The Tracker

CULTURE & PUBLIC POLICY

unesco

This monthly Tracker is produced by UNESCO to monitor culture in public policy with regards to the UN Sustainable Development Agenda. It highlights developments within national and regional contexts, as well as emerging debates on culture's contribution to sustainable development. Drawing on a variety of sources, it provides a broad overview of cultural policy trends worldwide at the national, regional and international level and looks at ways in which countries integrate culture into other policy areas.

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AVAILABLE SOON!

The Tracker in Spanish
with the generous support of the Ministry of Cultures, Arts and Heritage of the Government of Chile

AT A GLANCE

The United Nations adopts a bold new Resolution on Culture for Sustainable Development, raising the profile of culture's impact for resilience and recovery; the historic inclusion of culture in a G20 Leaders' Declaration, the roll-out of the Culture|2030 Indicators... fresh inspiration has infused the global debate on culture's vital role as the bedrock of sustainable development. But this role remains underexplored.

Cutting Edge this month traces the history of culture and sustainable development discourse, and explores some key policy areas in which culture is driving progress.

Cultural Policy Highlights contains the latest cultural policy innovations from around the world, including related to culture's transversal role in public policies, whilst the **Regional Perspectives** section includes updates on regional processes, with a special feature on the Luanda Biennale.

Culture in the 2030 Agenda highlights the first workshop of the UNESCO Inter-Agency Platform on Culture for Sustainable Development, focusing on reducing inequalities, as well as examples of culture's role in health, food security and disaster risk reduction policies in Member States' Voluntary National Reviews.

Find Out More features the latest updates positioning culture in sustainable development processes.

Culture
contributes to the attainment of **ALL** **17** Sustainable Development Goals, as demonstrated in Voluntary National Review

UNESCO Study on Culture in the VNRs, 2021

God Atlas from ancient Greek mythology
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Focus on...

Local & Urban

Indigenous Peoples

Climate Action

Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Culture & Education

Digital

Gender Equality

Youth

Regulatory Frameworks

Social Inclusion

CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

This section showcases a selection of the latest developments in cultural public policy from UNESCO Member States. Whilst reactive measures to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cultural sector are expected to stimulate adaptations of cultural public policies throughout 2021, there are positive signs that countries and cities are transitioning from recovery measures to longer term strategies to build resilience in their cultural sectors.

The Minister of Information and Social Development of **Kazakhstan** has announced that 250 new cultural facilities will be built in the country by 2025, as part of the national project to expand cultural facilities to villages and remote areas.

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In **Saudi Arabia**, the Cultural Development Fund has launched its first funding programme that aims to provide financial support for cultural sector projects to enable them to start or expand their business in fields, such as: film production, heritage and antiquities, cultural research and studies, infrastructure support, education, training and artistic residencies, digital transformation, and the marketing of cultural works.

adel awad abdallah/Shutterstock.com*

The National Assembly of **Seychelles** has approved a bill creating the National Institute for Culture, Heritage and the Arts in October. This new institute aims to ensure stability, continuity and permanence in the development and management of the culture sector in Seychelles. It was launched as one of the activities organised to mark the Creole Festival. The country also reviewed its national cultural policy.

Several government departments in **Croatia**, in collaboration with Japan, have installed seismic devices for early warning and earthquake warning to the Zagreb Cathedral, harnessing this World Heritage site as part of the country's disaster risk reduction strategy.

The Ministry of Culture of **Argentina** has launched a cultural competition for environmental action, an initiative that encourages citizen engagement with environmental and climate issues through photography, drawing, painting, essay-writing, comics, music and mural creation.

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CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

The Directorate of Culture in Tafileh Governate in **Jordan** has introduced the "Paths" cultural initiative to produce films for the promotion of touristic routes that link cultural and environmental itineraries. The initiative will preserve literary and historical heritage, whilst also supporting local creators.

The State Department for Culture and Heritage of **Kenya** has announced a project to use festivals for the promotion of the country's cultural heritage, acknowledging of the role cultural festivals can play in economic development and in spotlighting cultural artifacts and performances by local communities.

Maasai warrior playing the traditional horn
Anna Om/Shutterstock.com*

The Cultural Heritage Administration of the **Republic of Korea** has partially revised its 1962 Cultural Heritage Protection Act, to expand the criteria for designating "national treasures" to better align with UNESCO World Heritage criteria.

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Ukraine has started a public consultation for the development of a draft Strategy and Roadmap for the development of creative industries. The strategy will be the main state policy on creative industries – which contribute to 4% of the national economy - and will focus on design, fashion, folk arts and crafts, concert and music industry, book publishing.

The Ministry of Entrepreneurship, Entertainment and Talent Development of **Saint Kitts and Nevis** brought together government representatives and over 120 musicians, photographers, event promoters, DJs, dancers and other creative professionals as the first round of public consultations with the country's creative sector, with the aim of shaping the future of the creative industry.

CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture of **Malaysia** has launched a new National Cultural Policy for the arts, culture and heritage sectors, recognizing culture's role as a catalyst for socio-economic development.

In **Iraq**, the Babylon International Festival was held for the first time in almost 20 years, in the ancient city of Babylon, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Following two war-scarred decades, the Festival attracted thousands of fans and served as a platform for artists from dozens of countries including Jordan, Serbia and Russia, as well as homegrown talents.

The Minister of Sports, Culture & Youth Affairs of **Eswatini** has officially launched a 'First 50 Vaccinated' campaign to support the arts industry in which the government will distribute 50 free tickets for vaccinated patrons for selected cultural events.

A specialised board of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of **Turkey** have issued "Artist Identification Cards" to 345 people who have been recognised as experts of traditional arts and handicrafts. This initiative is part of the country's broader strategy to safeguard its intangible cultural heritage.

The Ministry of Culture of the **Dominican Republic**, through the National Crafts Centre, awarded certificates to students in the different areas of craftsmanship, to entrepreneurs and outstanding handicraft teachers. The National Crafts Centre is dedicated to the training of young people in the different areas of areas of Dominican craftsmanship.

CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

The President of the Republic of **Côte d'Ivoire** has signed 15 orders for the improvement of living and working conditions of artists and creators of intellectual works, including the decree on copyright.

