

# **CULTURE, DEVELOPMENT AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The “cultural dimension of development” has long been recognised, at least among actors in the arts, culture and heritage space. However, the primary decision-makers about development and its concomitant strategies have largely failed to give credence to the relationship – whether positive or negative – between culture and development.

Between 2013 and 2014, international cultural organisations like UNESCO, the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA), United Cities and Local Governments, the International Federation for Cultural Diversity and Arterial Network, engaged in a campaign – The Future we want includes Culture - to convince decision-makers who were formulating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), of the importance of culture both as a goal and as an enabler of development.<sup>1</sup>

In the Campaign’s analysis, the predecessors of the SDGs – the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) - had not been as successfully realised as they might have been, because of their failure to consider the cultural dimension of development.

In their advocacy document, the Campaign stated:

As global cultural actors we wish to contribute to the Post-2015 Development Agenda. We are fully engaged in the fight against poverty and in the pursuit of sustainable development at local, national and global level. This is our work, this is our commitment.

During the last decade, the international community has collected sufficient evidence on the role that culture plays in development. The conclusion is that, most of the time, development policies and projects which do not take into account the cultural dimension context have failed. Culture makes an essential contribution to policies, strategies and programs aiming at inclusive social and economic development, environmental sustainability, harmony, peace and security. Culture is both a driver and an enabler of sustainable development.

....It is now time for culture to be at the centre of transformative change.

This campaign was unsuccessful, with culture not being affirmed as a goal, and with only five general mentions of culture in the 169 targets listed under the 17 sustainable development goals to be realised by 2030.

On the other hand, the Africa Union’s long-term development plan – Agenda 2063 - does affirm the importance of culture as one of its seven aspirations.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.uclg.org/en/media/news/sustainable-development-goals-place-culture-zero-draft>

Aspiration 5 for the continent is “An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics”.

By 2063, it is envisaged that

- Pan Africanism will be fully entrenched
- The African Renaissance will have reached its peak and
- Africa’s diversity in culture, heritage, languages and religion shall be a cause of strength, including the tangible and intangible heritage of Africa’s island states

Features of this aspiration are:

- Pan-African ideals will be fully embedded in all school curricula and Pan-African cultural assets (heritage, folklore, languages, film, music, theatre, literature, festivals, religions and spirituality) will be enhanced. The African creative arts and industries will be celebrated throughout the continent as well as in the diaspora and contribute to self-awareness, well-being and prosperity, and to world culture and heritage. African languages will be the basis for administration and integration. African values of family, community, hard work, merit, mutual respect and social cohesion will be firmly entrenched.
- Africa’s stolen culture, heritage and artefacts will be fully repatriated and safeguarded
- Culture, heritage and a common identity and destiny will be the centre of all our strategies so as to facilitate a Pan-African approach and the African Renaissance
- Africa’s women and youth shall play an important role as drivers of change. Intergenerational dialogue will ensure that Africa is a continent that adapts to social and cultural change.
- Africa is a continent of people with religious and spiritual beliefs, which play a profound role in the construction of the African identity and social interaction. The continent will continue to vehemently oppose all forms of politicisation of religion and religious extremism.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **The “Cultural Dimension of Development”**

In recent times, the “cultural dimension of development” has largely come to refer to the creative and cultural industries as drivers of economic growth, which would then provide the resources for social and human development.

It is this understanding of the “cultural dimension of development” which was the overarching message of the 2009 conference themed “Culture as a Vector of Development”, which the European Commission and ACP Secretariat hosted to convince African, Caribbean and Pacific ministers of culture of the need to invest in the creative and cultural industries, with the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals fast approaching.

It is this understanding which also informed the African Union’s Plan of Action on the Cultural and Creative Industries adopted in 2008.

Much of the impetus towards this economist view of the cultural dimension of development was provided by the 2008 and 2010 reports of the UN Conference and Trade and Development (UNCTAD) that highlighted the economic and job creation contributions of the creative industries and underscored their resilience during the economic recession, although the evidence to support these assertions was gleaned particularly from experiences in the Global North.

