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Precarious situation for women working in the field of culture

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) is the statistical office of UNESCO and is the UN depository for global statistics in the fields of education, science and technology, culture and communication.

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This fact sheet presents the latest UIS data on cultural employment available as of September 2017.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 8.5 seeks that “By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value”. To help monitor this target, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) produces data on cultural employment. This fact sheet offers a snapshot of the characteristics of persons employed in cultural jobs, with a particular focus on the profile of women.

Culture plays a significant role in the economy

The economic wealth of a country does not have an impact on the share of people employed in the culture sector. As shown in **Figure 1**, the rate of cultural employment can vary considerably. In countries with relatively high levels of GDP per capita, the rate of cultural employment ranges from 3% to 8% of total employment. The range widens in countries with lower levels of income. For example in Mexico, almost 10% of the workforce is in the culture sector, compared to just 1% in El Salvador.

Many people in cultural jobs hold university degrees

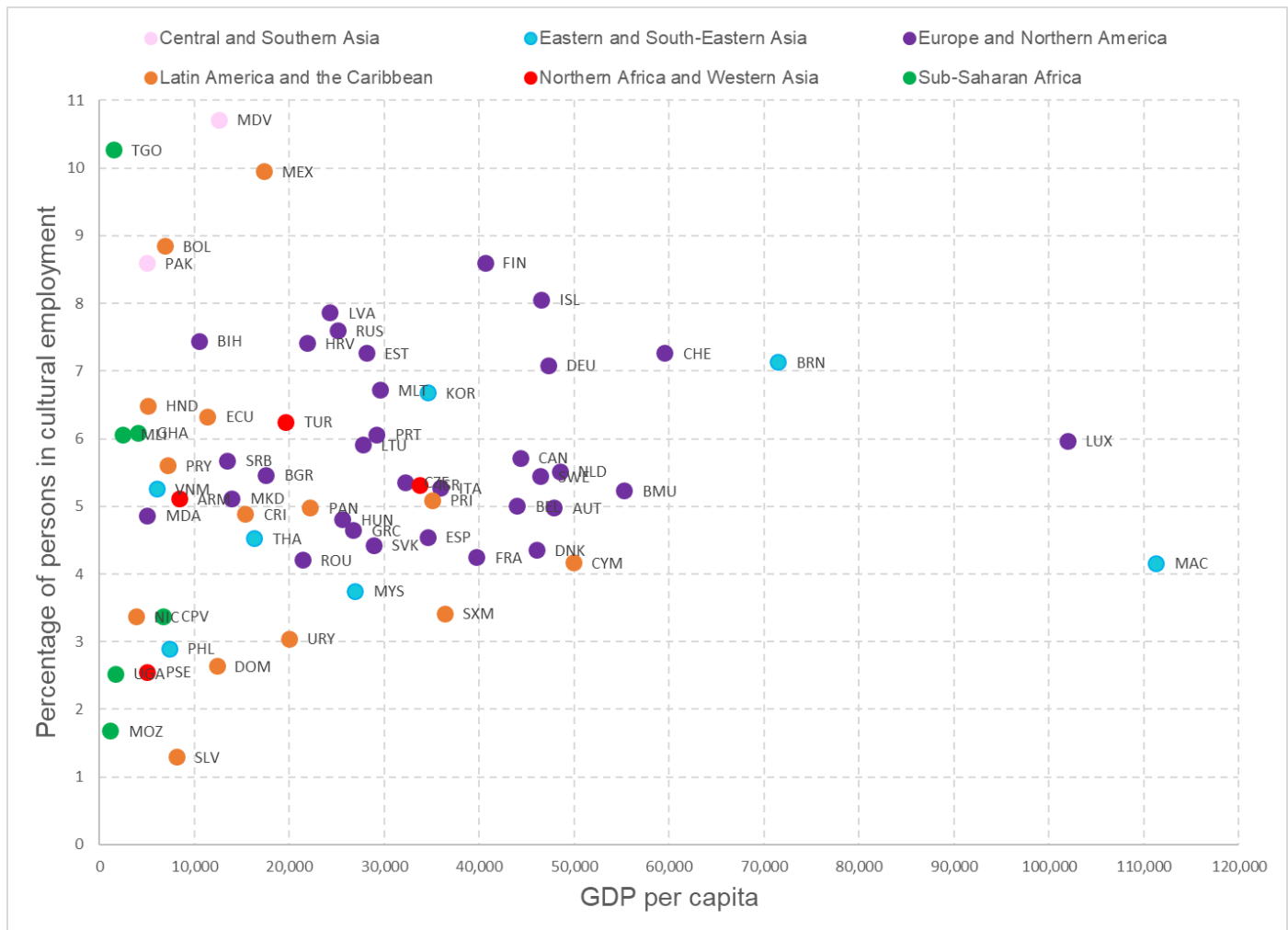
People with cultural occupations tend to have higher levels of educational attainment compared to those with a non-cultural job. In 90% of countries for which data are available, the number of people employed in cultural occupations who have attained a tertiary level of education¹ is higher than the number of people in non-cultural occupations (see **Figure 2**).

