

CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE POST-2015 PROCESS



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The role of culture for development has not always been obvious for all. It is now clearly acknowledged within the United Nations and in many countries, but a strong commitment is still needed to systematically include culture on the development agenda at the global level and invest adequate resources in culture. In the context of the post-2015 agenda, UNESCO is striving to advance the cultural agenda and continues to advocate for recognition of its role in achieving truly sustainable development.

Culture both enables and drives development, and it is essential that it be acknowledged as such in the post-2015 development agenda. Culture enables development as a cross-cutting element that should be mainstreamed in any development programme. Indeed, to be most effective, development approaches should be adapted to local contexts and should therefore rely on the cultural resource while respecting cultural rights. Culture also drives development within a number of cultural sectors including the creative industries, cultural tourism and heritage, both tangible and intangible.

UNESCO has embarked upon a coordinated strategy to promote this vision at the international institutional policy level building on the results of the action led at country level where we can see, in situ, the impact that culture has on development.

At global level

During the last two decades of the twentieth century, a radical change occurred in the way least developed countries assessed the role of culture in development. These countries began to view their cultures as an asset in eradicating poverty. This is also the case of middle-income countries, which are seeking innovative development paths with their full ownership. In the case of multilateral organizations, a major step forward has been discernible in the conceptual approach to the cultural dimension of development. For instance, UNESCO has developed a comprehensive set of normative instruments in the area of culture, ranging from tangible heritage (1972 Convention), intangible heritage (2003 Convention), and underwater cultural heritage (2001 Convention), but also illicit international trafficking of cultural property, the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict and (1954 and 1970 Conventions), cultural industries and the diversity of cultural expressions (2005 Convention). Through its set of Conventions and Recommendations and operational programmes, UNESCO contributes to capacity development of cultural institutions at the country level, networks of professionals, communities, and to the development of norms, standards and legislation in all fields of culture. UNESCO also provides a unique platform for international cooperation, financial assistance and dialogue, fostering mutual respect, appreciation and understanding.

While culture was not explicitly recognized in 2000 in the international development agenda as expressed in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the UN System as a whole has become gradually more and more involved in integrating culture, or following a culture-sensitive approach in their development work. UNESCO has a specific mandate in culture, but "Culture" is not a "UNESCO-specific" concern. Some 15 UN organizations work in this area, including through joint programming at country level, thereby illustrating both the transversality and the intrinsic importance of culture on the ground (among which UNDP, UNIDO, UNWTO, IFAD, WIPO, FAO, UNEP, UNCTAD, UNITAR, UNOPS, UNAIDS, UNHCR, UN-Habitat, UNFPA, UNV). The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, and UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark, jointly delivered a strong video message on culture and development¹.

In practice, there has been an increasingly explicit recognition of the role of culture for development: in 2005 the World Summit Outcome Document, adopted by the UN General Assembly, acknowledged the diversity of the world and recognized that all cultures contribute to the enrichment of humankind. This was followed by the 2010 MDG Summit which, ten years after the Millennium Declaration, emphasized the importance of culture for development and its contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. These messages were further reiterated in two consecutive "Culture and Development" UN General Assembly Resolutions respectively in 2010 and 2011, which called for the mainstreaming of culture into development policies and strategies, and underscored culture's intrinsic contribution to sustainable development.

In June 2012, the Report of the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, entitled "Realizing the Future We Want for All" – a key document in the Post-2015 process – referred to the role of culture on numerous occasions².

The National level

At the national, country level, many countries are developing vibrant culture sectors and initiatives and request assistance in this area. In particular, middle-income countries are increasingly requesting the UN to continue working together towards strengthening their cultural sectors.

There is a growing interest for culture as an integral part of the broader development debates at country level. Culture has been defined as a main outcome in the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) of several countries. While culture was mentioned in less than 30% of UNDAFs in 2006, in 2012 this was increased to 70%. UNESCO has carried out an analysis³ which shows that culture is associated with all the thematic areas of the UNDAFs: entries linked to social and economic development themes account for 55% of the total of all culture entries, 18% relate to governance and 17% to sustainable development, and 10% are associated with human rights and the rule of law. This reflects the broad scope of the sector's actions and of the versatility of culture programmes,

which can be associated with various development themes depending on needs and priorities at the country level.