But this is a far more limited understanding of “the cultural dimension of development” than when the term first gained traction in the 1970s.

In 1998, UNESCO published *Our Creative Diversity: Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development* under the leadership of Javier Perez de Cuellar. This report was the culmination of six years of work by a group of ‘independent economists, social scientists, artists and thinkers...who were asked to explore the interactions between culture and development and put forward proposals to help the international community deal with them better’.

This Report came at the end of UNESCO’s World Decade for Cultural Development.

At an international seminar on culture and development hosted in 1991 by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), Dr Carl Thamm – the Director General of SIDA at the time – opened the seminar saying,

...material growth alone does not compose the evolution and transformation of a society. It is also this conviction which constitutes the foundation for...SIDA’s work in the field of culture. In a world characterised by enormous chasms between rich and poor countries, by mass poverty and desperation emanating from misery and injustice, by enormous environmental problems...it might appear extravagant and esoteric for a development agency to deal with cultural issues. I believe – I am convinced – that this is an error of judgment. It was no coincidence that in 1987, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed the period 1988-1997 as the World Decade for Cultural Development, thereby acknowledging and promoting what was called the ‘cultural dimension of development’.

In explaining the World Decade for Cultural Development, UNESCO’s Practical Guide to the World Decade for Cultural Development published in 1987 states:

Despite the progress achieved, the results of the first two International Development Decades revealed the limitations of a development concept based primarily on quantitative and material growth. From 1970 onwards, critical reflection gave rise to the Intergovernmental Conferences on Cultural Policies...in all parts of the world, and finally led to the Mexico City Conference of 1982 to put forward with great conviction the idea that ‘culture constitutes a fundamental part of the life of each individual and of each community...and development...whose ultimate aims should be focused on man (sic)...must therefore have a cultural dimension. The two principal objectives of the World Decade for Cultural Development - greater emphasis on the cultural dimension in the developmental process and the stimulation of creative skills and cultural life in general – reflect an awareness of the need to respond to the major challenges which shape the horizon of the twenty-first century.

The current emphasis on the creative and cultural industries as drivers of economic growth and thus of human and social development is a reversal of the broader understanding of the cultural dimension of development alluded to above.

But the recognition of the cultural dimension of development goes back even further than the 1990s and '80s, to the more immediate post-colonial period.

In his book, *Tradition, culture and development in Africa*, Dr Ambe J. Njoh writes that  
On the eve of independence for most African countries in the 1950s, development economists and international development agencies were beginning to seriously contemplate the necessary strategies for facilitating development in the emerging nations....As the 60s drew to a close, some dissenting voices could be heard in the development economic community. These voices...began to question the sagacity of defining the concept of development in strictly economic terms.

Njoh talks of leading development economists in the late 1950s and 1960s 'who considered the cultural transformation of Africa and other developing regions as a *condition sine qua non* (a prerequisite) for economic development. For these economists...the customs and traditional practices of non-western societies constituted a hurdle to so-called modern development aspirations.'

One development theorist, Sorenson summarised the 'popular theory that underdevelopment in third world societies such as Africa is due to internal as opposed to external factors' thus:

Basically, the theory holds that so-called traditional societies...are underdeveloped because of a lack of important propellants of development, including a work ethic, morals, innovative and entrepreneurial capacity, free market mechanisms, a propensity for taking risks and organisational acumen. The absence of these factors, according to the theory, is itself a function of flaws in the culture, customs and social mores of traditional societies. Particularly noteworthy in this latter respect is the fact that the theory considers the leading cause of underdevelopment in so-called traditional societies as the fact that such societies tend to place a lot of emphasis on kinship and family rather than on individual success and little or no emphasis on sophisticated technology and the acquisition of material wealth.

Those subscribing to this theory – says Njoh – 'suggested that it was impossible for Africa to develop without abandoning its traditional practices and assuming Eurocentric cultural values, beliefs and ideology.'

Njoh concedes that 'certain aspects of cultural and traditional practices in Africa...and other parts of the world in general encourage behaviour that constitutes impediments to development however it is defined. The question is: which are these aspects?'