¹ Tertiary education entails learning at a high level of complexity and specialization. It includes what is commonly understood as academic education but also advanced vocational or professional education (UIS, ISCED 2011).



The difference is smaller for countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In Mali and Ghana, the share of people with a tertiary education is almost identical, regardless if they hold a cultural job or not, with 2% and 4% respectively.

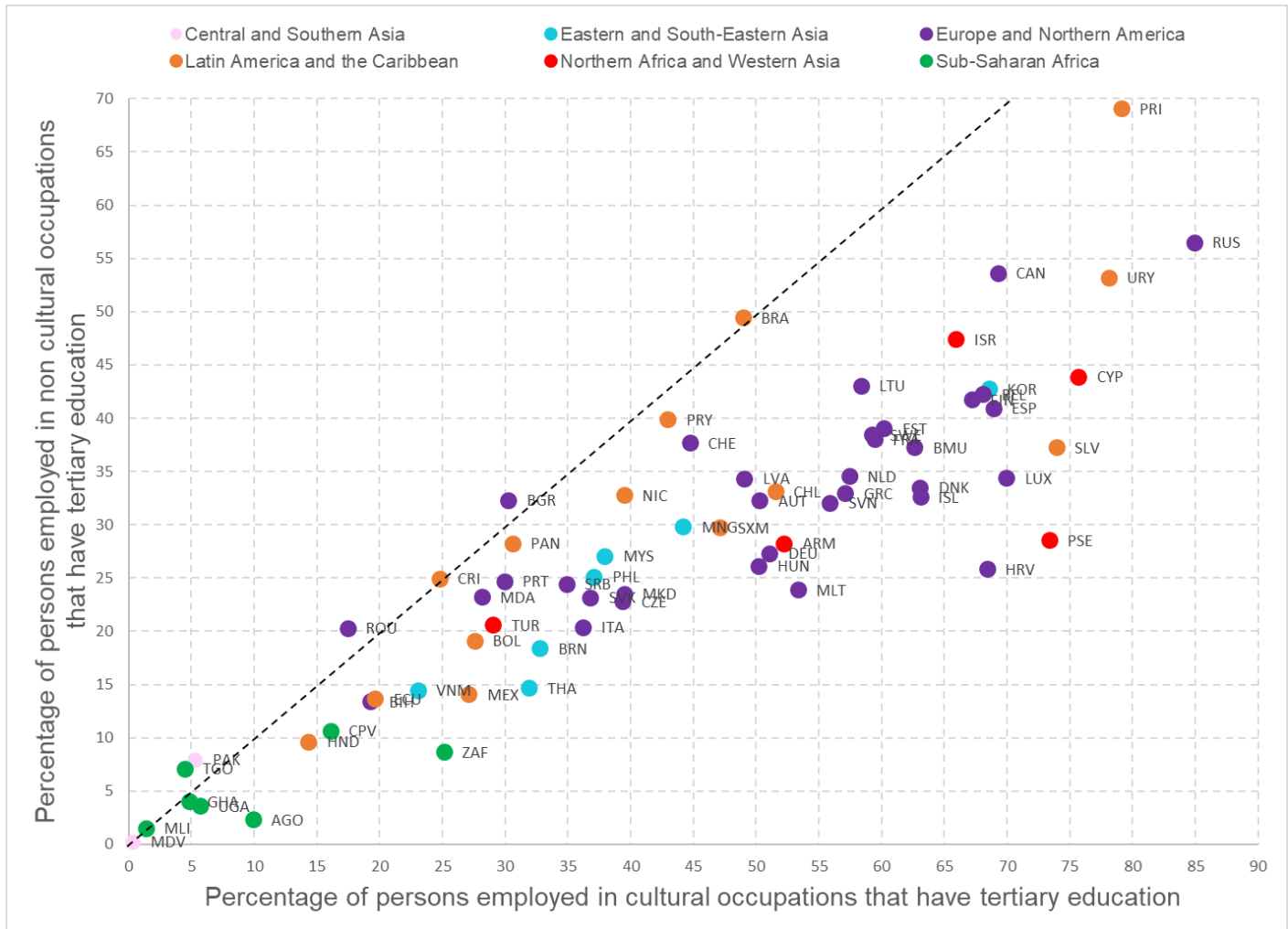
Figure 1. Percentage of persons in cultural employment by GDP per capita, 2015 or latest year available