For Latin America and the Caribbean, the number of culture entries reached 83% in 2012. The linking of culture and development with a central role for indigenous communities has been particularly innovative in this region. As early as 1978, the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Bogotá, recognized that “the diversity of peoples should be seen as a balancing factor and not division.” This regional concept of combining cultural diversity and national identity has remained central since that time. Four years later, the World Conference on Cultural Policies (Mexico City, 1982), in its final report, made a critical contribution by adding a section on the cultural dimension of development. Subsequently, the region continued to increase its efforts through events such as the Forum of Ministers of Culture, the first session of which was held in Brazil in 1989, and the creation in 1991 of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), which promotes the production and movement of cultural goods and services within the region. Against this historical backdrop, the analysis confirmed that in Latin America and the Caribbean, culture plays a very specific role at the national level, with an increasingly strong focus on indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities. This has led to these aspects of the culture sector being included as cross-cutting themes for all areas of development, at the country level and within the international aid community. This can be analysed as a successful result of the advocacy for the recognition of the linkages between culture and development. In the region, the focus on the social and human rights aspects is the most prominent, accounting for 55% of all entries. Here, many culture entries are related to indigenous peoples related issues, which are a key national development priority for most countries in the region, and this is reflected in the choice of development thematic areas but also in the key types of culture entries: most entries relate to cultural diversity (28%) and cultural rights (20%). These, together with related intercultural dialogue, make up for half of all culture entries in the region.

The fact that the number of culture entries in UNDAFs almost doubled between 2006 and 2008 is no doubt linked to increased efforts on the part of UNESCO to participate in United Nations common country programming and the inception of the MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) Culture and Development Joint Programmes, most of which were led by UNESCO.

The end of 2006 was marked by the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F), financed by Spain, which contributed some US\$ 900 million, devoted to 8 thematic areas, including one on Culture and Development. The thematic window on Culture and Development has been led by UNESCO and was the first major country-level effort of its kind, with 18 large-scale joint programmes in the Arab States, Africa, Latin America, Asia and South-East Europe⁴. This was the first initiative on such a scale with a dedicated budget of US\$ 96 million to demonstrate the contribution of culture to development at the national



level in order to boost progress towards achieving the MDGs. The programmes have aimed to promote social inclusion and poverty reduction through cultural resources by means such as encouraging the inclusion of minorities and disadvantaged groups in social, political and cultural life and by harnessing the potential of the cultural sector for poverty reduction.

The MDG-F experience on Culture and Development has been extremely positive in terms of impact on the ground, with over 1,5 million direct beneficiaries and over 9,8 million indirect beneficiaries. While areas of work range from strengthening cultural and creative industries, developing sustainable cultural tourism, safeguarding tangible and intangible heritage, and promoting cultural diversity and pluralism, to supporting inclusive policies and ethnic minority development, the joint programmes have provided clear evidence that Culture is an economic sector capable of generating incomes and jobs, thereby contributing to poverty eradication (MDG 1); Culturally adapted curricula content allows for improved quality education and citizenship building (MDG 2); Culture-oriented activities such as craft entrepreneurship are a source of gender empowerment (MDG 3); Socio-cultural approaches to health lead to cost-effective and more efficient health policies (MDG 4, 5 and 6); Cultural and traditional know-how are inexhaustible resources for sustainable environment and livelihoods (MDG 7); Culture is source of multiple-level networks and has a convening power, thus contributing to global partnerships (MDG8).

In Latin America, joint programmes have endeavoured to combat socio-economic inequality and increase social inclusion by focusing on highly marginalized groups, such as people of African descent, indigenous peoples, women and youth. Priority has also been given to the development of cultural industries and to raising professionalism among stakeholders.

Some key achievements regarding socio-economic inequality and increase social inclusion include Costa Rica’s “Parque La Libertad” urban regeneration project, which has boosted many inclusion activities under four heads, namely the arts, the environment, micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and urban activities, Ecuador’s public policy on gender and interculturality, the promulgation of the Cultural Development Act in Honduras, the enactment of Nicaragua’s Autonomy Statute for Caribbean Region (Law No. 28) and Uruguay’s cultural factories, established for socially and economically vulnerable populations.