Rather than the neo-colonial view that advocated the wholesale abandonment of traditional cultural values and the embracing of cultural values and beliefs of the global north in order for development to be effective, progressives argued rather for

an understanding and practice of the 'cultural dimension of development' in which development strategies need to be understood, planned, designed and executed in the context of the cultures – the values, belief systems, world views, social traditions, etc - of the intended beneficiaries of development.

## **Development**

Having made the case for the cultural dimension of development, we need to talk about "development", a much-used word that generally appears to have two implicit assumptions:

- a. that development is always 'a good thing' and
- b. that everyone understands development to be the same thing

UNESCO's World Commission on Cultural Diversity Report contrasts just two (of many) definitions of development:

- a. development as a process of economic growth, 'a rapid and sustained expansion of production, productivity and income per head' i.e. the most common development paradigm that foregrounds economic growth and
- b. development as 'a process that enhances the effective freedom of the people involved to pursue whatever they have reason to value'.

The second definition comes from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which expands it more:

Human development is a development paradigm that is much more than the rise and fall of national incomes. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. People are the real wealth of nations. Development is thus about expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value. And it is thus about much more than economic growth which is only a means – if a very important one – of enlarging people's choices.

Mahbub ul Haq, co-founder of the Human Development Report (along with Indian economist Amartya Sen) writes that 'the basic purpose of development is to enlarge people's choices...the objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives'.

The Human Development Report includes the annual Human Development Index that measures each country in terms of three key criteria: a long and healthy life i.e. life expectancy at birth, number of years of schooling and a decent standard of living. There are four categories into which countries are divided on the HDI: Very high human development, High Human Development, Medium Human Development and Low Human Development.

In the most recent UNDP report, there are no African countries in the Very High category. There are 7 in the High category – Seychelles, Mauritius, Algeria, Tunisia, Botswana, Libya and Gabon; 14 in the Medium Human Development category, and of the 37 countries in the Low Human Development Category, 32 are African – nearly 60% of the countries on the continent.

The Sustainable Development Goals are probably most relevant then to the African continent where the number of people living in poverty has remained stagnant or worsened in the last thirty years, notwithstanding relatively high levels of economic growth. In other words, the general African experience has been that economic development (the much-emphasised form of development) has not translated into human and social development, which is what more progressive definitions of development underscore.

Arterial Network - a Pan African civil society network of creative practitioners, cultural activists and NGOs, developed a definition of development as  
the ongoing generation and application of resources to create and sustain the optimal conditions in which human beings may enjoy all the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This definition not only emphasises the physical needs of human beings or the economic needs of society, but rather the need to create the best political, social, economic and cultural conditions in which human beings could realise and celebrate their full potential as holistic entities with physical, intellectual, emotional, psychological and spiritual dimensions.

As may be determined from these various definitions, “development” itself is a cultural construct, premised as it is on particular values, ideological assumptions, worldviews and beliefs. Development could also serve particular geo-political and economic interests so that development aid or practices are not necessarily acts of altruistic benevolence, but rather strategic interventions that serve the economic, political or security interests of the donor. This is a further reason to deconstruct the cultural dimension of development: what values, ideas, beliefs and ideological assumptions underpin developmental goals and practices?

## **Culture**

UNESCO’s Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity defines culture as

“...the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs”.

In using this definition, the 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics states “This definition of culture is very closely related to the ways in which societies, groups and communities define their identity”.<sup>2</sup>

Given this “way of life” definition or understanding of culture, it is impossible to understand how those concerned with development – its goals and most effective strategies – can not take account of culture when determining such goals and strategies.

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<sup>2</sup> The 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics, Information Document, UNESCO General Conference, 35<sup>th</sup> Session, Paris 2009

This lack of recognition of the cultural dimension of development is probably linked to the lack of recognition – whether unconscious or deliberate - of the culture of those who define “development” and thus infuse it with their beliefs, values and worldviews.

There are structural and systemic causes of poverty that need to be addressed in order to effect social and human transformation. However, poverty itself creates a culture, manifested in feelings of inferiority, of marginalisation, of not belonging and of psychological disempowerment. At the same time as addressing systemic issues, the cultural dimension of poverty needs to be understood and appropriate strategies need to be created and implemented so as to encourage greater agency on the part of those on the underside of society.