The Ministry of Justice, Communication and Foreign Affairs of **Tuvalu** has introduced the Future Now Project on climate change resilience, which features national efforts to preserve and digitize historical documents; records of cultural practices and other important texts, images, or multimedia that should be protected in the face of climate-induced disasters.

Yan Krukov/Pexels.com

Aruba hosted the national Immerse Forum bringing together the private sector, NGOs, public institutions, students, entrepreneurs, and investors to accelerate creative and cultural innovation, including how new technologies and digital transition benefit the cultural sector.

The **Lithuanian** Culture Council has opened a call for applications for the financing of cultural and artistic projects, particularly focusing on initiatives related to art and well-being and cultural education, as well as professional development for artists and cultural professionals.

In **Sri Lanka**, the National Craft Council and national Postal Department have joined forces to facilitate the online sale of handicrafts of local craftspeople to local and international markets via a digital platform.

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Culture: the bedrock of sustainable development

God Atlas from ancient Greek mythology
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In the face of global fractures, and the paralysis of some institutional platforms, [culture] is a common language that breaks down barriers, declared the Director-General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay, while opening the 2019 UNESCO Forum of Ministers of Culture. The 130 ministers present agreed: now is the time to fully harness the power of culture to drive forward progress towards achieving a more sustainable future for all, tackling contemporary fault lines, from social fragmentation to climate change, from uneven distribution of emerging technologies to new conflicts. They recognized that the cultural sector – more than any other policy domain – has the capacity to adapt its models across time, building on the dynamic essence of culture itself.

The global health crisis and far-reaching ramifications starkly laid bare the urgency of shifting international relations from competition to cooperation and the need to reinforce multilateralism. Hence the call launched by the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, in his vision paper Our Common Agenda to strengthen global efforts to protect our most precious, shared assets, our "global public goods". Based on a broad consultation with 1.5 million people, in all 193 Member States, this blueprint for the future looks ahead to the next 25 years as "our welfare, and indeed the permanence of human life, now depends on us working effectively together across borders and sectors to manage many shared risks and achieve a vital set of common goals." Culture is one such common good.

Culture's cross-cutting impact in contributing to sustainable development across policy domains has been recognized for over 40 years. Indeed, whilst the global shutdown of the cultural sector due to the COVID-19 shed light on its fragility, it also spotlighted its resilience and its vital role across sectors, from public health awareness-raising campaigns to its capacity to heal collective trauma. Attention is once again being focused on culture in broader global public policy debates. In the run-up to the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development - Mondiacult 2022, to be held in Mexico in September next year, the concept of culture as a global public good – our source of meaning and energy, our well-spring of creativity and innovation – represents a potent engine for social development and economic growth whilst opening up new perspectives for sustainability in achieving our shared 'vital set of common goals'.

Shifting contours of international development

The contours of international development discourse have shifted and cultural policies have evolved in this landscape, often shaping it. The Mondiacult Conference that took place in 1982 affirmed that "development should henceforth be based on the cultural values of societies and on maximum respect for the personality of each of them and that it should therefore be centred on human individuals and on the communities to which those individuals belonged." The World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997) represented a time to reflect on this fundamental role and develop new tools to reinforce the 'first generation' of international normative instruments, under the custodianship of UNESCO, (which included conventions related to the illicit trafficking of cultural property and World Heritage, including in times of conflict). The rooting of cultural policies as "one of the key components of development strategy" was the first objective following an Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, held in Stockholm, Sweden in 1998. That objective was a precursor to the mantra that "no one size fits all" for sustainable development policies, citing the need for "endogenous" models. During the first decade of the 21st century, UNESCO and the international community developed new normative instruments related to intangible cultural heritage, the diversity of cultural expressions, underwater cultural heritage and cultural diversity, which expanded the conceptual toolbox for culture's contribution to sustainable development, particularly as they adopted a more people-centred approach.

The United Nations General Assembly, for over ten years, has increasingly anchored culture in broader development, particularly through specific resolutions on "Culture and Development" (2010 and 2011). At a high-level event at the UN General Assembly in 2013, then Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon opined that "too many well-intended development programmes have failed because they did not take cultural settings into account". Subsequent General Assembly resolutions on "Culture and sustainable development" (2013, 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2019) further boosted the incorporation of culture into UN programmes in countries, as illustrated in the UN Development Assistant Frameworks (UNDAFs): whereas in 2008 less than 30% mentioned culture, by 2013 this had risen to 70%.

The <u>Hangzhou Declaration:</u> Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies (2013), further honed the typology of how culture contributes to sustainable development: identifying that, firstly, culture should be considered as a fundamental enabler of sustainability due to its "extraordinary power", particularly when fostering people-centre and place-based approaches, integrated into development programmes and peace-building initiatives. Secondly, culture should also be seen as a driver through the specific contributions that it can make – as knowledge capital and a sector of activity - to inclusive, social, cultural and economic development, harmony, environmental sustainability, peace and security.

The <u>United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</u>, which sets out a shared vision for a more just and sustainable world, "acknowledge[s] the natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognize[s] that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development." Indeed, research by UNESCO shows concretely that <u>culture contributes to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals</u> (SDGs): in their <u>Voluntary National Reviews</u> submitted to the UN to monitor progress towards the SDGs, <u>countries have cited concrete examples</u> with linkages to culture. Culture is also being embedded in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (which replace the UNDAFs), UN Common Country Assessments and Covid-19 National Impact and Recovery Plans, although often to an insufficient degree.

