

The power of  
**Culture**  
*for Development*



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

*Culture, in all its dimensions, is a fundamental component of sustainable development. As a sector of activity, through tangible and intangible heritage, creative industries and various forms of artistic expressions, culture is a powerful contributor to economic development, social stability and environmental protection.*

*As a repository of knowledge, meanings and values that permeate all aspects of our lives, culture also defines the way human beings live and interact both at local and global scales.*

# Culture is

*A source of identity, innovation, and creativity.*

*A set of distinctive spiritual and material,* intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group.

*A complex web of meanings,* relationships, beliefs, and values that frames people's relationship to the world.

*Acquired* through the process of cultivation and improvement of the individual, especially by means of education.

*An evolving dynamic force* relevant to all societies, local or global.

*Influenced by and in turn influences* world-views and expressive forms.

*Located in a time and a place.* While culture in the abstract is a set of mental constructs, it is rooted in a place at a moment in history and is always local.

*A renewable resource* if it is carefully nurtured for it to grow and flower. When neglected, it is easily lost or destroyed.

# Aspects of Culture *Crucial to Development*

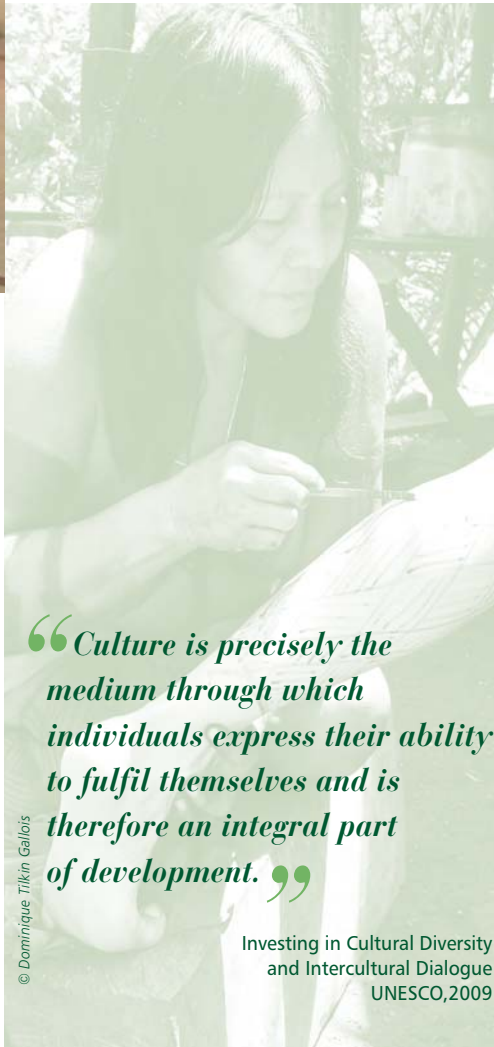


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**Traditional livelihoods** related to cultural forms and local practices whose skills and knowledge may be passed on from generation to generation

**Distinctive cultural forms** and artistic expressions including buildings and architecture, literature, art, dance, music, crafts, storytelling, and films.

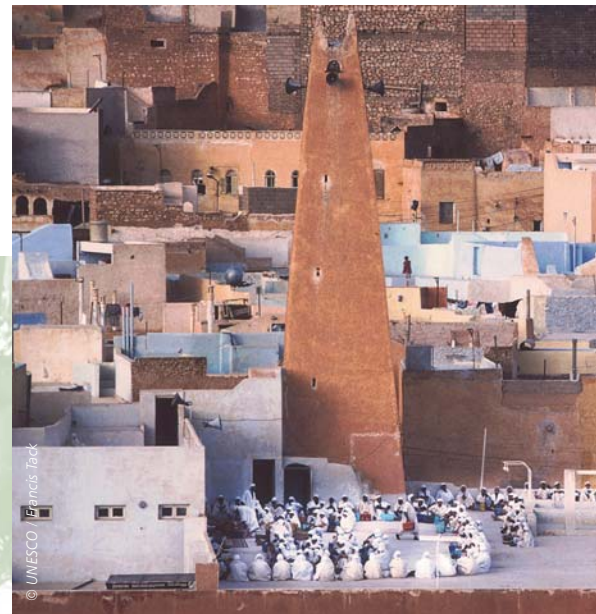
**Global ethics** that celebrate cultural pluralism and dialogue while promoting human rights, equality for all individuals and groups including gender equality, and democracy.