## **WHY CULTURE MATTERS**

The two key faultlines in the world today are inequality and culture.

Structural inequalities in economic, political and military power persist at global, regional and national levels. These instruments of “hard power” are employed to pursue and secure national or group interests, through means such as development aid, military intervention and political sanctions. Culture is the domain of “soft power”, but no less important in pursuing and securing interests. For it is through culture that citizens internalise values, ideas and perspectives that support or perpetuate particular interests. It is through culture that individuals and communities make meaning and establish their identities.

Globally, whose values and ideas dominate, whose way of life is valorised, which perspectives on world events carry the most influence, which victims of terror are humanised, in other words, whose culture assumes hegemony, depends on who has global or regional reach through news and media outlets, audio visual products and distribution networks, and access to digital platforms.

People have different value systems, different traditions and histories, different religious beliefs, different languages, in short, different cultures. Conflicts rooted in inequality are often fuelled or given further texture by culture, by different belief and value systems. On not a few occasions, conflicts may be rooted in cultural differences.

All major development plans including the SDGs and Agenda 2063 emphasise the empowerment of women, but this goal will never be realised without addressing the fundamental cultural (including religious) beliefs that relegate women to a lesser status in many African countries.

This is why culture matters when it comes to pursuing development goals that have to do with gender equity.

Over a period of two years from 2014, there were more than 28 000 reported cases of Ebola in West Africa, and more than 11 000 deaths during the epidemic. Health officials attributed the spread of the disease to various factors, including – not insignificantly – to cultural practices regarding burial and caring for the ill. It was only

when these cultural practices were addressed that the epidemic began to be reversed.

This is why culture matters when it comes to pursuing development goals that have to do with health.

Boko Haram, we are told, advocates a pure form of Islam in which it is forbidden to engage in anything that is associated with Western social and cultural practices. Besides the military costs, the 2016 costs for Nigeria to respond to the humanitarian needs as a result of Boko Haram's insurgency was \$2,6 billion; the estimated contribution of Nigeria's film industry, the second largest in the world, is about \$600 million per year. So, on the one hand, creative and cultural industries contribute to economic growth; on the other, conflicts with a cultural dimension consume far greater resources, with adverse consequences for development through the destruction of infrastructure, the diversion of resources away from development towards military engagement and the social and human impact of the conflict.

This is why culture matters when it comes to pursuing development goals in places where conflicts with a cultural dimension prevail.

One of the mistakes of the contemporary emphasis on the creative and cultural industries as the primary focus of the "cultural dimension of development" is its repetition of the narrow emphasis on the economic dimension of development in the post-colonial era.

One of the mistakes of contemporary advocates of a broader understanding of the cultural dimension of development, is to fail to acknowledge the negative and potentially negative impact of culture on development, always preferring to emphasise culture as a positive, constructive phenomenon, in case it compromises their case.

From the above examples, it is clear that culture – as defined above – is a transversal phenomenon that impacts on every aspect of society and human identity so that development – however it is defined and which seeks to advance economic, social and human development – needs seriously to take culture into account.

### **THE SDGs AND AGENDA 2063**

In 2000, world leaders came together and adopted the Millennium Development Goals, the MDGs as they came to be known. They gave themselves 15 years to realise these goals: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; Achieve universal primary education; Promote gender equality and empower women; Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015; Reduce child mortality by two-thirds; Improve maternal health by reducing maternal mortality by three-quarters; reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria; Ensure environmental sustainability, including halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation and Develop a global partnership for development.

Eight goals with a total of 18 targets.



World leaders congratulated themselves for having achieved goal 1, halving world poverty, although this was only because China raised 600 million people out of poverty in that period, while poverty remained stagnant in Africa. Then the world leaders set another batch of goals – the Sustainable Development Goals, 17 of them with a total of 169 targets to be met by 2030. Many of the MDGs are included – end poverty, end hunger, attain gender equality, etc but there are additional ones such as the sustainable use of marine resources, build inclusive cities, justice for all and so on.