Culture regains centre stage in sustainable development

Multiple global crises and systemic weaknesses in the international order have once again reignited interest in maximising the role of culture for sustainable development. In April 2020, <u>130 ministers of culture</u> joined an online meeting organized by UNESCO to exchange on ways to build resilience in the culture sector, which was shown to be so vulnerable during the global lockdown. Regional intergovernmental organizations and development banks also pledged their support to the cultural sector in an online meeting, highlighting the economic importance of culture, as well as the fundamental role culture plays as a resource for resilience, hope and social inclusion. The UN General Assembly designated 2021 as an <u>International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development,</u> upon the initiative of Indonesia, to make the creative sector more resilient in the face of future crises and to design cultural policies that are better aligned with the 2030 Agenda, whilst the African Union declared 2021 the AU <u>Year of the Arts, Culture And Heritage.</u>

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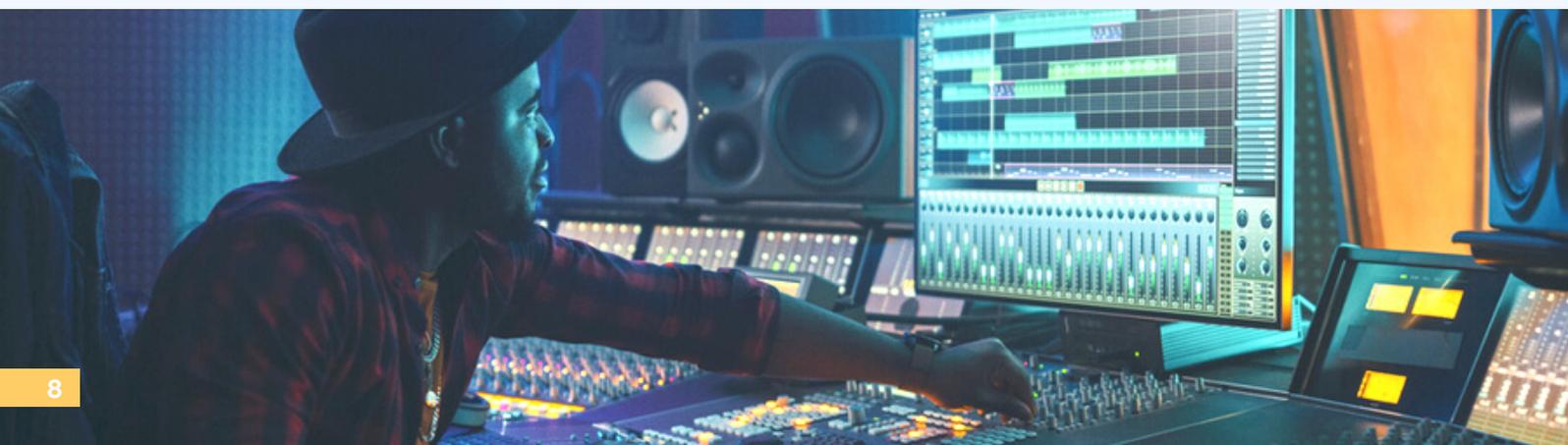
In an historic first, world leaders, meeting in Rome, Italy, for the <u>2021 G20 Summit</u> in October also vowed to prioritize culture as part of post-COVID recovery, as well as incorporating it into the economic group's broader work to bolster economic and social progress. The culmination of efforts undertaken over the course of the year, it clearly positions culture in sustainable development frameworks and reflects the unprecedented <u>Declaration of Ministers of Culture</u> adopted in July 2021. It built on the momentum instigated by Saudi Arabia who introduced culture on the agenda of the G20 for the first time in 2020. The UN General Assembly <u>Resolution on Culture and Sustainable Development</u> adopted just this month also sends a strong signal on the role of culture in rebuilding resilient societies. It significantly reinforces international efforts to harness culture for policy-making across the public policy spectrum, reinforcing its transversal role, with explicit references to culture for social inclusion – particularly of youth, women and indigenous peoples, as well as issues related to the digital transformation, environmental sustainability and synergies between culture and education.

> " Recalling that culture has intrinsic value, we underline the role of culture and of cultural and creative professionals and businesses as drivers for sustainable development and in fostering the resilience and the regeneration of our economies and societies, stressing the importance of international efforts to safeguard and promote culture, with a key role to be played by UNESCO..."

G20 Leaders' Summit Final Declaration,
October 2021

**Massimiliano De Giorgi - G20/PCM
Italian Ministry of Culture and G20 Italy**

A shared vision of culture for greater policy impact

Work on the linkages between culture and other public policy areas has developed at different speeds, with some firmly embedded in international, regional and national policy frameworks. In order to strengthen synergies between culture and other policy areas, UNESCO has recently called on UN sister agencies, International Organizations and Development Banks to join forces to expand work, in line with the UN reform aim to build a shared reflection approach to maximise action on the ground. The <u>Inter-Agency Platform on Culture for Sustainable Development</u>, launched in May 2021, focuses on three broad areas - inequalities, climate change and peace-building – with a view to leveraging culture for the implementation of the SDGs, as well as identifying possible avenues for cooperation.

Reducing inequalities, encapsulated in the motto 'leave no one behind', is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, in a world marked by increasing disparities. Culture's driving force for creating job opportunities is well-documented, particularly through the creative economy and cultural tourism, including for otherwise excluded groups. It also contributes to decent work. In light of the pandemic, the ResiliArt Movement has reignited a global conversation on improving the working conditions of cultural and creative professionals, reinforcing the long-standing efforts of UNESCO and the International Labour Organization, including through the UNESCO 1980 Recommendation on the Status of the Artist. Boosting Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the cultural and creative sectors, including in non-formal education settings, is thus particularly important in fostering employment and entrepreneurship in the cultural sector, especially as more young people 15-29 are employed in the sector than any other fields of economic activity. Inequalities also exist in the online space and UNESCO has developed the 2017 Digital Guidelines for ensuring the diversity of cultural expressions online, as well as the 2021 UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence related to the implications of, for example, AI-created artistic content.

Ensuring sustainable peace relies on harnessing culture and education "to build peace in the minds of men and women", as implored in the preamble of the Constitution of UNESCO. The recently-published UNESCO Futures of Education report reimagining how knowledge and learning can shape the future of humanity and the planet, emphasizes how the cultural context has an impact on learning outcomes by providing content and context relevance. Arts and cultural education are a particularly key ingredient, as is the intergenerational transmission of intangible cultural heritage, for social inclusion as a means to building peaceful societies. The Seoul Agenda, adopted in 2010, provides a clear framework for arts education to benefit children, youth and lifelong learners, and UNESCO is providing fresh impetus to global reflections and recent reinvestments in this area, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. UNESCO, along with its partners, is stepping up its efforts in the area of cultural and arts education, and is working towards a World Conference on Arts Education in 2023.