Source: [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#).



Figure 2. Percentage of people in cultural and non-cultural occupations with tertiary education, 2015 or latest year available



Source: [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#).

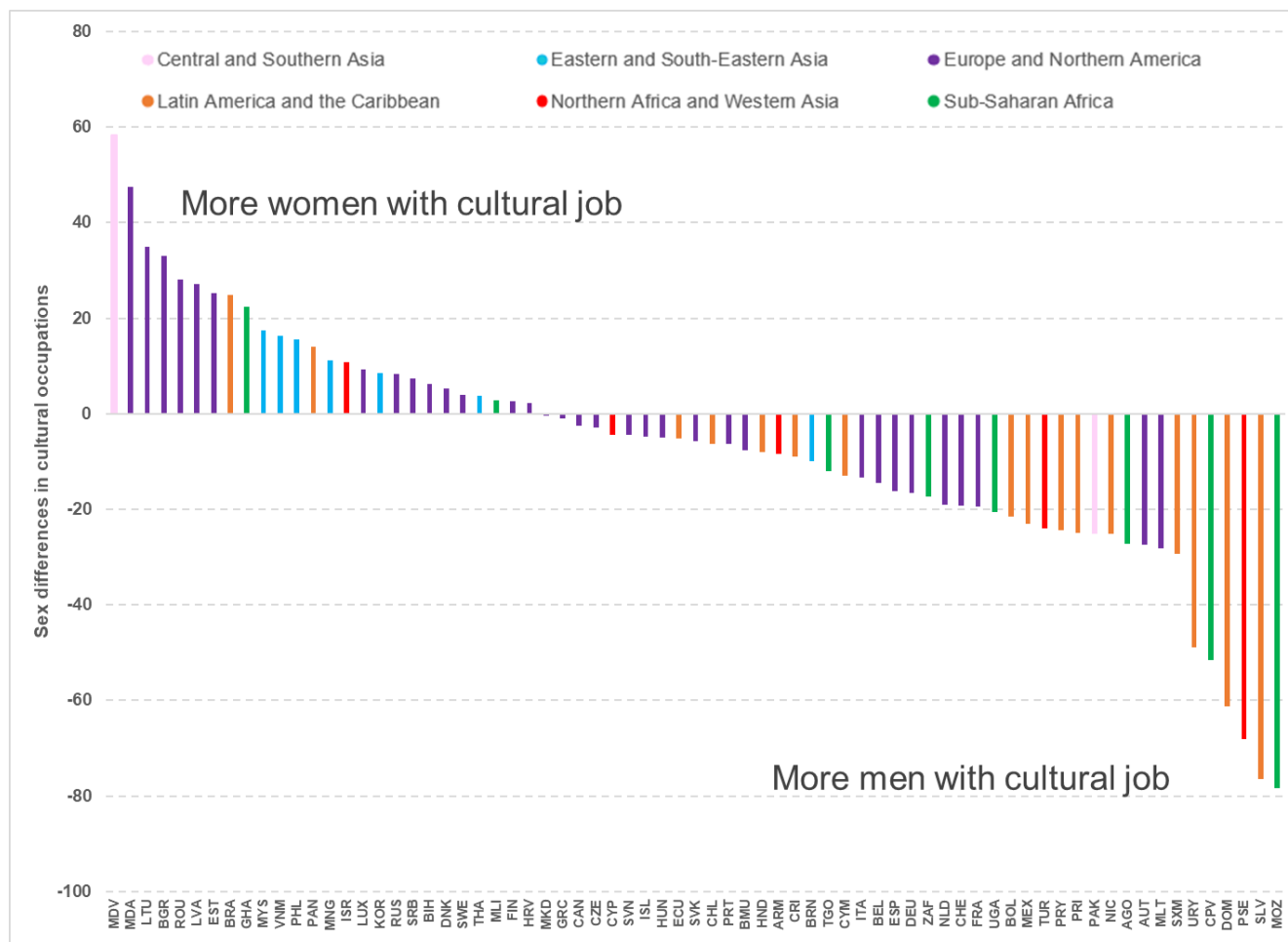
Status of women in cultural occupations

Do jobs in the field of culture attract more women than men? In 58% of countries for which data are available, there are more women with cultural occupations compared to non-cultural occupations. **Figure 3** shows the breakdown of where there are more or less women with cultural jobs by country.