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*“Culture is precisely the medium through which individuals express their ability to fulfil themselves and is therefore an integral part of development.”*

Investing in Cultural Diversity  
and Intercultural Dialogue  
UNESCO, 2009



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**Social practices** including language, religion, education, family practices, decision-making systems, and institutional processes.

**Practices and processes of inhabitation rooted in local knowledge**, accumulated over time, including practices, knowledge and technology of farming, nutrition, health, childbirth, building materials, natural resource use, and environmental management.

**Dissemination of knowledge**

that fosters creativity, innovation, and the intellectual development of individuals and groups while discarding harmful practices contrary to global ethics.

**Nurturing and safeguarding** of

the distinctive cultural forms as well as the processes of their production.



# Cultural Approaches to Global Challenges

**Globalization**, with its ever-increasing social and economic interdependencies, provides opportunities for development, while also presenting enormous challenges to local communities, livelihoods, and identities.



Culture, in all its multiple forms, is essential to address these global challenges, through its role in economic growth, in human development, as a storehouse of environmental knowledge, and as a symbolic force to bring stability and meaning to communities everywhere. Principles of inclusiveness and global ethics enable even the most marginalized individuals



**Global challenges** such as **conflicts and wars**, **endemic poverty**, the **financial crisis**, **rapid urbanization**, and **environmental degradation** have rendered people all the more vulnerable to change and to the impacts of **natural disasters**, and have led to the progressive **loss of local cultures**.



and groups to participate in development processes and benefit from them. Culture provides solutions that respond to local specificities, as a driver of development in its own right as well as a desirable outcome of development efforts.

# Culture *a Vehicle for Economic Development*

**Culture Industries:** Culture is a powerful global economic engine generating **jobs and income** with a value of US\$1.3 trillion in 2005. Global cultural industries account for more than 7% of global GDP. During the 1990s, the cultural industries grew at an annual rate twice that of service industries and four times that of manufacturing in OECD countries (2009 UWR).



However, infrastructure investments are needed in the South to enhance and support cultural industries.

**Cultural Tourism:** Cultural tourism is 40% of global tourism revenue in (2007 UNWTO). Heritage, especially, UNESCO World Heritage sites, produces **revenues from visits**, sale of local crafts, music and cultural products generating **employment for communities**. International tourism represented approximately 10% of the EU's GDP in 2004 (2009 UWR).

**Traditional Livelihoods:** Culturally embedded livelihood practices help retain local knowledge and generate employment while enabling local **economic development**. These may vary from building crafts to agriculture and natural resource management.

**Opportunities for economic growth through micro-enterprises:** Cultural goods and services often need low capital investment by building on materials and skills available within the community. The successes of micro-credit enterprises that benefit women have been especially valuable.



**Cultural infrastructure and institutions:** Universities, museums, cultural centres, cinemas, theatres, craft centres, and other such institutions are significant generators of employment and revenues. A museum such as the Tate Modern is estimated to bring in revenues of over £100 million to London every year.



# Culture a Vehicle for Social Cohesion and Stability

**Mutual** appreciation of diversity among cultures creates positive and constructive engagement. Dialogue promotes mutual understanding, knowledge, **reconciliation, and peace**, which are essential for **social stability**.

**Reconstructive force of culture:** Intercultural dialogue brings peace and possibilities of reconciliation in the event of conflicts. Following a disaster, culture in all its forms helps communities reconstruct their disrupted lives and restore psychological well-being.