The linkages between culture and climate change are also firmly established. UNESCO's designated sites, including World Heritage properties, Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks, protect some 10 million square kilometers of cultural and natural sites around the world, thus contributing to global climate change mitigation action. Living heritage, in the form of local and indigenous knowledge, is a particularly vital source of resilience which provides adaptation strategies including through traditional water and land management techniques.

Cities lead creative and innovative efforts to promote more sustainable production and consumption patterns, as well as by tapping into innovative approaches and materials building on creativity and design. Culture-based approaches can help shift the focus of climate negotiations from competing interests to shared values and the common good, whilst museums are vital spaces for dialogue. UNESCO closely cooperates with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the World Meteorological Organization, particularly the COP processes to reinforce these linkages. For the first time, culture was fully integrated into the recent COP 26 negotiations in Glasgow, United Kingdom, notably through a high-level event, organised by the European Union on the initiative of Greece, on the interconnection and interdependence between our heritage - natural and cultural - and the impacts of climate change, which the UNESCO Director-General addressed.

Culture for health and well-being

Whilst the necessity of embedding culture in some policy areas is more firmly established, albeit with differing levels of implementation, reflection on the role of culture in other policy areas is beginning to emerge more clearly. "The systematic neglect of culture in health and health care is the single biggest barrier to the advancement of the highest standard of health worldwide", admits the World Health Organization (WHO) in a 2017 policy brief entitled Culture Matters. The 2030 Agenda gave WHO fresh impetus to focus on the notion of well-being thanks to its values base that calls for alternative ways of empowering and giving voice to marginalized groups. Examining cultural contexts, WHO reveals differences in value systems once deemed to be universal and also sheds light on determinants, such as socioeconomic status, environmental conditions, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation and level of education. Factors such as the influence of the extended family, maintaining harmony in relations, stigma regarding certain conditions such as mental health, mystical or religious beliefs, and perceptions of authority figures like doctors can all influence a patient's interaction with the healthcare system. UNESCO's Story Circles methodology helps professionals, including in healthcare, to develop intercultural competencies to navigate such potential pitfalls. Furthermore, traditional knowledge of medicines are also increasingly being recognised as treatments, including elements on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, such as acupuncture or Thai massage.

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The COVID-19 pandemic also put a spotlight on the essential role of culture and creativity for our health and well-being. With billions of people confined to their homes at the onset of the pandemic, people turned to culture – films, books, music, and online cultural events and exhibitions – as a source of comfort and healing. A study following more than 72,000 adults in the United Kingdom from the start of the pandemic found that those who participated in art-related activities for at least 30 minutes each day reported lower levels of anxiety and depression. In September 2021, doctors in Brussels, Belgium, began to write prescriptions for free museum visits for patients suffering from stress, replicating a successful programme launched in Montreal, Canada in 2018. Artists also mobilized to raise awareness of COVID-19 health measures, as epitomized by UNESCO's #DontGoViral campaign in Africa. In February 2022 UNESCO and WHO will hold an event on the "The Healing Power of Culture and Creativity."

Just 30 minutes of artistic activity each day during the pandemic led to lower levels of anxiety and depression for 72,000 adults.
University College of London

vientocuatroestudio/Shutterstock.com*

Through decades of experience in post-conflict and post-disaster contexts, UNESCO has also witnessed how culture and creativity can help people and communities heal from trauma. The UNESCO-led community-based reconstruction of Timbuktu's famed earthen mausoleums, destroyed by extremists in 2012 in Mali, helped promote reconciliation and resilience. Meanwhile, the performing arts were harnessed to support healing and resilience for displaced people in Port-au-Prince following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti whilst a UN High Commissioner for Refugees project in Angola also taps into song and dance in community engagement of Congolese refugees. Indeed, research from the past 20 years shows that the arts have an impact in improving health and well-being, according to a 2019 WHO report whether it be supporting child development to promoting healthy behaviours, preventing and managing mental illnesses, or supporting acute and end-of-life care.

Food Security: From Farm to Fork (or spoon or chopstick)

Food straddles policy areas of health and nutrition, environment, and local economies, with outcomes also depending heavily on the cultural context. The tasks of sourcing and preparing meals, the ways in which we share them and the messages they convey are all core aspects of what food is. Eating effectively anchors us within communities of shared tastes, common habits and collective histories. The UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity recognizes several elements related to food practices. For example, the Mediterranean Diet, described as "a set of skills, knowledge, rituals, symbols and traditions concerning crops, harvesting, fishing, animal husbandry, conservation, processing, cooking, and particularly the sharing and consumption of food" was included in 2013 on the initiative of Cyprus, Croatia, Spain, Greece, Italy and Portugal. Other examples include the Japanese culinary tradition of Washoku, traditional Mexican cuisine, the French gastronomic meal, the Korean Kimchi and the couscous of Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. In recognition of the need for a culturally-grounded approach to nutrition policy, countries such as Brazil have developed holistic national food guidelines with a wide variety of sources, including anthropology, gastronomy and political activism.

8.9% of the world's population is hungry
FAO

Tatiana Bralnina/Shutterstock.com*

Food security is becoming a more important issue for the UN, with current estimates showing that nearly 690 million people are hungry, or 8.9 per cent of the world population whilst the consequences of climate change become increasingly acute. Over the last century, food systems have undergone a significant transformation with technological advances, the massive use of fossil fuels, trends in migration and increasing urbanization. Food production accounts for a large share of global greenhouse gas emissions while we waste a third of the food we produce, equivalent to 1.3 billion tonnes. The first-ever UN Food Systems Summit, held in September 2021, saw nearly 300 commitments from hundreds of thousands of people from around the world to transform food systems. In 2016, the UN-designated 18 June as the international Sustainable Gastronomy Day, acknowledging gastronomy as a cultural expression embedded in the natural and cultural diversity of the world.

