

CALL TO ACTION

STRENGTHEN THE SYNERGIES BETWEEN GENDER AND CULTURE IN DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

European Development Days (June 2018)

On the occasion of the European Development Days 2018 organised by the European Commission in Brussels and of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, a group of organisations active in the field of culture and international development have gathered to discuss the gender dimension of their work.

We believe that sustainable development cannot be achieved unless culture is understood as both an enabler and driver of development. Achieving international goals, including SDG5 ('Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls') and other aspects of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the aims of the New European Consensus on Development, requires fully acknowledging cultural aspects, practices and agents as substantial elements, alongside the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Upholding a concern about the rights of women and girls, including their full participation in cultural life, is central to these aims.

We subscribe to a dynamic understanding of culture, which involves asserting the ability of cultural values, forms and expressions to evolve, and recognise the diversity of ways of life that have existed across the world and history. We stand with an understanding of culture that helps to expand freedoms and liberties, builds trust between peoples, promotes peace, and enables everyone to exercise all human rights.

The role of women is essential in the intergenerational transmission and the renewal of many forms of intangible cultural heritage in local contexts, as well as in the promotion of cultural diversity. Representing over 50% of the population, women are often the advocates for peace-building and the protection of tangible heritage, the innovators in business and entrepreneurship, and the social glue that binds us together. Cultural and creative industries (CCI) represent a potential for job creation and entrepreneurship based on local resources: generating US\$2,250b of revenues and 29.5 million jobs worldwide in 2013, they are drivers for the digital technologies and economy, but also a powerful tool for enhancing the voices and the expressions of the most fragile groups.

In order to capture the full potential of heritage-related and creative activities to foster gender equality and women's empowerment, existing challenges and limitations still need to be addressed. Key challenges include the absence of regular and reliable research and data; the need to mainstream gender into cultural policies and recognise the role of culture for gender equality and women's empowerment; the need for concrete action plans and legislation; the need for targeted training and capacity-building; gender imbalances in access to higher education, decision-making positions and income; and inflexible economic and social structures that limit women's economic opportunities and empowerment.

Our work builds on that of many women's organisations, female artists and cultural professionals, NGOs, experts and activists who have campaigned for the full participation of women in cultural and public life, and whose daily work provides inspiration to us all. We also acknowledge the work done by the European Union, by the UN Special Rapporteurs on Cultural Rights and by UNESCO in the integration of gender aspects in recent policies and reports on culture.

Principles

To achieve gender equality and foster women's economic, social and cultural rights and their contribution to sustainable development, we call on the European Union, international organisations, third countries, national, regional and local governments, cooperation agencies, the private sector and civil society organisations to improve coordination and synergies of their interventions, and implement the following principles, which we also undertake to integrate in our own work:

1. **Access and participation in cultural life for all.** The full exercise of cultural rights should be central in the design, implementation and evaluation of cultural policies and projects. This involves paying attention to disadvantaged groups and to factors which may lead to discrimination and inequality, including gender. Attention also needs to be paid to the intersections between gender and other categories (race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, marital status, class, educational level, etc.) which may reinforce patterns of inequality and discrimination. Guaranteeing full access and participation of all in cultural life, including women and girls, should be a commitment for cultural actors.
2. **Gender balance and diversity in cultural heritage.** The safeguarding, protection and transmission of cultural heritage is incomplete if women's narratives, symbolic places, practices and voices are not visible and properly recognised. A people-centred approach to cultural heritage involves the recognition and visibility of these lesser-acknowledged aspects, as well as the involvement of women in determining and interpreting cultural heritage, including their ability to modify or discard cultural traditions, values and practices.
3. **Recognition of women as creators and authors.** The role of women as writers, film directors, musicians or visual artists is very often secondary in cultural venues, festivals and the media. Recognising this gap is the first step towards raising awareness and taking effective measures, ensuring that opportunities for creative development exist in all fields, beyond those that have more traditionally been associated with women. Active commitment is necessary to stand against all forms of gender-related bans, attacks, and discrimination in the cultural scene.
4. **Addressing salary inequality and other forms of discrimination.** Salary gaps between men and women prevail in most societies and professional sectors, including culture. It is essential to adopt measures to recognise these imbalances where they exist, to address any underpinning factors, and to ensure equal pay for equal work, as well as full access to labour rights and support in balancing parenthood and career opportunities for everyone, irrespective of gender.
5. **Cultural actors as advocates of equality, rights and freedoms.** Artists and cultural organisations can give voice to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and raise awareness about social inequality, including that which affects women and girls. They also offer opportunities and safe spaces for expression and connecting with others. It is important to build partnerships between public authorities, organisations active in the field of women's rights, organisations representing other vulnerable groups and cultural stakeholders, exploring the potential of cultural practices and processes to advocate for equality, to change policies and practices, and to broaden rights and freedoms.
6. **The cultural dimension of other human rights.** Cultural contexts, traditions and values inform access to basic services and the exercise of human rights. Often, prejudice and tradition can work against women and girls' ability to access education, politics, employment or health, including sexual and reproductive health services. Cultural adaptation of services contributes to universal access and enjoyment of rights. Mainstreaming the role of culture to promote gender equality and diversity in other policy areas and collaboration between cultural stakeholders and other agents providing basic services (governments, NGOs, private companies, etc.) are fundamental.

7. **Education and training as key areas for strengthening the place of women and girls in cultural life.** Educational institutions are a key environment to broaden opportunities for women and girls to fully participate in cultural life and should ensure access to the arts and culture. Educational authorities and professionals should pay attention to the gender stereotypes that often prevail in areas of education and training, and to the values that are promoted in them. An emphasis needs to be placed on the education of men and boys, whose values, attitudes and behaviour can very often hinder opportunities for women and girls in social, economic, political and cultural life. Learning in this area must be understood to take place in a wide range of institutions and contexts, and address people of all ages. Attention also needs to be paid to the collection and analysis of data on how men and women access higher education and vocational training differently, and to giving visibility and platforms to female artists and cultural professionals as mentors and role models.
8. **Full participation of women in decision-making and leadership.** Full participation in public life includes the ability of women and girls to take part in decision-making on cultural policies and projects at local, national, regional and international levels. Hurdles need to be identified and addressed, including the 'glass ceiling' often preventing women from accessing senior leadership positions. Likewise, community consultation exercises in the context of sustainable development projects of all kinds should integrate a gender perspective and seek to actively involve women and girls.
9. **The role of public authorities in fostering change.** International organisations and national, regional and local governments and cities are in a privileged position to lead change. They should embrace the responsibility in raising awareness about gender equality and about the important links between culture, gender and sustainable development. They should drive change in their policies, practices and organisational cultures, and in those of others, by providing guidelines and models and by stimulating forms of participatory governance involving civil society organisations, private actors and individual citizens.
10. **The importance of data collection, analysis and evaluation.** Reinforced efforts in research and evaluation are necessary, including through the collection of gender-disaggregated data, further analyses of the links between culture, gender equality and sustainable development, and the integration of a 'gender lens' in project and policy evaluation.

Key recommendations

Based on the above principles, we propose the following actions in policy design, implementation and evaluation, funding programmes and advocacy initiatives for a better inclusion of culture and gender in sustainable development policy and beyond.

Recommendations to all stakeholders

1. Secure equal remuneration for men and women within organisations and promote the place of women in decision-making roles.
2. Support the development of local, national, regional, and international networks of women in all cultural sectors and take part in them.
3. Support the integration of gender-sensitive approaches in education (primary, secondary, higher education, lifelong learning, etc.) and in training materials, including in arts and cultural studies, in order to improve gender equality and girls' empowerment from an early age.
4. Foster thematic research on the nexus between gender equality and culture, on the role of women and girls in cultural heritage and culture, and on broader aspects related to access to and participation in cultural life.
5. Systematise the use of gender-sensitive indicators in policy and project design and evaluation, and support the development of gender-sensitive monitoring systems for organisations and projects in the field of cultural cooperation for development.
6. Develop awareness-raising campaigns to promote the role of women as creators (including the instances of discrimination and harassment that affect them), cultural operators, and as guardians of heritage, value transmission, social cohesion and know-how in a perspective of human rights, also involving men and boys in promoting gender equality.

