

CULTURE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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WHAT IS UNESCO'S PRIORITY GENDER EQUALITY?

Gender Equality, one of UNESCO's two global priorities, underpins all of the Organization's actions on education, culture, natural science, the social and human sciences and communications. UNESCO promotes gender equality through a two-pronged approach – gender-specific programmes and gender mainstreaming – and coordinates these efforts through the Division for Gender Equality, located in the Cabinet of the Director-General.

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WHY CULTURE FOR GENDER EQUALITY?

Despite notable progress in recent decades, women are underrepresented in almost all cultural fields, including film, music, museums, art, heritage and digital media, particularly in leadership positions. Moreover, according to *Re/Shaping Cultural Policies*, the Global Monitoring Report for the 2005 Convention, women in culture are paid significantly less than their male counterparts, and have limited access to resources, training and mentorship. These gender disparities in the field of culture frequently reinforce and perpetuate gender inequalities in society at large. Yet strengthening women's participation in and access to culture can also be a powerful means of promoting gender equality. That is why UNESCO is working to integrate an awareness of gender into all its programmes and activities, including in the field of culture, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the ultimate goal of closing this gender gap and achieving gender equality.

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HOW DOES THE CULTURE SECTOR WORK TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY?

- i. **Researching the gender gap.** *Re/Shaping Cultural Policies* found that a multifaceted gender gap persists in all cultural fields and reaffirmed that the Convention calls for States Parties to integrate a gender perspective into all cultural policies and measures. In 2014, UNESCO published *Gender Equality, Heritage and Creativity*, providing a global snapshot of the current challenges and opportunities for gender equality in cultural life. Among its recommendations, the Report specifically called for countries to improve the collection of sex-disaggregated data within the culture sector.
- i. **Supporting women creators.** 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. Through the You Are Next initiative, UNESCO has supported women entrepreneurs under the age of 40 by expanding their access to funding, infrastructure, and co-production opportunities in the digital creative industries.
- ii. **Fostering women's empowerment.** UNESCO organized its first workshop aimed at female military personnel in late 2019, bringing together some 40 female members of the armed forces of Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan, as well as female peacekeepers from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), to discuss the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict. UNESCO and Fondation CHANEL are working to further vocational education and training in sustainable tourism for women in the communities surrounding the Tsingy Nature Reserve in Madagascar, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- ii. **Mobilizing its Conventions.** Under the World Heritage Convention, World Heritage sites such as Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo are ensuring that women have access to every level of site management, including the park ranger positions typically held by men. Through the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO works to ensure that all gender groups can fully participate in the safeguarding and transmission of their intangible heritage.

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KEY MESSAGES



Gender permeates all areas of cultural life. As part of the DNA of communities, culture provides a unique space where gender roles and social norms are constantly questioned, challenged, reinforced and reimagined.



A gendered look at the state of heritage and creativity reveals the same challenges found in other areas of socioeconomic life: limited participation of women in decision-making positions; segregation into certain activities; restricted opportunities for training, capacity-building and networking; women's unequal share of unpaid care work; as well as gender stereotypes and fixed ideas about culturally appropriate roles for women and men.



Women are under-represented in creative fields such as publishing, contemporary music and the visual arts, particularly in leadership positions. Less than a quarter of the crew members and only 5 percent of the directors who worked on the 2,000 highest grossing films over the last two decades were women. Out of the world's top 150 classical music conductors, only 3 percent are women. 82% of management positions in cultural administration are occupied by men.



A lack of sex-disaggregated cultural data often conceals gender gaps and challenges from policy-makers and decision-makers.



Many heritage sites are gendered. Some have segregated entrances to buildings, and assign women and men different areas in certain religious monuments. All intangible cultural heritage expressions carry and transmit knowledge and norms related to the roles and relationships between and within gender groups in a given community. Intangible cultural heritage is therefore a privileged context for shaping gender roles and identities and transmitting them.



Few sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List are directly related to the history and lives of women, although there are exceptions, such as the Flemish Béguinages. When preparing nominations for World Heritage sites, site managers, local communities, national agencies and others should be encouraged to document and analyse the experiences of women and men in relation to these sites.



UNESCO's position is clear: culture can be a powerful ally for achieving gender equality and building more sustainable and inclusive societies.

For more information, visit: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/themes/gender-equality/>