Reinforcing the links between food and culture contributes to sustainable development through the safeguarding of the rich variety of food practices around the world. Several agricultural landscape properties on the UNESCO World Heritage List attest to the ingenuity of generations past and present to adapt to their surroundings to produce food, including the cultivation of taro in Papua New Guinea, rice systems in the Philippine mountain ranges, palm tree oases in Mauritania, coffee plantations in Cuba and Colombia, the stone-walled terraces of the Konso highlands of Ethiopia, as well as vineyards in Hungary and South Africa. The Food and Agricultural Organization recognises Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems as a "living, evolving system of human communities in an intricate relationship with their territory, cultural or agricultural landscape or biophysical and wider social environment". Indeed, the local and traditional knowledge associated with many World Heritage sites holds potential key lessons for future food production, such as the subak system of water management in Bali, Indonesia or the Al-Aflaj irrigation system of the United Arab Emirates, which is on UNESCO's list of living heritage. The COVID-19 pandemic also prompted greater interest in urban food production and examples such as the Market Gardener's District of the Middle Ages German World Heritage city of Bamberg can also be a model for local food security.

UNESCO Member States recognized in 2019 the importance of food and culture for sustainable development, under the initiative of Italy, and adopted the Parma Declaration at the World Forum "Culture and Food: Innovative Strategies for Sustainable Development". The Declaration highlights the need to strengthen the links between culture and food for environmental sustainability by safeguarding cultural identity for transformative change. In addition to exploring the role of cultural heritage and living heritage, delegates also drew attention to the role of creative gastronomy as part of the solution for food security. There are currently 49 UNESCO Creative Cities of Gastronomy, each of which has adopted innovative and locally-adapted strategies and projects, such as Yangzhou (China) which is combatting food waste and Zahlé (Lebanon) which is supporting local food producers. Furthermore, food culture continues to foster, communication and intercultural dialogue, adapting and innovating - for example, fusion food- as well as being an engine for economic and social development, for example through food-related tourism, employment opportunities and Technical and Vocational Training.

Rice Terraces, Banaue, Philippines, Tara Kenny/Shutterstock.com*

Culture for disaster resilience

Climate change, urban pressure and lack of disaster preparedness, are increasingly transforming natural hazards, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions or tsunamis into disastrous events causing life and economic losses. According to the UN, by 2030, half of the world's population will be exposed to flooding, storms and tsunamis. Natural disasters arise from the intersection of natural hazard events and human populations. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 - which guides UN work in bolstering resilience against natural hazards – mentions culture some 17 times, particularly in the context of cultural heritage. Defined in its broadest sense, culture influences people's interpretation of what a hazard means and how they should react to it, for example, whether they have grown up living in a floodplain or earthquake zone. Therefore, it is crucial to understand underlying belief systems, livelihood choices, social networks and time availability for preparedness activities, including education.

Communities worldwide are currently not harnessing the full potential of culture for reducing disaster risk. Recent studies have demonstrated how heritage, in both its tangible and intangible forms, has a significant potential to be harnessed to reduce vulnerabilities, and thus negative impacts on lives, property, and livelihoods, before, during and after a catastrophic event. UNESCO-designated sites (World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and UNESCO Global Geoparks) play a crucial role in fostering resilience by reducing vulnerabilities, and also by providing precious assets for the sustainable social and economic development of an affected region during its recovery phase, by attracting investment, creating employment, or providing renewable natural resources, such as in Nepal at the UNESCO Kathmandu Valley World Heritage site following the 2015 earthquake.

The knowledge base of how intangible cultural heritage can bolster resilience is also expanding. Vernacular architecture, for instance, can build resilience in the face of hazards. As observed during the 2003 earthquake in Bam (Iran), relatively few causalities were reported in the traditional mud-brick and timber-laced dwellings in comparison to the tragic death toll associated with the modern buildings constructed less than 40 years before. Similarly, in the Pacific Small Island Developing States, traditional building knowledge and associated features have been shown to better withstand cyclones and floods, including the Vanuatu nakamal, the Tongan fale, and the Fijian vale meeting houses.

Ancient ruins Islamic Iranian citadel in Bam (Arg-e Bam), Iran
Udompeter/Shutterstock.com*

Other traditional knowledge and skills to enhance prevention and mitigation of disasters that have maintained over the centuries can be witnessed in the case of the fishermen of the Andaman Islands who survived the 2005 tsunami because they knew, from their forebearers, that when the sea withdraws, humans must do the same. Traditional knowledge also ensures fire protection at the World Heritage site of the Kiyomizu Dera Temple of Kyoto, in Japan. UNESCO's Category 2 International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI) has published further research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management.

Whilst representing a unique repository of human knowledge, World Heritage cultural and natural properties, as well as living heritage practices, are increasingly exposed to disaster risk and face irreparable loss or damage. Yet, many World Heritage properties do not have any established policy, plan or process for managing risks associated with disasters. Moreover, existing national and local disaster preparedness and response mechanisms usually do not include heritage expertise in their operations. As a result, hundreds of sites are critically exposed to potential hazards. This is why UNESCO has started working, together with other partners, to integrate a consideration for heritage in disaster risk reduction policies including the 2007 Strategy for Reducing Risks from Disasters at World Heritage Properties and the 2019 Operational principles and modalities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies. The UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund enables the Organization to respond quickly and effectively to crises resulting from armed conflicts and disasters caused by natural and human-made hazards all over the world, intervening in domains including cultural and natural heritage, movable cultural heritage, underwater cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage and the diversity of cultural goods, services and expressions.

Desert museum, Loyangalani, Lake Turkana, Kenya
MOIZ HUSEIN STORYTELLER/Shutterstock.com*

Culture and a new social contract

Building transversal, comprehensive public policies – beyond sectoral approaches – is needed more than ever given the complexity and interdependence of sustainable development challenges. If the future envisioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to become a reality, the linkages between different areas of public policy – from culture and education to economic development and climate action – should be strengthened, systematized, and measured to bear social, economic and environmental outputs, truly forging more holistic sustainable development models.

In that light, the transformative impact of culture across public policies is particularly critical and increasingly acknowledged by policymakers. Culture reaches beyond the narrowly defined field of cultural policy itself, more broadly informing all environmental, economic and social policies, as reflected in the recently endorsed UN Resolution on Culture and Sustainable Development. Its contribution to other policy areas – for example, health, food security and disaster risk reduction – has remained hitherto relatively underexplored but may be further amplified in the future, particularly considering the impact of the pandemic, urging more people-centered approaches to development. However, despite this global recognition, culture and creativity remain under-invested to bring about the change in mindsets and behaviours that is urgently needed to address the stagnation of progress towards the sustainable development goals.