Recommendations to the European Union, other regional and international organisations and intergovernmental organisations:

1. Promote gender equality and the role of cultural heritage and creativity as drivers for women's empowerment in cultural cooperation projects for development.
2. Contribute to the design and implementation of gender-sensitive indicators and gender-sensitive budgeting in all international and regional programmes supporting culture within cooperation for development, in cooperation with civil society.
3. Systematise the integration of a cultural dimension in gender-related and women's empowerment policy instruments and enhance the nexus between gender equality and culture in the mid-term review of the SDGs.
4. Support the development of statistical data, policies and measures to improve gender equality and women's empowerment in partner countries, including in cultural sectors.

5. Strengthen financial support schemes for innovative initiatives on gender equality, women's empowerment and culture, fostering mobility, peer-learning, networking and people-to-people exchanges.

Recommendations to local, regional and national governments

1. Reinforce or establish measures supporting women's autonomy and their economic, social and cultural rights through cultural heritage-related activities, cultural and creative initiatives and access to culture.
2. Evaluate and improve existing measures (legal, institutional, financial) to support the cultural sector through a 'gender lens' and/or develop new measures in this area.
3. Ensure that the cultural expressions of women and girls can be created, developed and exhibited in safety, including in the public realm, and take measures to guarantee their visibility.
4. Act as models for communities in the integration of a gender perspective and the implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives, including in cultural activities.
5. Ensure equal access for all, including women and girls, to cultural and natural resources, as well as to education, land and economic opportunities, notably through investment facilities and appropriate access to intellectual property systems.

Recommendations to civil society organisations, the private sector and the academic field in the EU and elsewhere

1. Support the organisation of local, national, regional and international seminars or similar activities to promote synergies between gender equality, women's empowerment and culture.
2. Cooperate with public authorities, regional and international organisations in data collection and research.
3. Encourage knowledge-sharing at local, national, regional and international level through different means (professional meetings, seminars, online platforms, peer exchanges...).
4. Foster cooperation between cultural and women's organisations, e.g. in the form of platforms, peer-learning, joint projects, awareness-raising campaigns, etc.
5. Map women's organisations, support knowledge-sharing initiatives to enhance their visibility, identify their needs, develop training and support mechanisms, notably in coordination and in partnership with public bodies.
6. Embed gender equality in the design and delivery of projects, and ensure a gender balance in participants and audiences, where possible and appropriate

This document has been discussed in the framework of the European Development Days 2018 and agreed upon among the partner organisations listed. It will inform the work of the organisations involved in its elaboration¹; they will also contribute to its dissemination. It remains open to other organisations that may wish to endorse it.

¹ The resolution was drafted by Jordi Balta and Valeria Marcolin, on behalf of the convening organisations Culture et Développement, Africalia (Belgium), Arterial Network (Africa), British Council, UCLG (Committee on Culture), International Music Council, Interarts Foundation, UNESCO (Liaison Office, Brussels) and their associated partners ACP Secretariat, Bozar, CISAC, European Coalitions for Cultural Diversity, ICOMOS, More Europe, UCLG-Africa, Observatory of Cultural Policies

Convening organisations



Associated partners



Do you wish to join our associated partners and our call to action?
Contact our Culture for Development initiatives: CDAcoordination@gmail.com

Annex: relevant references in this area

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- UCLG, [Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Local Action](#), 2018
- [Déclaration de Bruxelles des artistes, des professionnels et des entrepreneurs de la culture des pays d'Afrique, des Caraïbes et du Pacifique \(ACP\) et des pays membres de l'Union européenne, 2009](#)