In 2015, women accounted for more than 50% of those employed in cultural occupations in Eastern Europe and South-Eastern Asia. In contrast, in some countries women participate significantly less than men in cultural employment. The gender gap in favour of men is quite pronounced in a few developing countries: Cabo Verde, Mozambique, Palestine, Salvador and Uruguay.



Figure 3. Sex differences for people with cultural occupations by country, 2015 or latest year available



Note: This graph presents the percentage point difference in the proportion of women or men working in cultural occupations. The positive value indicates that women outnumber men with employment in culture.
Source: [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#).

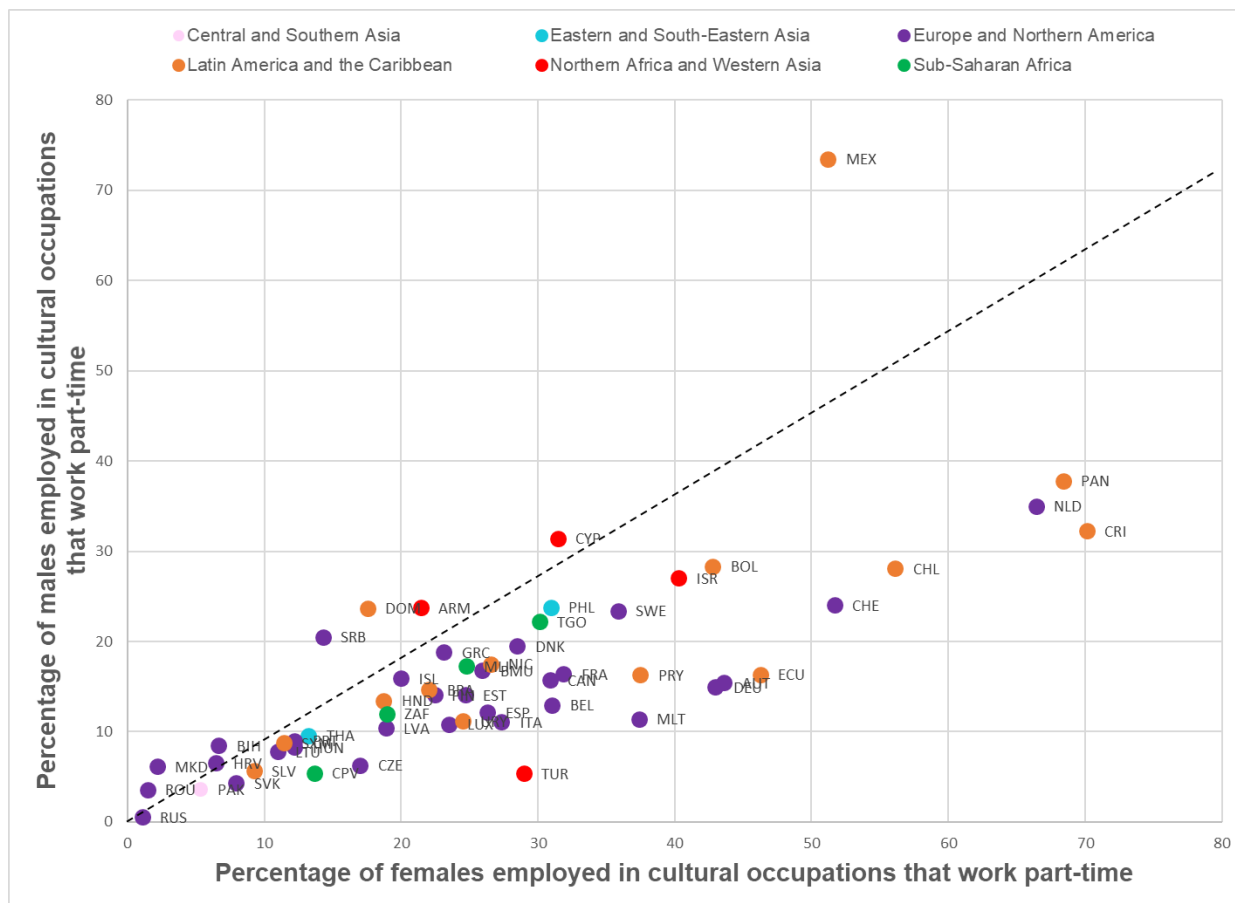
Is the culture sector providing decent work for women?

