions, as well as private and civil institutions active in the field of training as shown in Table 4. It also included theater data collected from a number of sources. This information is detailed in Table 5. Sources from which the data on visits to university libraries are similarly listed in Table 6.

**Table 4:** Sources on which the report relied in presenting the cultural training data provided by the Ministry of Culture and its affiliated commissions and institutions, and private and civil institutions active in the training field.

Sequence	Authority
1	Literary clubs
2	Saudi Heritage Preservation Society
3	Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts
4	The Royal Institute of Traditional Arts
5	Saudi Film Festival
6	Ithra
7	MBC Academy
8	Jameel Art
9	Misk Art Institute
10	King Abdulaziz Public Library
11	Red Sea Festival
12	Literature, Publishing & Translation Commission
13	Fashion Commission
14	Film Commission
15	Theater and Performing Arts Commission
16	Culinary Arts Commission
17	Architecture and Design Commission



**Table 5:** Sources the report relied on in presenting data on theaters.

Sequence	Sources
1	Saudi National Theater list for 2020
2	Theater Commission list for 2021
3	National Events Center (Riyadh Season Theaters) for 2021
4	Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts for 2021
5	Sample of universities for 2021
6	Literary clubs survey for 2021
7	Open sources

**Table 6:** Sources on which the report relied in calculating the average visits to university libraries.

Sequence	Sources
1	Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University
2	Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University
3	Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University
4	Prince Sultan University
5	Jazan University
6	University of Tabuk
7	University of Hail
8	Taif University
9	University of Taibah
10	Al-Qassim University
11	King Khalid University
12	University of Bisha
13	Shaqra University
14	Najran University
15	King Abdulaziz University
16	University of Prince Mughrin
17	Dar Al-Hekma University
18	University of Hafr Al Batin
19	Princess Nourah University







## Appendix (2): 2021 Cultural Participation Survey

In the last 12 months, have you visited any of the Kingdom's museums in person?

	Percentage
1-3 times	7.9
4-7 times	0.9
More than 7 times	1.1
No, I did not visit at all	13.1
No, but I wish to visit in the future	77.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In the last 12 months, have you attended any poetry evening or literary meeting in person in the Kingdom?

	Percentage
1-3 times	3.6
4-7 times	0.9
More than 7 times	0.4
No, I did not visit at all	25.5
No, but I wish to visit in the future	69.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In the last 12 months, have you attended any concert or live performance in person in the Kingdom?

	Percentage
1-3 times	10.7
4-7 times	1.0
More than 7 times	0.8
No, I did not visit at all	45.4
No, but I plan to visit in the future	42.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In the last 12 months, have you visited a public library in person in the Kingdom?

	Percentage
1-3 times	13.2
4-7 times	2.5
More than 7 times	2.2
No, I did not visit at all	16.2
No, but I wish to visit in the future	66.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In the last 12 months, have you visited a historical or archaeological site(s) in the Kingdom?

	Percentage
1-3 times	23.6
4-7 times	4.6
More than 7 times	2.7
No, I did not visit at all	9.7
No, but I plan to visit in the future	59.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In the last 12 months, have you visited a natural reserve or park in the Kingdom?

	Percentage
1-3 times	19.7
4-7 times	5.1
More than 7 times	5.3
No, I did not visit at all	9.7
No, but I plan to visit in the future	60.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In the last 12 months, have you attended any cultural activity held virtually?

	Percentage
1-3 times	9.8
4-7 times	3.1
More than 7 times	1.9
No, I did not visit at all	24.8
No, but I plan to visit in the future	60.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In the last 12 months, have you attended any cultural activity or event in person in the Kingdom?

	Percentage
1-3 times	13.5
4-7 times	2.0
More than 7 times	1.0
No, I did not visit at all	19.4
No, but I plan to visit in the future	64.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Where were the cultural activities you attended over the last 12 months?

	Percentage
They are all outside your neighborhood	80.5
They are all inside your neighborhood	6.4
Some of them are inside your neighborhood	6.3
A few of them are inside your neighborhood	6.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

If the answer is "yes" to Question number (8), what is the main reason for your attendance at this event?

	Percentage
Accompanying family and friends	50.7
The time was appropriate	12.9
Participation was free or tickets were affordable	12.0
To visit a different location	10.0
Effective organization and easy access	5.0
This type of events is attractive to me	3.5
Other	5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

If the answer is "no" to Question (8), what is the main reason for you not attending?

	Percentage
Busy or work engagement	30.4
No time	18.0
High price of tickets	10.5
I prefer to participate in other activities	9.0
Health problems	4.9
Poor financial situation	4.6
Safety concerns	3.7
I am not interested in this type of activities	3.4
Confusion (do not read)	2.5
Not available where I live	2.2
No transportation available	2.1
Lack of advertisements	1.9
Other	6.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Your visits to in-person cultural activities and events in the Kingdom after the Covid-19 pandemic

	Percentage
Increased	6.4
Remained the same	11.5
Decreased for health-related reasons	26.3
Decreased for other reasons	14.6
I did not visit at all	41.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It is good for virtual cultural events (via internet) to continue even if there is no epidemic and social distancing

	Percentage
Strongly agree	14.4
Agree	47.7
Neutral	20.6
Disagree	13.6
Strongly Disagree	3.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>



In the last 12 months, have you participated in any voluntary work in any cultural field in the Kingdom?