As regards cultural enterprises, examples of achievements include the design of tourist products and routes under the joint programmes of Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras and Nicaragua, the strengthening of 400 cultural enterprises through the Cultural Industries Fund in Honduras and public access through cultural factories to means of artistic production.

The experience gained by the joint programmes has also showed that work was required on policies, public administration and collectivities as part of the groundwork

for appropriate action in culture and development tailored to each country’s context and institutions. Capacity-building has therefore been given priority everywhere in order to empower and link groups, raise participation and have an impact on public policy. In real terms, Costa Rica has trained 1,061 communal leaders and officials in interculturality and ethnoscience, Ecuador has trained some 1,000 people in public policies to combat racism and narrow the social gap between ethnic groups, Honduras has organized 80 training courses in business management and has implemented 60 youth initiatives, Nicaragua has conducted 504 training courses on responsible cultural tourism, 416 on cultural management and 72 on cultural revival, and Uruguay has delivered 44 training courses on cultural management, trained 80 craftworkers in design and implemented an initiative to train young cultural mediators. Other topics covered by joint programmes generally were gender equity, artistic skills and intercultural policies.

As evidenced by operational programmes on the ground, Culture is key to enable a more effective, inclusive and human-centred approach to development. There is also a strong demand, at country level, to integrate culture in development policies which shall now be duly reflected in the global post-2015 agenda.

Next steps in 2013

As we advancing on the path opened by the two resolutions of the UN General Assembly on Culture in 2010 and 2011, efforts must be pursued to ensure that culture is included as a key element of the global Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Following Rio+20 and the UN System Task Team Report to the UN Secretary-General, which made clear references to the importance of culture, the year 2013 will be marked by a series of milestones and high-level events on Culture and Development.

In May 2013, the Hangzhou International Congress is the first international meeting organized by UNESCO since the Stockholm Conference in 1998 with the participation of the global community at large⁵.

On 12 June 2013, the President of the 67th United Nations General Assembly convenes a Thematic Debate of the UN General Assembly on Culture and Development⁶, in partnership with UNESCO, which will bring together eminent representatives of Member States. The UN Thematic Debate will inform the post-2015 discussions of the UN General Assembly in September on future development goals.

This debate, together with the 2013 ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review on “Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals”, will represent key milestones, at the political level, to contribute to the post-2015 process.

The third edition of the Creative Economy Report, to be jointly published by UNESCO and UNDP by the summer of 2013, will also



represent an opportunity to highlight the contribution of culture to the attainment of MDGs and more broadly to sustainable development.

In November 2013, Indonesia, and UNESCO, will organize the first World Culture in Development Forum. This will also represent a key event contributing to the Post-2015 Agenda, particularly with respect to the role that President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia as co-chair of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Finally, the UN Secretary-General will also submit a report, led by UNESCO, to the UN General Assembly, which will discuss a third resolution on Culture and Development.

There can be no doubt that the momentum is building. At all levels, we must therefore remain mobilized in order to put culture on the agenda now. **C&D**

Notes

¹The video message can be viewed on UNESCO website: www.unesco.org

²See in particular paragraph 71: “It is also critical to promote equitable change that ensures people’s ability to choose their value systems in peace, thereby allowing for full participation and empowerment. Communities and individuals must be able to create and practice their own culture and enjoy that of others free from fear. This will require, inter alia, respect for cultural diversity, safeguarding cultural and natural heritage, fostering cultural institutions, strengthening cultural and creative industries, and promoting cultural tourism.”

³For detailed information see the Analytical Overview of the inclusion of culture in the UNDAFs, UNESCO 2012: www.unesco.org/new/undaf

⁴Detailed information and data on key achievement and impact can be found on: www.unesco.org/new/mdgf

⁵For more information : www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/resources/hangzhou-international-congress-placing-culture-creativity-at-the-heart-of-development/

⁶For more information: www.un.org/en/ga/president/67/