Press Release by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)& Ministry of Culture (MOC) on the occasion of the Palestinian National Culture Day

To mark the Palestinian National Culture Day on March 13th, PCBS & MOC reviewed the status of cultural institutions in Palestine.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the reality of cultural institutions during 2020 due to frequent lock-downmeasures to limit the spread of the virus. Despite the decrease in the number of museums visitors and the number of theatre plays performed in and their attendees, the number of participants in cultural activities held in cultural centres witnessed a remarkable increase compared to 2019 since activities were arranged virtually. Below are the most prominent statistical figures that reflect the reality of cultural institutions during the year 2020.

The number of institutions[1]working in cultural activities in the private and the non-governmental sectors in Palestine reached 1,086 in 2017, where such institutions employ 3,882 employees, of whom 2,924 are males and 958 are females. In the West Bank,the number of institutions working in cultural activities reached 729 (67.1%) with2,574 employees, of whom 74% are males and 16% are females. Whereas the number of institutions working in cultural activities in Gaza Strip reached 357 establishments (32.9%), where the number of employees reached 1,308, of whom 77% are males and 23% are females.

Hence, such institutions were distributed in Palestine by employment size group into small-sized institutions that employ (1-4) employees, where they reached 858 institutions (79%), medium-sized institutions that employ (5-19) employees, where they reached 211 institutions (19.4%), and large establishments that employ (20 employees and more). The number of those institutions reached 17 at a percentage of 1.6%.

The Number of Cultural Centres Operating in Palestine Decreased Compared to previous year

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent closures, the number of cultural centres operating in Palestine decreased from 566 cultural centres in 2019 to 528 cultural centres in 2020, with aclear gap in the number of cultural centres between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Distribution of Cultural Centers Operating in Palestine by Region for Selected Years

Region	2014	2017	2018	2019	2020
Palestine	**666**	**625**	**597**	**566**	**528**
West Bank	583	545	528	510	473
Gaza Strip	83	80	69	56	55

The biggest impact of the decline was on the cultural activities held in cultural centres, of those that responded[2] to the questionnaire during 2020, as the number of cultural activities decreased

[1]They are institutions that are classified as cultural institutions, regardless of whether they engage in cultural activities or not

[2]The refusal rate was about 4% from the total number of cultural centres operating in the years 2014, 2017 and 2018, while it was 6% in 2019 & 2020.

by almost the half, where it reached about 4.7 thousand cultural activities in 2020 compared to the number of cultural activities held in cultural centres in 2019 which was about 9.2 thousand cultural activities.

Despite the marked decrease in the number of cultural activities, training courses continued to rank first among cultural activities held in cultural centres.

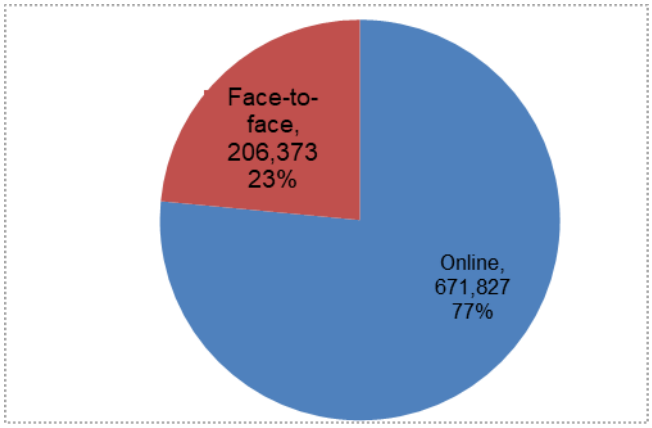
Percentage Distribution of Activities Held in Cultural Centres Operating in Palestine by Type of Activity for Selected Years

Type of Activity	2014	2017	2018	2019	2020
Training Courses	67.6	72.1	65.0	66.5	62.8
Performances	13.9	12.9	16.5	14.8	11.1
Lectures	7.7	5.7	9.2	10.4	14.5
Seminars	9.2	6.7	7.3	5.9	10.2
Exhibitions	1.6	2.6	2.0	2.4	1.4
Total (%)	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
Total (Number)	**9,204**	**9,345**	**9,534**	**9,187**	**4,738**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic,onlineparticipation was the dominant feature on cultural activities, as about 878 thousand participants participated in cultural activities carried out by cultural centres in Palestine, of whom about 672 thousand participants participated in cultural activities held online.

In 2020, about 878 thousand persons participated in the cultural activities of the operating cultural centres, which responded; about 782 thousand participants in the West Bank and 96 thousand participants in Gaza Strip. In 2019, about 558 thousand persons participated in cultural activities.

Distribution of Participants in Cultural Activities Held by Method ofHolding the Activity ,2020



A severe decline in the number of museums visitors during 2020by 94% compared to 2019

There were 32 museums operating in Palestine in 2020: 27 museums in the West Bank (three of them did not respond) and 5 museums in Gaza Strip.

COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the number of museums visitors during 2020; as the number of visitors to museums that provided data reached about 26 thousand visitors in 2020: 76% were Palestinians and 24% of them are from other nationalities. The results showed that the largest number of visitors was in January with about 10 thousand visitors, while the lowest number was in July with only 7 visitors. In 2019, the number of visitors to museums was about 388 thousand.

The Number of Theatre Plays Decreased by More than half Compared to 2019

There were 16 operating theatres in Palestine: 13 in the West Bank (one of them did not respond) and 3 in Gaza Strip. 96 plays were performed in Palestine in 2020: 92 plays in the West Bank and 4 in Gaza Strip; out of which 36 plays were for children, 29 plays were for adults and 31 plays were for both children and adults. There were about 22 thousand theatre attendees; where the highest number was in January with about 8 thousand attendees, while no plays were performed during the months of March, April, May and July due to closures taken to face the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, the number of plays performed was 323 plays and the number of theatre attendees was about 90 thousand.

Contribution of Ministry of Culture in Supporting Cultural Activities in 2020

The Ministry of Culture has carried out many electronic cultural activities and events; such as its campaign " the book is for all", which maybe the most prominent event of them all, where it has sent out more than 350 thousand books to 1,700 of universities, schools, institutes, municipalities, cultural institutions and libraries camps around Palestine.

Ministry of Culture has issued 12 publications on heritage, poetry, stories, criticism and complete works of late writers and children's literature. It also worked on re-launching the State Appreciation Award for Literature, Arts and Humanities, where 7 writers, intellectuals and artists won the award, in addition to honouring a number of cultural figures.

In the same context, Ministry of Culture funded around 576 cultural projects in 2020, including 67 projects that were supported by the Palestinian Cultural Fund. Furthermore, 509 projects for 35 cultural institutions and 474 individuals working in the cultural field were supported by the Cultural Initiatives Support Program.

The Sources:

1. **Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017.**Population, Hosing and Establishments Census2017. Ramallah-Palestine
2. **Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021.** Database ofComprehensive Survey on Cultural Centres,Museums and Theatres, 2020. Ramallah-Palestine**.**
3. **Ministry of Culture 2021.** Directorate of Planning & Project Management. Database of Administrative Records, 2020. Ramallah – Palestine.