	Percentage
Yes	8.3
No	91.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

What type of podcasts do you follow?

	Percentage
Sports	16.5
Culture	12.9
News	9.1
Comedy	8.3
Religious	8.2
Health and Fitness	6.7
Science	6.1
History	5.5
Politics	5.0
Other	2.3
I do not follow podcasts	19.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

What type of books would you prefer to read other than for work or study purposes?

	Percentage
Psychology and Self-development	18.1
Religion	18.1
History and Politics	14.6
Literature	13.1
Science	9.6
Intellectual and Philosophy	6.1
Other	2.5
I do not read books	18.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In the last 12 months, have you bought books for non-study and work purposes?

	Percentage
Yes, all were paper books	22.0
Yes, paper and electronic books	8.1
Yes, all were electronic books	2.9
No	67.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

What type of cultural activities would you like to see more of?

	Percentage
Lectures and seminars	25.1
Poetry or literary evenings	23.1
Heritage related events	20.3
Theater performances	13.4
Musical concerts	11.1
Other	2.3
There is no event I would like to see more of	4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

What is your preferred way to watch movies?

	Percentage
Television channels	26.8
Digital platforms	23.6
Movie theaters (cinema)	21.2
Videotapes or CDs	0.8
I do not watch movies at all	27.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

What has been your preferred method of listening to music over the last 12 months?

	Percentage
Digital video platforms (such as YouTube)	22.3
Non-subscription digital platforms	13.9
Radio	9.4
Television Channels	7.7
Subscription digital platforms (such as Spotify and Anghami)	5.1
Attending concerts	4.3
CDs	2.1
I do not listen to music at all	35.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

To what extent are you satisfied with the ticket prices of cultural events and activities?

	Percentage
Totally satisfied	4.2
Satisfied	17.0
Neutral	28.1
Dissatisfied	20.7
Totally dissatisfied	6.2
I do not know (I did not attend/there are no events)	23.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

To what extent are you satisfied with the availability of cultural festivals and events where you live?

	Percentage
Totally satisfied	13.5
Satisfied	50.6
Dissatisfied	25.3
Totally dissatisfied	6.4
I do not know	4.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

To what extent are you satisfied with the availability of cultural facilities where you live?

	Percentage
Totally satisfied	15.0
Satisfied	53.0
Dissatisfied	24.3
Totally dissatisfied	5.2
I do not know	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Are there any parks or open spaces in your neighborhood where cultural events are held?

	Percentage
Yes	21.2
No	77.5
I do not know	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

How long does it normally take you to get from your home to places where events are held where you live?

	Percentage
Less than 20 minutes by car	23.1
From 20 minutes to 40 minutes	40.1
From 40 minutes to an hour	15.5
More than an hour	8.7
More than 2 hours	4.5
I don't know (I didn't go/ No events)	8.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

What is your main reason for not visiting public places?

	Percentage
Busy or occupied with work	31.2
I have no time	21.5
I do not like to visit public places	6.7
No transportation available	5.9
Other	34.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Do you have a college degree (bachelor's degree, graduate studies) in a field related to culture?

	Percentage
Yes, I studied or currently studying	5.8
No, but I wish to study	31.9
No, I have not studied	62.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>



What is the main motive for you to study and want to study this major?

	Percentage
Personal interest or passion	65.1
Present and future job opportunities	25.2
GPA or requirements for entering this major	7.7
Other	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

What is your major (for those who studied or are currently studying)?

	Percentage
Literature, linguistics and translation	43.0
History and heritage	14.4
Design and visual arts	7.4
Architecture and design	5.8
Libraries	5.0
Fashion, cooking and hospitality	4.3
Archaeology and museums	2.8
Movies, music and singing	2.6
Theater and performing arts	1.1
Other	13.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Why did you not major in a cultural field?

	Percentage
I do not have an interest or I am not passionate about it	33.8
The major is not available	13.5
Due to current and future job opportunities	12.6
Busy or work engagement	11.9
Did not finish my education	9.4
GPA or program enrolment requirements	7.6
I have no time	7.5
Other	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Were you previously enrolled in a training program, course or workshop in any cultural field in the last 12 months?

	Percentage
Yes, only in a virtual training program, course or workshop	2.9
Yes, only in an in-person training program, course, or workshop	1.5
Yes, an in-person and virtual program, course or workshop	1.6
No, I did not join any training program, course or workshop	94
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

If the answer is "yes" to Question number (31), what is the program or workshop field?

	Percentage
Creative, literary and content writing	23.5
Heritage and crafts	17.9
Arts and drawing	17.3
Photography and movies	14.3
Music (singing and playing music)	7.1
Theater and acting	5.1
Other	14.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

What is your preferred way to learn cultural skills and creative arts?

	Percentage
Attending courses or training programs	42.6
Self-learning (through books or online)	31.1
Enrolling in a university or institute	22.2
I do not wish to learn cultural skills	3.8
Other	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

# Entities involved in providing the report data











ثقافتنا هويتنا  
Our culture, our identity