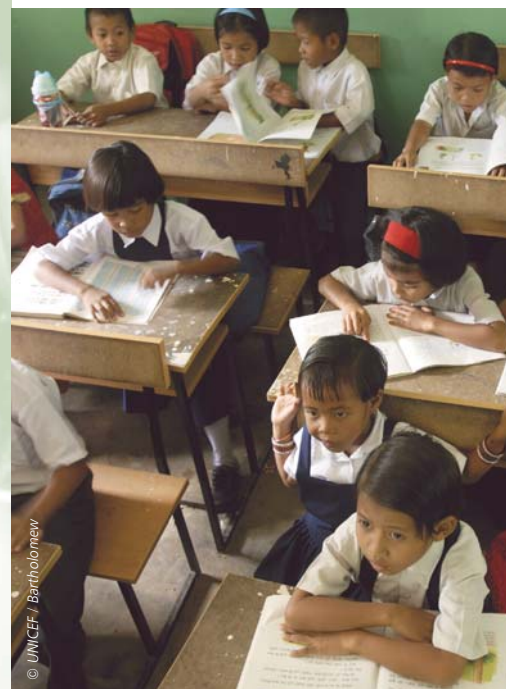
**Symbolic force of cultural heritage:** Culture is a well-spring of hope, enabling a deep sense of belonging.

**Social cohesion through cultural tourism:** Cultural heritage not only generates income, but also builds social cohesion, mobilizing communities around its care and management. Cultural festivals enhance dialogue.



**Empowerment of women:** Intercultural dialogue with its focus on the respect of difference rather than standardization empowers women by acknowledging their role as both 'value

carriers' and 'value creators.' Women in local cultures carry the responsibility of interpreting cultural forms, practices, and their meanings as well as transmitting them to the new generations. Women are also empowered by an acknowledgment of difference and reinforcement of their identities.



**Safeguarding** distinctive cultural forms and the processes of their production contributes to strengthening the social capital of a community and creates a sense of stewardship and trust in public institutions.

**Create an enabling environment to achieve the MDGs:** By preventing conflict, building peace, protecting the rights of women and marginalized groups, intercultural dialogue can help create conditions for achieving the MDGs.

*“...Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”*

UNESCO Constitution, 1945

# Culture *a Vehicle for Environmental Sustainability*

*Values and beliefs shape the relationship of a people to their natural environment and the ways they manage and impact it. Cultural values, local knowledge, and traditional practices of environmental management can be valuable resources towards achieving ecological sustainability.*

**Cultural and ecological diversity:** Biological and cultural diversity are intricately connected to a wide range of interactions between humans and nature, that are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

**Traditional systems of environmental management:** Accumulated traditional knowledge and the community practices of environmental management are fundamental to sustainability and essential for the survival of the place and people. Development approaches and programs have often failed to recognize that societies categorized as 'underdeveloped' have in fact been living sustainably for generations in a specific locale.

**Cities and cultural landscapes:** In an urbanizing world, management of natural and built heritage need to embrace their interrelationships by involving local communities in conservation initiatives.

**Ecological challenges:** A variety of current environmental challenges such as depleting water sources, shrinking forest covers, and disappearing species, rooted in a disregard for the environment, may be addressed by positive practices embedded in local cultures that value a balance between natural and human worlds.



# Culture *a Vehicle for Resilient Communities*

**Innovation and creativity:** Culture builds resiliency by reinforcing the abilities of people to be innovative and creative especially in the adversity of disasters and conflicts.

**Local building materials and technologies:** Schools, health centres, and housing built with local materials, knowledge and technologies are climatically effective, of lower cost, and use labour from the community. They engender identity, acceptance, and ownership, rather than structures imported from outside the region.

**Culture and globalization:** Communities empowered to define their identities and assert local values



are better able to engage with the forces of globalization to 'indigenize' them on their terms and benefit from them.

**Agents of development:** Heightened awareness of values and assets, enables people to become authors of their own development.