SDG Goal 8 makes reference to decent work meaning that a person should receive a reasonable income to sustain his/her basic needs. While the UIS survey on cultural employment does not collect data on income, other data can be used to assess decent work in the culture sector. For example, a person who has more than one job, most likely does not have enough income with his main occupation to fulfill his/her basic needs.

Due to the digitisation of the economy, artists' revenues – particularly for musicians – have decreased significantly. Thus, they often need to find another source of revenue. In many developing countries, women



Figure 5. Percentage of people employed in cultural occupations who work part-time by sex, 2015 or latest year available



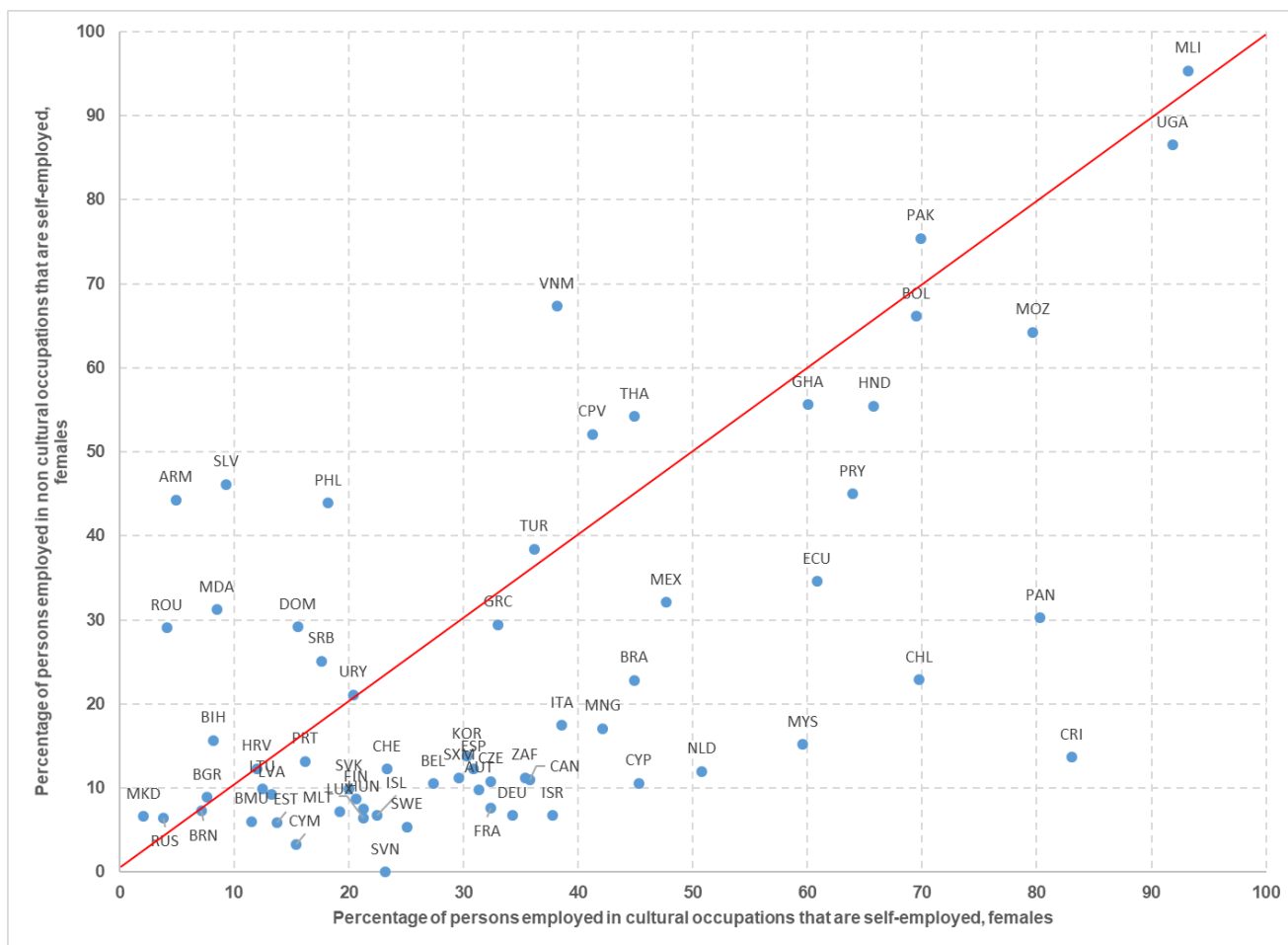
Source: [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#).

