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**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE
FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION
OF THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS**

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This document presents information on the « You Are Next: empowering creative women », UNESCO – Sabrina Ho initiative and on the projects approved for financing in 2018.

1. The UNESCO 2018 [Global Report](#) “Re|Shaping Cultural Policies” concluded that women are not only less connected, but have lower digital literacy skills and little access to training programmes. Women are less likely to be hired by tech companies and are underrepresented in tech conferences or creative industry marketplaces. Women entrepreneurs remain invisible in the digital creative industries even though they represent half of those employed in these sectors worldwide. Women are also largely missing in senior management and leadership positions.
2. “You Are Next: empowering creative women” was designed to meet these challenges. It is a new initiative to address the different needs, aspirations, capacities and contributions of young women working in the digital creative industries in developing countries. It expands the actions of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD) through a contribution of \$ 1.5 million from - Sabrina Ho¹, a young cultural entrepreneur and philanthropist, in November 2017.
3. A call for applications to the “You Are Next” initiative was launched in the context of the IFCD, aimed at women under 40 years of age from developing countries, to support for projects that:
 - Develop and/or implement strategies that invest in women as entrepreneurs working in the digital creative industries;
 - Create networks and opportunities to innovate and collaborate for women under 40 working in the digital creative industries;
 - Organize female-led creative mentorship programmes for women under 40 in partnership with digital creative hubs, incubators and clusters;
 - Give visibility to the work and innovations of women entrepreneurs under 40 working in the digital creative industries;
 - Strengthen the digital skills of women under 40 working in the creative industries;
 - Collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data with a view to better understand the underlying causes of gender inequality in the digital creative industries with a view to inform policy making.
4. This document presents the results of the call for applications to the UNESCO-Sabrina Ho, “You Are Next: empowering creative women” initiative.

UNESCO-Sabrina Ho “You Are Next: empowering creative women” initiative 2018 call

5. UNESCO launched the “You Are Next: empowering creative women” call for funding proposals in February 2018. The call closed on 20 April 2018. Successful projects were announced on the 2005 Convention’s website (<https://en.unesco.org/creativity/news/unesco-sabrina-ho-initiative-women-digital-creative>) in August 2018 and their implementation began in December 2018.
6. In order to ensure a fully transparent project selection process, all submitted projects followed 3 steps of evaluation:
 - Technical assessment by the 2005 Convention’s Secretariat;
 - Expert evaluation and final recommendations;
 - Approval of project recommendations by Sabrina Ho.
7. The Secretariat received 101 projects from 46 countries. The majority of the projects received focused on capacity development: 35% of projects were designed to provide mentoring and/or

¹ Sabrina Ho, following her studies in arts at University of Hong Kong and the completion of her MBA in Switzerland, founded Chiu Yeng Culture Limited in 2015, a company dedicated to promoting young artists in Macao. She has been actively involved at community level to support the emergence of the region’s cultural scene. She is a member of the Youth Committee of the Macao (China) Chamber of Commerce and Committee Chairman of the non-profit organisation, Boao Youth Forum for Asia.

training; 22% aimed to build new and/or stronger networks of cooperation; 8% of the projects included governance and public policy in their objectives and activities.

8. As a result of the technical assessment, 34 projects were deemed eligible for funding: 35% from Africa, 23.5% from Latin America and the Caribbean, 23.5% from South-Eastern Europe, 9% from Arab states and 9% from Asia and the Pacific.
9. Four recommended projects were submitted to Sabrina Ho for approval.

Projects selected

10. On August 31, UNESCO announced the four winning projects for a total amount of 385 520 USD. Below are summaries of the selected projects.

#BeYourVoice (Mexico)

#BeYourVoice is a project developed by the performing arts company “Teatro de Aire” at the interface of education and culture. It is designed to empower 100 young women, giving them the artistic, digital and entrepreneurship skills they need to succeed. #BeYourVoice will operate within a unique platform, using Virtual Reality technologies. Its experimental dimension can lead to new educational models, both in form and content that could be replicable in other sectors or countries. Through this new VR e-learning tool, #BeYourVoice aims to increase women’s confidence, their employment opportunities and create a network of future decision-makers in the digital creative industries.

Women Audio Visual Education - WAVE (Palestine)

“Theatre Day Productions” in Gaza has developed a new project bringing together digital animation, drama, storytelling and vocational training to build entrepreneurial, creative and technical skills among young women. They will learn to create short videos with their smartphones, work with communities and turn improvisation, character analysis and development into new digital creative expressions from Palestine that can be distributed through international festivals and regional markets. National and international trainers, using the latest digital technologies and software, will mentor these young women. In parallel, “Theatre Day Productions” will launch an advocacy campaign on culture, freedom of expression and women’s rights. It will use the results of the project to formulate a five year strategic plan towards the introduction of curriculum on digital audiovisual production at a Palestinian university or public institution.

DigitELLES (Senegal)

Gender equality, artistic creation and freedom of expression are priorities for “Africulturban” who works to support women and girls in Dakar to take ownership of their creative environments and develop their full potential. Through this project, “Africulturban” will provide a new digital training programme for young female artists working in the music industry to strengthen their technical and artistic skills. With the collaboration of “Positive Planet International”, they will provide opportunities for cultural management training and for the production of new cultural expressions using digital tools. Through this partnership, they will introduce collaborative co-working methods and the Human-Centred Design approach that will help these young women establish micro-enterprises and contribute towards achieving their financial independence. In parallel, “Africulturban” will launch an awareness raising campaign to combat stereotypes and empower women to fight against discrimination in this sector.

Digital Arts Academy (Tajikistan and Afghanistan)

Much of Tajikistan and Afghanistan’s cultural and educational infrastructure was destroyed by conflict and war, impeding their social and economic development. As they move towards rebuilding their countries, they face fundamental challenges, including the exclusion of women from economic and public spheres, including the tech world. “Bactria Cultural Centre” will establish a new Digital Arts Academy in Dushanbe for female cultural entrepreneurs under 40

years old from Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The academy will offer courses on coding, digital creation and entrepreneurship training to help them become competitive on the digital job market. The female graduates will be involved in developing new curriculum, teaching and mentoring future academy graduates. This will help break down barriers women face to spheres of influence. The “Bactria Cultural Centre” will launch a creative digital campaign designed by the graduates themselves, to help raise awareness of the role and creative capacities of women. Their digital artistic productions will be promoted, giving recognition to the contribution of women to the digital arts scene of Central Asia for the first time.

Create|2030 Talks

11. The project beneficiaries are to participate in a special session of “Create|2030 Talks” organized during the present session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Opened by Sabrina Ho, the project beneficiaries are not only to present their projects but have an opportunity to share with Committee members the challenges that women face in the digital creative industries in their countries and the results expected from the implementation of their projects.