# Economic Contributions of Culture

## *Did You Know?*

■ Mali's culture sector accounts for 5.8% of employment in 2004 and 2.38% of GDP in 2006. (2007 IBF for the EC)

■ Colombia's craft production brings an annual income of US\$400 million (including US\$40 million in exports). This helps to provide workers in the sector income ranging from US\$140 to US\$510 annually. (2009 UWR)

■ In Columbia, 650,000 tourists brought in revenues of US\$800 million. (2009 UWR)

■ In Morocco, the tourism industry contributed 6.5% of GDP. (2009 UWR)

■ Brazil's 'creative' sector has contributed 6.7% of GDP in 1998.

■ In Guatemala, cultural industries grew at a rate of 7.3% annually from 2001 to 2005. This was a higher rate than that in most other sectors of the economy. Cultural industries also employed 7.14% of the labour force (2008 UNCTAD, Creative economy report)

**Cultural industries including cultural goods, services, activities, cultural tourism, and museums have also contributed significantly to economies that are modernized and advanced.**



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■ Morocco's crafts production forms 19% of its GDP (including exports estimated at US\$63 million). (2009 UWR)

■ Thailand's craft-workers are estimated to be 2 million with almost a half working full-time. (2009 UWR)



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■ Australia's 15 World heritage areas contribute to the GDP with over AU\$12 billion, and more than 40,000 jobs. (2008 DEWHA)

■ UK's GDP owes over £20 billion to heritage tourism and £5 billion annually to music. (2010 MLA)

■ EU's television, cinema, music, performing arts and entertainment generated €654 billion or 2.6% of the GDP in 2003 employing 5.8 million people in 2004. (2006 EC)



# Culture-Sensitive Development



## Espouses human development rather than economic growth alone:

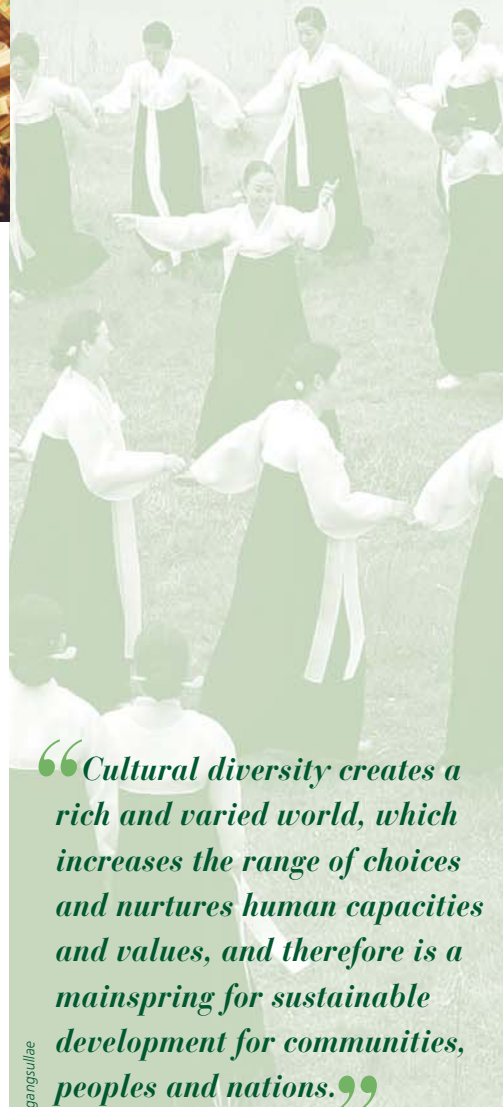
A vision of development embracing culture as an essential part of the enlargement of choice, provides for human dignity and well-being, and an enhancement of freedom.

## Promotes plural pathways to development:

Promoting development appropriate to a people, place, and their culture empowers them to shape their futures and the means to attain them. Development projects that impose visions from the outside impair the capacity of people to contribute to the well-being of their communities.