People in cultural professions may have a unique profile from people with non-cultural jobs. Artists and craftmakers are often entrepreneurs.

Figure 6 presents the share of self-employed women in cultural occupations compared to non-cultural occupations. For 69% of countries with available data, there were more self-employed women working in the culture sector than in non-culture sectors in 2015. According to the data for these countries, on average 34% of women with cultural jobs are self-employed, compared to 24% of women in non-cultural occupations. However, these figures hide great disparities within countries. In Mali and Uganda, for example, more than 90% of women in cultural jobs are self-employed compared to just 7% in Brunei Darussalam.



Figure 6. Share of women employed in cultural occupations and non-cultural occupations who are self-employed, 2015 or latest year available

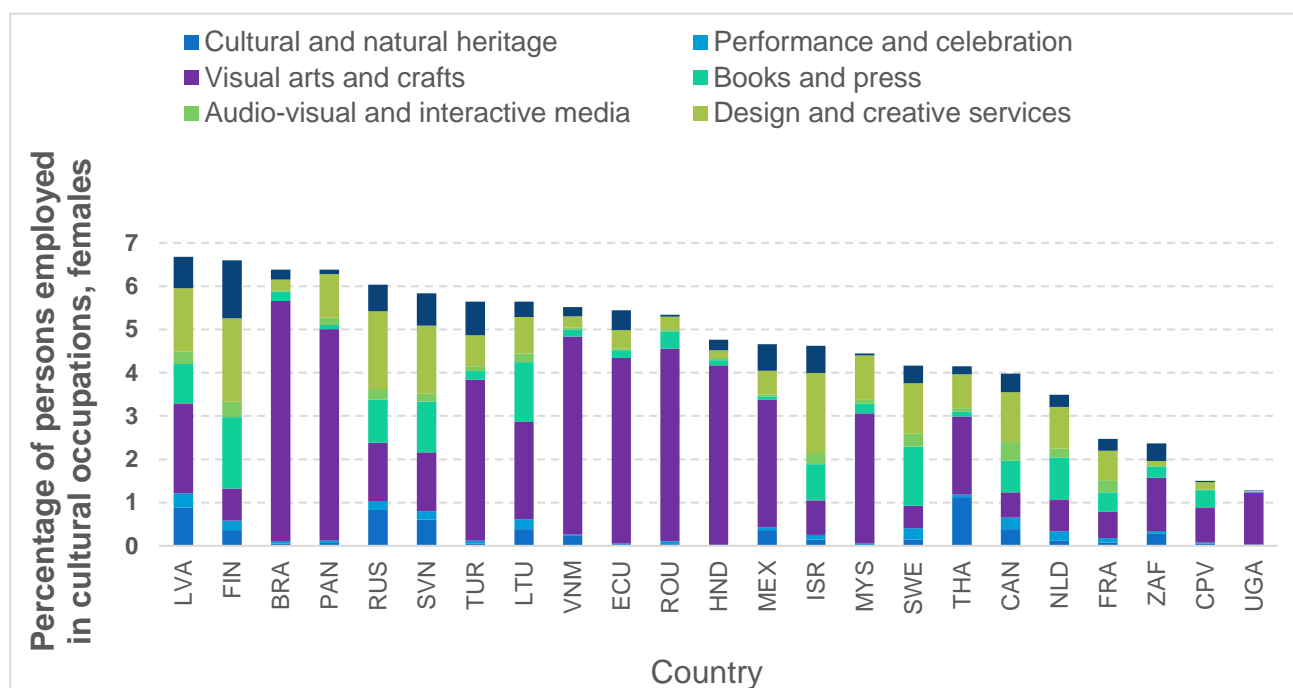




In developed countries, the distribution of women in cultural employment is more evenly distributed across visual arts and crafts, books and press, and design and creative services.