Measuring and demonstrating the multifaceted impact of culture on public policies therefore remains a priority to further amplify this momentum. The coexistence of diverse approaches and methodologies in collecting data and building evidence on culture's impact on sustainable development makes it difficult to capture a global picture. The roll-out of the Culture|2030 Indicators currently being undertaken in 13 countries will help make the transversal role of culture in development more visible. Combining a variety of data, including quantitative and qualitative indicators, they rely as much as possible on existing data sources (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, national statistical institutes, and on Culture Conventions periodic reports) and will contribute to a greater base of evidence of culture's transversal role, as well as inform policies at national and urban levels.

In building towards Mondiacult 2022, the call of the UN Secretary-General to "renew the social contract between Governments and their people and within societies" in Our Common Agenda should resonate with all stakeholders. This entails embracing a comprehensive vision of human rights in which civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights are mutually reinforcing, indivisible and universal, as well as updating governance arrangements to better deliver public goods, such as health and education. He also issues a call to identify "global public goods" that concern the welfare of humanity as a whole. International normative frameworks already identify cultural diversity – as a source of exchange, innovation and creativity – "as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature", in the UNESCO 2001 Declaration on Cultural Diversity. Culture has increasingly demonstrated its vital importance as the ultimate renewable resource for enabling humankind to adapt to a changing world.

AFRICA

Jackson David/Pexels.com

BIENNALE OF LUANDA
The Pan-African Forum for the Culture of Peace
27 Nov - 2 Dec

The 2nd edition of the Pan-African Forum for the Culture of Peace, the "Biennale of Luanda" opened on November 27 in Luanda, Angola under the theme "Strengthening the Pan-African Movement for a Culture of Peace and Non- Violence: Towards a Global Partnership". Jointly organized by UNESCO, the African Union (AU) and the Government of Angola, in collaboration with the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) the event brings together representatives of governments, civil society, the artistic and scientific community, international organizations and more than 100 young people from 49 African Countries and 13 Diasporas, until it concludes on 2 December.

The aim of the Biennale of Luanda is to promote the prevention of violence and the resolution of conflicts, by encouraging cultural exchanges in Africa, dialogue between generations and the promotion of gender equality. As a space for reflection and dissemination of artistic works, ideas and best practices related to the culture of peace, it brings together a broad diversity of stakeholders, including representatives of governments and of civil society.

Taking place during African Union Year 2021: "Arts, culture and heritage: levers for building the Africa we want", it will focus on four main axes:

1. **The contribution of arts, culture and heritage to peace**
2. **Engaging young people as actors of social transformations for conflict prevention and sustainable development**
3. **Africa in the face of conflicts, crises and inequalities**
4. **Harnessing the potential of oceans for sustainable development and peace**

The Biennale of Luanda contributes to the aspirations of the AU 2063 Agenda, the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance and the International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development, as well as UNESCO's Action Plan for a Culture of Peace in Africa - "Make Peace Happen".

ARAB STATES

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The Regional Forum on Digital Cultural Economy of the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science (ALECSO) was held in Tunisia, from 21-23 October. The forum called for Arab countries to adopt more advanced approaches which recognize the growing role of digital technologies in cultural industries. The themes discussed by the participants were focused on financing the digital cultural content industry and start-ups in Arab countries, content creation and the digital cultural economy for sustainable development, and the role of cultural content creation and the digital cultural economy in achieving sustainable development goals. In addition, the ALECSO Observatory released the third Statistical Bulletin for 2021 entitled "World Cultural Heritage in the Arab Countries", including data and indicators on tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as well as on endangered heritage properties, in the world and in the Arab countries.

Meanwhile, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), and the Minister of Youth, Culture and Communication of the Kingdom of Morocco, proclaimed Rabat as the 2022 Islamic World Capital of Culture for the Arab Region, as part of ICESCO's Islamic World Capitals of Culture Programme. Each year, three capitals of Islamic culture, representing the Arab, Asian and African regions are selected.

The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra) think tank and the Economist Intelligence Unit have released a report that presents the current state of cultural offering and consumption in the Middle East and North Africa region, entitled "Culture in the 21st Century". In addition, Ithra has developed a report mapping Saudi Arabia's 'cultural and creative landscape' and another on the impact of COVID on the cultural industries.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) sub-regional inter-governmental organization have declared 2022 the Year of People's Art and Cultural Heritage, in recognition that culture traditionally plays an important role in preserving historical ties and further rapprochement of the peoples. Around 100 events will be organized during the year aiming to strengthen connections with the region's heritage, as well as bolster of cooperation in the sphere of culture, tourism and sport. The twelve CIS countries are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

Ministers of Trade of the Pacific Islands Forum have adopted the Pacific Regional E-commerce Strategy and Roadmap that focuses on digital trade activities that will benefit from a regional approach. The document identifies as "significant export opportunities" Pasifika's creative industries, cultural handicrafts, and textiles, as well as traditional pearl farming.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution of 20 October on the situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the European Union (EU). The Resolution urges the Commission and EU Member States to recognise the intrinsic value of culture, as well as the fundamental role of culture for society, its progress and our wellbeing, the economy and inclusiveness, and to translate this recognition into adequate and continuous financial and structural support. It also calls on the Commission to consolidate policies on the cultural and creative sectors and industries, particularly in light of the growing opportunities in the CCSI for young people created by the digital environment. In parallel, the European Commission began reflections on the EU Pact for Skills for the Cultural and Creative Sectors during a kick-off meeting on 15 October. Also in the European Parliament, the Culture and Education Committee exchanged views with the European Commission on how to promote female talents to support women's professional artistic careers, as part of its Gender Equality Week.

Harnessing culture for the EU's external relations was also discussed by the EU Committee on Culture and Education and the Committee on Foreign Affairs on 14 October in a joint public hearing. The Members, together with the invited experts (including UNESCO), exchanged views on how culture could better feature in the EU's external relations as a soft power to foster sustainable economic and social development, to promote peace and fight radicalisation, and to strengthen cooperation on protecting cultural heritage. The public hearing also examined the implementation of the 2017 resolution entitled "Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations".