## Prioritizes people in development processes and outcomes:

Development as linear economic growth is incompatible with complex social and political dimensions, damaging the very foundations of cultural identities and values.



*“Cultural diversity creates a rich and varied world, which increases the range of choices and nurtures human capacities and values, and therefore is a mainspring for sustainable development for communities, peoples and nations.”*

UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions  
2005

## Values and safeguards cultural heritage:

Heritage, both tangible and intangible, is a legacy, a storehouse of knowledge, and the identity of a place, and a people. Identifying and safeguarding must happen alongside economic development since heritage, both tangible and intangible, is fragile and often unwittingly destroyed or lost in the rush to modernize.

## Seeks local solutions to global agendas:

Cultural approaches help to make development strategies relevant at the local level. Development responsive to place and culture empowers communities to engage with globalization on their own terms.

## Recognizes and promotes social justice and equity

within the framework of global ethics while enhancing cultural rights and identities. Enabling democratization empowers communities to exert an influence on the outcomes of development. Empowering women, indigenous and marginalized groups to assume their rightful role in society enables them to benefit from development programs.

## Nurtures spiritual and intellectual wealth towards eradicating poverty:

Poverty is not only a lack of economic resources but also a lack of rights, influence, status, and dignity. Altering perceptions of insecurity and of status enables the poor to rise out of poverty as does recognizing innovation and creativity.

# A Short History of Culture and Development

**1980s and early 1990s:** international efforts at modernization and development recognized the need to place people at the centre of development processes and with that the significance of culture.

**1982:** The World Conference on Cultural Policies in Mexico constituted a landmark for the acknowledgment of the indivisibility of culture and development.

**1988-1998:** UNESCO launched the World Decade on Culture and Development to advocate for the contribution of culture in national and international development policies. This led to establishing international standard-setting instruments and demonstration tools, such as cultural statistics, inventories, and mapping of cultural resources, as well as to an increasing focus on cultural industries.

**1990:** UNDP launched the publication of the Human Development Report emphasizing the idea of development as the enlargement of choices

**1992-1996:** UN World Commission on Culture and Development prepared a report espousing an expanded view of cultural diversity to recognize all forms of difference that excluded people from the development processes and outcomes.

**1998:** Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development in Stockholm recognized cultural diversity as essential for development emphasizing the value of cultural pluralism and creative diversity.

**1999:** UNESCO – World Bank Intergovernmental Conference, “Culture Counts: Financing Resources and the Economics of Culture in Sustainable Development” in Florence acknowledged the cultural capital as being crucial to advancing sustainable development and economic growth.

**2001:** UNESCO’s Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity recognized culture and cultural diversity as an ethical imperative and as vital to achieving economic and social development.

**2005:** UNESCO’s Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions acknowledged culture’s contribution to sustainable development and put culture and development together at its core.





# UNESCO's Cultural Mandate

*UNESCO, the sole UN agency with a cultural mandate, has devised policies and actions that demonstrate culture's unique contribution to development and establish a strong conceptual framework for it.*

## NORMATIVE INSTRUMENTS

UNESCO has developed a variety of normative and standard setting instruments including seven Conventions that support the elaboration of national cultural policies. They include:

- Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)
- Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)
- Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001)

- Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)
- Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Cultural Property (1970)
- Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954)
- Universal Copyright Convention (1952, 1971)