When we look at the share of women employed in each domain, they are predominantly employed in two cultural domains: books and press and cultural education and training. As seen in **Figure 8**, in 2015 women made up at least 60% of the work force in these two domains. The third domain dominated by women is cultural and natural heritage.

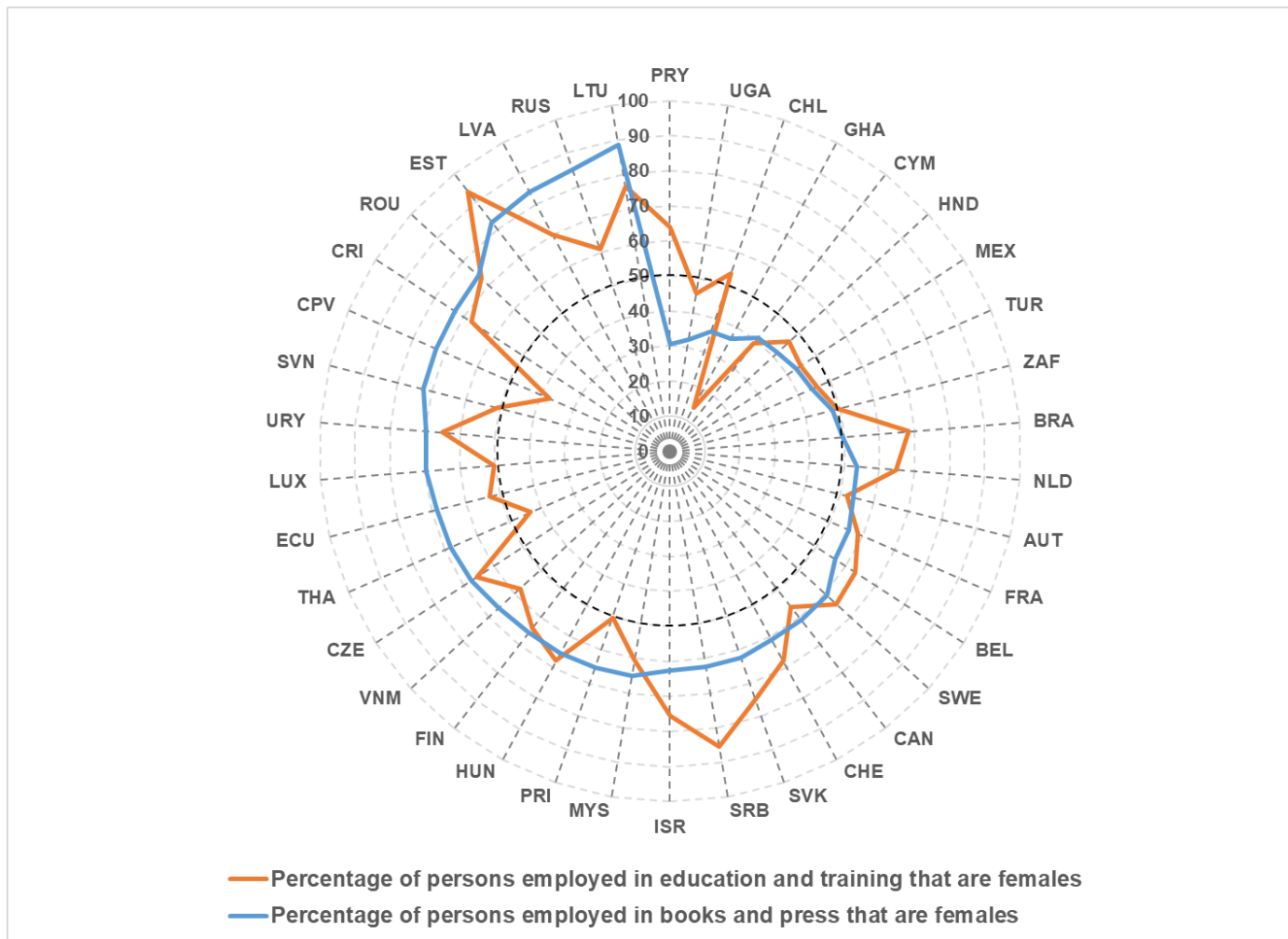
Figures 7. Share of women employed in cultural occupations by domain, 2015 or most recent year available



Source: [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#).



Figure 8. Percentage of workers in books and press and cultural education and training who are female, 2015 or most recent year available



Source: [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#).