The Nordic Council of Ministers for Culture issued in November a Declaration to recognize that art and culture have an indispensable intrinsic value particularly focusing on culture and language, freedom of expression, digitalization and international cooperation (especially on climate change).

LATIN AMERICA AND
THE CARIBBEAN

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The Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI) on November 4-5 commemorated the 15th anniversary of the Ibero-American Cultural Charter. The commemoration, held in Montevideo (Uruguay) during the Ibero-American Congress of Culture, aimed to review the instrument and reaffirm its objectives, priorities, and challenges for the years to come. The Secretary-General of the OEI also highlighted the recent report "The contribution of culture to economic development in Latin America". With the launch of this Charter, the value of culture as a vital pillar of social and economic development was recognized for the first time in Ibero-America whose population of almost 700 million people is among the most culturally diverse in the world.

The Dominican Republic hosted the XXI Ibero-American Conference of Ministers of Culture on 21 October, at which ministers approved a Declaration on several measures to boost the cultural sector - which they consider essential for the recovery from the multidimensional COVID-19 pandemic crisis - including the Ibero-American Reciprocal Guarantee Fund. The Declaration also commits to implementing the Ibero-American Strategy of Culture and Sustainable Development that defines the central role of culture in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Also held in the Dominican Republic was the first Caribbean Orange Forum seeking to boost and connect the creative economy ecosystem (also known as the 'orange economy') and creative industries across the Caribbean. The Forum aims to address and formalize the creative sector as an economic sector contributing to the sustainable development and growth of the region.

CULTURE IN THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

Member States increasingly acknowledge the importance of culture in driving progress towards the 2030 Agenda in their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). Culture is the bridge that translates global ambitions into national and local realities; from social inclusion to tackling climate change, from food security to rebuilding communities following conflict, and from lifelong learning to stronger institutions. Around two thirds of VNRs submitted to the UN by Member States to monitor progress towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Agenda mention culture and UNESCO has found linkages between culture and all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Culture plays an important role for food security, particularly in light of the global pandemic, linking to SDG 2 (hunger reduction), 3 (good health) and 12 (responsible consumption and production), as well as being an important vector for safeguarding communities' cultural identity. Traditional medicine and indigenous ancestral knowledge are recognised as vital components of national healthcare systems. Meanwhile, the healing power of culture in post-disaster situations is also acknowledged, as is the need to incorporate culture into disaster risk reduction policies, albeit to a lesser degree.

Since 2016, **245** VNRs were submitted by **177** countries

126 directly linked initiatives with a cultural component to SDGs.

CULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

Seychelles cites that artisanal fisheries continue to be of great importance in terms of food security, employment and cultural identity, particularly Creole cuisine fish that is both a staple food and a delicacy. **Samoa's** agricultural sector is strengthening the revival of traditional food production and preservation practices as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the production of underutilized highly nutritious crops, such as laupele. **Cyprus** is also promoting gastronomy and traditional food systems for sustainable agriculture whilst **Uruguay's** National Employment and Professional Training Institute offers courses for the development of culinary skills and knowledge into how they can revalorize the local gastronomy based on local cuisine and ingredients. Some countries have enhanced their implementation of SDG 11 (cities) through policies of local food festivities, such as the **Estonia** Food Policy 2015-2020 and **Spain's** Euskadi Gastronomy Food Plan, that aims to promote local food culture to enhance cultural identity, as well as sustainable consumption. **San Marino** cites an initiative to boost local food experiences using traditional food and wine products for the promotion of sustainable tourism. The Museum of Rural Life has also organised several workshops for the rediscovery of culinary traditions for both adults and children Finally, **Paraguay's** VNR highlights its Semilla Róga initiative led by indigenous women to produce an organic seed market, which promotes both food security and social inclusion.

THE CULTURAL DIMENSION OF HEALTHCARE

Cultural practices and attitudes have implications for healthcare, as highlighted in **Indonesia's**, **Marshall Islands'** and **Ecuador's** VNRs, that cite the use of traditional medicine and indigenous ancestral knowledge in their national health policies. **India's** VNRs also places great emphasis on traditional Indian medicine, Ayush, as part of the mainstream healthcare system, with specific hospitals for its treatment and research programmes. **Palau's** VNR cites several initiatives to incorporate traditional medicine in the nation's healthcare system, notably a Primary Health Care Manual that gathers rigorous scientific research on traditional medicine, as well as a 2018 law to create a national framework for access and fair and equitable benefits of traditional knowledge in health systems. Finally, **China's** Health and Silk Road Initiative also deepens the links between traditional knowledge of epidemic information, disease prevention and control, traditional herbs and medicines with the national healthcare policy.

> **In Palau, traditionally medical arts were considered to be secret knowledge to be closely guarded and passed through family lines. In recent years, western and traditional practitioners have begun to collaborate.**
>
> **-Palau 2019 VNR**

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CULTURE IN DISASTER SITUATIONS

Some countries have highlighted the role of culture as a driver of recovery and resilience in emergency situations. **Japan's** Sport for Tomorrow initiative launched in preparation for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 aims to benefit 12 million people in 204 countries and regions with post-conflict and post-disaster care through the enhancement of international cooperation and identity through sport. Moreover, countries such as **Benin** or **Bhutan** indicate that culture is included in their disaster risk reduction policies, particularly limiting the impact of catastrophes in their cultural infrastructures, some due to climate change.

UNESCO INTERAGENCY PLATFORM ON CULTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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The first workshop of the UNESCO Inter-Agency Platform on Culture for Sustainable Development - established to develop integrated approaches and reflections, strengthening synergies upstream - was held on the 3 November on the theme of inequalities. Although the pledge to **"leave no one behind"** is at the heart of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, "inequalities" is an extremely complex and multifaceted concept. Through its different targets, Sustainable Development Goal 10 touches upon social, economic and political dimensions of inequalities, both within and among countries. Leave no one behind is also one of the 12 areas of action of the UNSG Report Our Common Agenda launched in September 2021.