## Operational Guidelines and Policies

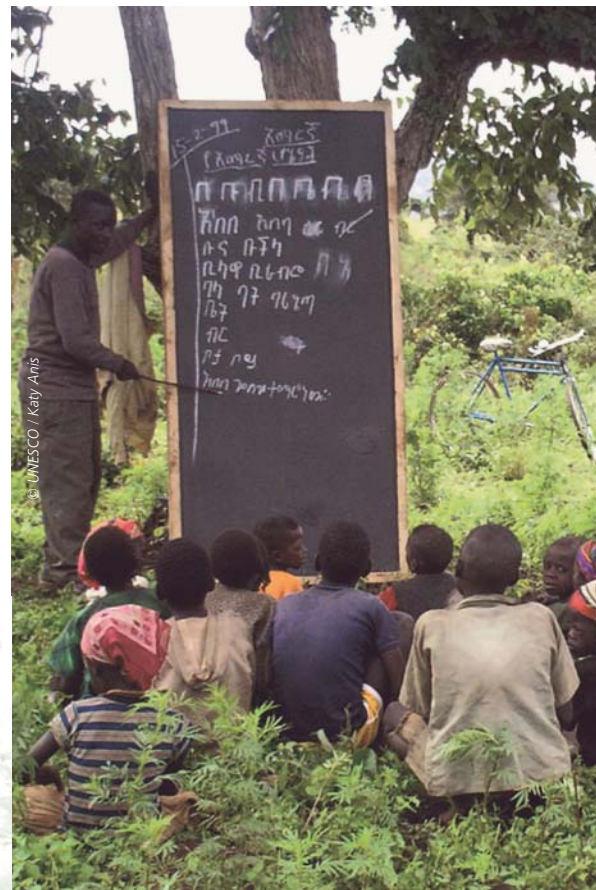
Policy documents and guidelines help to make the normative instruments operational on the ground. Together, they articulate UNESCO's vision for a culture-sensitive model of development and assist Member States in their implementation.



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## International Funds to Support Conventions

International Funds have been established in least developed and developing countries to support programmes related to some of the UNESCO Conventions at national, regional, and sub-regional levels, such as the International Fund for Cultural Diversity, the World Heritage Fund, and the International Fund for Intangible Heritage.

# UNESCO's Cultural Projects and Programmes for Development

*UNESCO has been engaged with many development projects and programmes from cultural industries to rapprochement for furthering social and economic development.*

*The projects help to generate jobs and revenues, strengthen traditional livelihoods, foster the emergence of a dynamic cultural sector and enhance existing ones.*

*UNESCO engagements in all regions of the world vary widely from supporting earth architecture conservation by women in Africa, to healing through art education for children after the tsunami in Indonesia, and from fostering creative economies in cities worldwide to promoting ecomuseums in rural areas.*

*The funds for these projects come mainly from contributions by the UNESCO Member States. Some have also benefited from private donations.*

## Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity

Intended to create partnerships between private, public, and civil society to strengthen local cultural industries for development. Between 2002 and 2009, 50 project partnerships were implemented. Projects have ranged from broadening the access for African music to regional and international markets to a programme in Côte d'Ivoire to build a cultural hub for regional and economic activities.



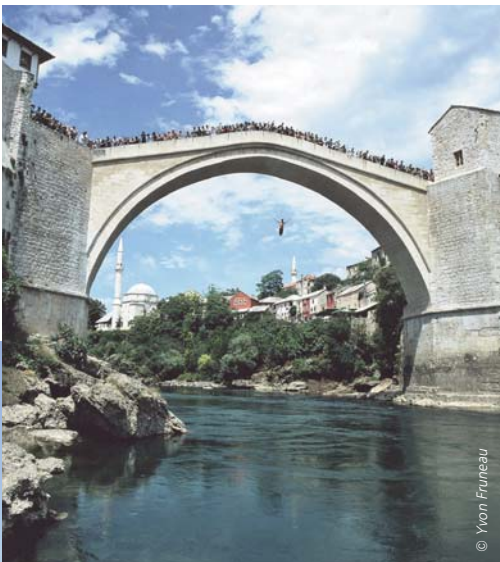
## World Heritage

In the framework of the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO conducts a large array of programmes and projects that foster local development throughout the world; these range



from environmental protection (biodiversity conservation, forests, marine areas, small islands), to historic urban landscapes, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, and cultural heritage conservation. Through these projects, UNESCO assists countries in protecting their cultural and natural heritage, improving their national policies and their management practices, building capacities, training, and raising awareness amongst communities, thus contributing to job's creation and economic revenues' generation.





