

CULTURE AND THE 2030 AGENDA

Q & A

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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WHERE IS CULTURE IN THE 2030 AGENDA?

Through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community has recognized, for the first time, the essential role of culture as an enabler of development. Culture is featured most prominently in Sustainable Development Goal 11, which calls on the international community to “Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage”. Other SDGs clearly refer to the role of culture for quality education (SDG 4), economic growth and sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDGs 8 and 12), climate action (SDG 13), inclusive and peaceful societies (SDG 16) and gender equality (SDG 5).

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WHY CULTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Culture is an enabler of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the cultural and creative industries were among the fastest growing in the world, representing 30 million jobs worldwide. Cultural tourism represented 40% of world tourism revenues, with sites inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List often serving as valuable sources of local job creation. Supporting the cultural sector in the wake of COVID-19 will be a crucial to ensuring that the world remains on track to achieve the SDGs. Intercultural dialogue and respect for cultural diversity are powerful tools for reconciliation and the creation of peaceful societies. Intangible culture heritage represents a source of resilience and knowledge for addressing key challenges, including poverty, providing quality education and climate change. Culture is who we are, where we have been, and where we are going. Development cannot be sustainable without it.

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HOW DOES UNESCO WORK TO ACHIEVE THE SDGS THROUGH CULTURE?

- i. **SDG 4 – Quality Education.** UNESCO is implementing a series of projects to integrate living heritage into formal and informal education systems, including with the EU. Through the World Heritage Education Programme, more than 3,500 young volunteers have learned about the value of heritage by taking part in 359 youth camps in 61 countries around the world. UNESCO celebrates International Arts Education Week during the fourth week of May.
- ii. **SDG 5 – Gender Equality.** UNESCO and Japanese film director Naomi Kawase, founder of the Nara International Film Festival (NIFF) have launched a new joint initiative to support young female directors from Africa through multi-generational female mentorship.
- iii. **SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth.** UNESCO has launched a new study on Culture & Working Conditions for Artists, which uncovers the persistent and emerging challenges facing artists and cultural professionals and examines how countries around the world are addressing these issues through policymaking.
- iv. **SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities.** The UNESCO Creative Cities Network, now home to 246 Member Cities, is committed to placing culture at the heart of their sustainable urban development strategies.
- v. **SDG 16 – Inclusive and Peaceful Societies.** Through the Revive the Spirit of Mosul initiative, UNESCO is working to restore Mosul’s historic spirit as a place of intercultural dialogue and exchange, particularly by restoring its cultural and educational institutions.
- vi. **International cooperation and dialogue.** On 19 November 2019, UNESCO held its first Forum of Ministers of Culture in more than 20 years, bringing together over 120 Ministers of Culture to discuss the many ways in which cultural policies can support education, peacebuilding, job creation and sustainability. UNESCO is also piloting the Culture|2030 Indicators for measuring the contribution of culture to the SDGs.

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KEY MESSAGES



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the first international development agenda to make explicit the link between culture and development.



It contains specific targets for safeguarding the world's cultural and natural heritage, for ensuring that respect for and appreciation of our cultural diversity is ingrained in our education systems, and for protecting fundamental freedoms, such as participation in cultural life and artistic freedom.



Culture is fundamental to achieving the SDGs, because truly sustainable, human-centred development is impossible without culture. Culture provides a sense of identity and meaning, makes communities more resilient and cities more sustainable. At the same time, cultural heritage and creativity play a critical role in reducing poverty by creating jobs and nurturing well-being.



Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the creative economy was responsible for nearly 30 million jobs worldwide, making up 10% of the GDPs of some countries. The creative economy also employs more people aged 15-29 than any other sector, and an almost equal number of men and women. Cultural tourism represented 40% of world tourism revenues and World Heritage sites served as valuable sources of employment. Supporting the recovery of the cultural and creative industries will be crucial to ensuring that the world remains on track to achieve the SDGs.



Realizing the full potential of culture for development will take far greater engagement on the part of governments and international organizations across the globe. It will require a new commitment on the part of national governments to fully integrate culture into their national development policies. It will also require an increase in the percentage of Official Development Assistance dedicated to culture, which today is at a 10-year low.



It will require further emphasis on the pivotal role of the technical and vocational education of culture professionals, managers and cultural entrepreneurs. This includes the transmission of cultural know-how, often embodied by craft and craftsmanship, which is ensured by UNESCO through the implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.



Crucially, it will also mean placing culture at the heart of peacebuilding and recovery efforts. UNESCO is supporting the reconstruction and recovery of the cultural heritage and cultural life of Beirut through the Li Beirut initiative. UNESCO is also working to reconstruct Mosul's cultural and educational institutions through the "Revive the Spirit of Mosul" initiative.

For more information, visit: <http://en.unesco.org/themes/culture-sustainable-development>