Participants at the meeting highlighted the strategic importance of the **creative economy** for fostering **social inclusion, gender equality** and active engagement of **youth** - especially as more young people aged 15-29 are employed in this sector than any other – and the need to boost **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**. Traditional knowledge and **Intangible Cultural Heritage** can inspire market-based models to promote the inclusion of marginalized groups, in particular, traditional food knowledge in the context of the burgeoning **green economy**. Furthermore, decent work also includes social dialogue, protection and access to rights. **Artistic freedom** should be linked with freedom of association and collective bargaining to ensure an equitable labour market in the culture sector, including by addressing issues such as violence and harassment in the workspace/environment.

They emphasized that the inclusion of wider communities – particularly migrants and people with disabilities - should be at the core of joint efforts on reducing inequalities and protecting cultural diversity. Strengthening the multiplier effect of cultural activities on social inclusion – especially through **arts education** - should be further explored through the mapping of existing initiatives, exchanges and networking that foster inclusivity and better Delivering as One in this context through joint action. Inclusive policies for engagement and participation of **Indigenous Peoples** represent an important avenue for cooperation. Such policies should encompass cultural heritage and traditional knowledge systems, including in the context of conflict resolution and food consumption, as well as climate adaptation and mitigation.

The Working Group on Inequalities agreed to concentrate efforts on 6 areas:

▶ Strengthen policy engagement and research to ensure equitable access and cultural diversity in the **digital environment;**

▶ Build on the **cultural and creative economy** to promote sustainable and inclusive growth particularly engaging workers in the informal sector, as well as marginalized groups;

▶ Strengthen regulation and public support schemes to ensure **social protection and fair remuneration** (online and offline) of cultural professionals;

▶ Develop innovative partnerships to **collect data** and document the socio-economic contribution of the cultural sector;

▶ Expand synergies between **culture and education** by bolstering policy schemes and investment in TVET, artistic education and heritage education;

▶ Build synergies across different policy areas to promote inclusive, socially-responsible **cultural tourism** as a driver for sustainable development.

NEXT STEPS

> **The UNESCO Inter-Agency Platform on Culture for Sustainable Development will hold further workshops in the coming months on other key topics.**

11 MAY 2021
Inaugural Meeting of the UNESCO Inter-Agency Platform on Culture for Sustainable Development (IPCSD)

30 SEPTEMBER 2021
Second Meeting of the IPCSD

3 NOVEMBER 2021
First Thematic Workshop on Culture for Reduced Inequalites

7 DECEMBER 2021
Second Thematic Workshop on Culture for Dialogue and Peace

26 JANUARY 2022
Third Thematic Workshop on Culture for Climate Action

MARCH 2022
Wrap-up Session on the Outcomes of the Thematic Workshops

28-30 SEPTEMBER 2022
World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development - Mondiacult 2022

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TRANSVERSAL ROLE ON CULTURE: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

JULY 2021

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL ON CULTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

"Recent policy developments are testimony to the power of culture for reshaping the public policy landscape... Today, there is a growing momentum to capitalize on culture as a common good, and build on its transformative power to make societies more economically stable, more inclusive, more harmonious and more environmentally sustainable."

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G20 LEADERS' FINAL DECLARATION

"Recalling that culture has intrinsic value, we underline the role of culture and of cultural and creative professionals and businesses as drivers for sustainable development and in fostering the resilience and the regeneration of our economies and societies, stressing the importance of international efforts to safeguard and promote culture, with a key role to be played by UNESCO, and the need to support workers, including in the cultural field, also by facilitating access to employment, social protection, digitalization and business support measures."

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CULTURE | 2030 INDICATORS PILOT PROJECTS LAUNCHED

The Culture|2030 Indicators that establish a methodology for demonstrating culture's role and contribution to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals have now been launched in Philippines, Burkina Faso, Colombia and Viet Nam. Kick-off workshops are scheduled for Portugal, Romania and Serbia in the coming weeks.

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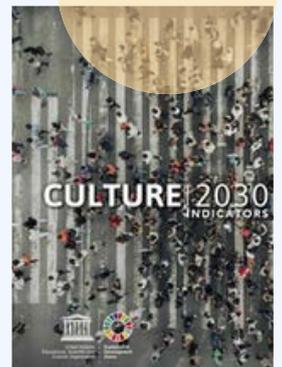
NOVEMBER 2021

NEW UNITED NATIONS' RESOLUTION ON CULTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, NOVEMBER 2021

"Emphasizes the important contribution of culture to the three dimensions of sustainable development and to the achievement of national development objectives, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, as well as other internationally agreed development goals."

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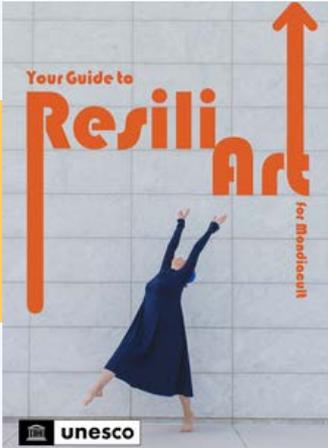
RESILIART X MONDIACULT

In the run-up to the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development - Mondiacult 2022, UNESCO is expanding the ResiliArt movement to gather inputs on the ever-evolving needs, gaps and opportunities on the ground to inform the preparatory process. ResiliArt x Mondiacult serves as an inclusive, accessible platform for any interested stakeholder to contextualize the high-level deliberation leading up to Mondiacult.

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WORLD HERITAGE FORESTS: CARBON SINKS UNDER PRESSURE

Despite their global recognition and protection status at the national level, 10 World Heritage forests were net carbon sources between 2001 and 2020 due to anthropogenic stressors, including land use and climate change. Resource use and more intense and increasingly frequent disturbances such as wildfires are likely to weaken World Heritage forest carbon sinks in the coming years.

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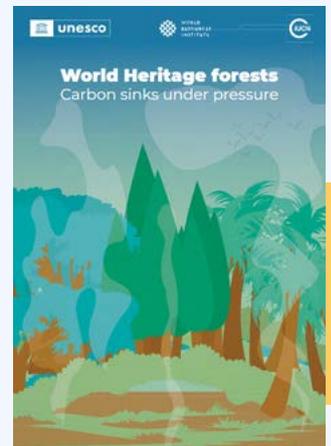
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We are counting on partners to support its production in other UNESCO official languages, to expand the global discussion on culture and public policy.

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