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### Intangible Heritage

In the framework of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO conducts projects such as the revitalization of traditional performances in Djemâa el-Fna Square in Marrakesh, traditional clothes' making in Uganda, and the safeguarding of the Ifuagao farmers' chants in the rice terraces of the Philippines; these projects play a crucial role in providing the local communities with sustainable economic and subsistence means while consolidating their cultural identities.

### Cultural Heritage for Reconstruction and Reconciliation

Cultural heritage provides people affected by conflict or natural disaster with a sense of identity and belonging that gives meaning to the efforts to reconstruct their nation and to return to normalcy. UNESCO projects developed in Ethiopia (Aksum Obelisk), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mostar Bridge), Cambodia (Angkor),



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Afghanistan (Bamiyan Valley), and Iraq (Museum collections) show how cultural heritage can help people in post-conflict situations find common ground and shared purpose. In another instance, intangible cultural heritage shared across nations, such as the Novruz celebration, covering a vast geographical area from Azerbaijan to India and Iran, promotes the values of peace and solidarity and contributes to friendship among peoples and various communities. UNESCO also promotes linguistic diversity education to foster intercultural dialogue and expand opportunities in a globalized world.

### MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) – Culture and Development Thematic Window

Within the MDG-F Culture and Development Thematic Window, which is led by UNESCO, 18 UN inter-agency programmes demonstrate the contribution of culture to development at national level with an aim to speed progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Funded by Spain for an amount of US \$95 million, these programmes foster social inclusion and poverty reduction through the promotion and enhancement of cultural resources. This is achieved by encouraging the inclusion of minorities and disadvantaged groups in social, political and cultural life, and by harnessing the tremendous potential of the cultural sectors for job creation, economic growth and poverty reduction.

# Putting Culture to work for the MDGs *the UNESCO contribution*

*Culture can contribute to the MDGs by helping to build strong, self-reliant communities. UNESCO's projects integrate cultural approaches that help to make poverty alleviation strategies highly relevant and more effective at the local level since they respond to local specificities.*

**Poverty and hunger:** A project to promote intangible living heritage in Morocco that includes traditional music, dance, and ceremonies provides alternative employment to seasonal agricultural workers of the Draa Valley. This has enabled them to feed their families during lean periods.

**Strengthen local systems of food production:** The informal home gardens in urban Amazonia as much as the terraced rice fields of the Philippines and Indonesia are cultural landscapes representing local systems of environmental, social and economic management. When such cultural landscapes are enhanced, they enable a diversity of food production systems especially those that directly benefit women and children.

**Universal primary education:** A project for primary education targeting indigenous communities in the Peruvian Andes, demonstrated that introducing local knowledge in curricula helps young people take pride in their community's values and build their trust in governmental institutions.

**Gender equality and women's empowerment:** A series of sub-regional creative workshops were set up in Cameroon, Madagascar, and Mali to encourage women business managers to play an active role in the development of cultural industries. The workshops also provided women crafts workers training in innovation, product quality, and marketing.

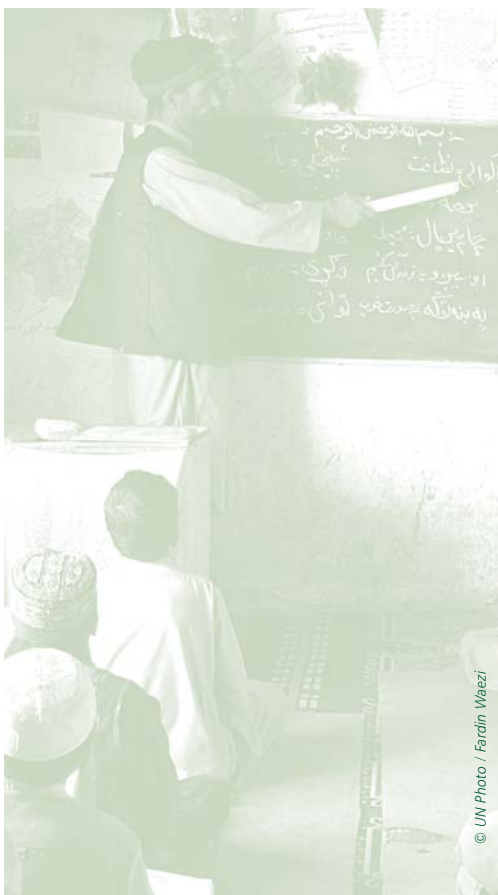
## **Improve maternal health and combat HIV and other diseases:**

Joint programmes of UNESCO with WHO and UNICEF along with others promote responsiveness to cultural beliefs and practices in public health care projects. This improves their effectiveness such as one in Tanzania aimed at reducing maternal mortality and neonatal deaths. Traditional arts and community museums have been effective in raising awareness about HIV/AIDS. An exhibition of drawings at the Fouban Community Museum in Western Cameroon, and radio soap operas in Southeast Asia are examples of these.

## **Environmental sustainability:**

Engagement with poor and vulnerable people, such as coastal communities at risk of floods, hurricanes, and rising

sea-level, enables their enhanced protection from climate change risks. A project that integrated preserving the environment and biodiversity at the Midongy-Befotaka National Park in Madagascar engaged local communities in balancing the availability of drinking water with the necessity of preserving natural resources. The project includes a monitoring system in order to regularly assess the evolution of social, economic, and environmental indicators linked to the MDGs.



**Global Partnership:** A joint UNESCO-EU programme provides demand-driven assistance focusing on the building of an enabling regulatory environment for the creation, production, and distribution of cultural industries in 63 developing countries.

More broadly, UNESCO is building partnerships with international development institutions such as the World Bank, the EIB and the OECD to encourage the integration of culture into the global development agenda on both the policy and operational levels.



# Culture First

## *Future Directions and International Commitments*

***Place culture at the heart of development:*** Culture is an essential investment for peace and stability, and is a prerequisite for the success of human development. A more visible and effective inclusion of culture in development programmes at local, national, and international levels is critical for sustainable development.

***Embrace diversity*** in approaches and development models as well as in cultural forms and practices.

***Adapt to market environments:*** Adapting of traditional cultural goods to modern markets requires technical and design support, as well as legal and financial expertise. Policies and measures are necessary to create an enabling market environment essential for the success of micro-enterprises and creative producers.

***Integrate culture in country-level policies:*** Fully acknowledging national and sub-national engagements is critical to promote effective culture-sensitive policies and strategies for development with UNESCO's international conventions serving as a guide. UN country teams can further integrate culture explicitly in joint programming exercises in pursuit of the countries' development priorities.

***Invest in capacity building:*** Capacity building of local communities and of supportive bureaucracies is a prerequisite for sustainable communities.

***Invest in culture:*** Culture requires long-term investments into the physical and technical infrastructure, training, and capacity building in order to realize economic and social potential.

***Promote culture-based projects:*** Projects to create and strengthen culture cultural industries and cultural tourism need to be included in bilateral and multilateral efforts that assist countries in the pursuit of their development objectives.

***Facilitate access to funding:*** Innovative financing and public-private partnerships are essential to improve access to capital for cultural entrepreneurs. Traditional forms of investing in culture such as subsidies are insufficient. Culture receives only 1.7% of ODA, even though it represents 2-6% of GNP in many countries.

***Develop guides and tools:*** UNESCO's Culture Diversity Programming Lens is an important tool to help develop national strategies. UNESCO's Policy Guide on culture and creative industries provides policy makers with a hands-on approach to strengthen the creative economy. UNESCO's suite of Culture and Development Indicators is a tool to assess and describe the contribution of culture to development processes.

**UNESCO's leadership is critical to enable pathways for integrating culture in development efforts.**



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