The Outcome Document of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provided the framework in which culture is integrated in the development agenda as illustrated below.

- The Preamble refers to the need to respect cultural diversity (paragraph 8) and pledges member states to foster inter-cultural understanding, tolerance and mutual respect, while acknowledging the natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognizing that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development (para. 36).
- Target 2.5 touches on the need to ensure access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, in order to achieve the goal of ending hunger and achieve food security etc
- Target 4.7 stresses the need for education to promote a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.
- Target 8.3 suggests that creativity and innovation should be encouraged by development-oriented policies together with productive activities, decent job creation and entrepreneurship.
- Targets 8.9 and 12.b refer to the need to devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism, including through local culture and products, and to the need to develop suitable monitoring tools in this area
- Target 11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
- Target 11.4 highlights the need to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage, in the context of Goal 11's aim to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Target 11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities
- Target 16.4 refers to the need to strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets
- Target 16.10 commits to ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms, which should involve recognizing the importance of libraries

The African Union's Agenda 2063, its 50-year development plan has 7 aspirations:

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development

2. An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa's renaissance (no more visas, and African passports for all by 2018)
3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
4. A peaceful and secure Africa (guns to be silenced by 2020)
5. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics
6. An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people especially its women and youth, and caring for children and
7. Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner

In none of the above is the cultural dimension of the problem analysed, understood and mitigated which raises the question about the sustainability of the development initiatives.

In the last three decades, given the influence of the "Brundtland Commission" in affirming the ecological dimensions of development in 1987, the term "sustainable development" was coined and defined as "a process that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"<sup>3</sup>.

The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) adopted culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development in November 2012 – along with the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. UCLG regards culture as the fourth pillar first, as the cultural sector in its own right (heritage, creativity, cultural industries, cultural tourism, etc) and then culture as a transversal phenomenon relevant to other sectors such as education, the economy, science, the environment, social cohesion, communication and international co-operation. The UCLG recognised both the economic potential of the cultural sector as well as its transversal relevance as a facilitative or inhibitive factor in development strategies.

The importance of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development has less to do with the classic definition of "sustainable development" (i.e. meeting the needs of the present without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet theirs), and more to do with the fact that development will have its best chance at long-term impact only if it is cognisant and respectful of the values, the beliefs, the traditions and worldviews of the beneficiaries of the intended development.

### **The policy implications of the cultural dimension of development**

If there is a strong case for the cultural dimension of development, what are the policy implications?

First, when we talk about "cultural policy", at best such policies – the world over – are limited to artistic practice and heritage, which are mere expressions or manifestations of culture. Cultural policies are generally developed and managed

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<sup>3</sup> Report of the World Commission on the Environment and Development, United Nations, 1987, chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland

through a silo department with little status within most governments, rather than as a transversal phenomenon having impact across numerous ministries.

If it is true that culture in its broader sense is integral to the successful implementation of development strategies, then it would be far more strategic to have a cultural unit in every department or ministry to explore, analyse and implement strategies that align development with cultural analysis. Such units can be coordinated by a Ministry responsible for arts and culture.

Secondly, since the realisation of the importance of ecology in sustainable development, many development projects are required to have environmental impact studies prior to such projects being implemented, in order to mitigate potentially negative impacts on the environment. Using the same rationale for culture as a pillar of sustainable development, cultural impact studies should be done both to determine the potential impact of development on the culture of the beneficiaries but equally, to determine the potential impact of the culture of the beneficiaries on the development goals and strategies, in order to determine culturally sustainable development.

If culture is understood as “a way of life”, encompassing values, ideas, belief systems, traditions and the concrete expression of these in social, economic and political structures and forms of behaviour, and “development” is generally understood to improve the way of life, then rather than “the cultural dimension of development”, it might be more appropriate to speak of the “development dimension of culture”.

Thirdly, we should devise funding mechanisms and strategies that recognise that arts, culture and heritage

- a. have value in their own right in the context of individual and personal human development
- b. have social value in bringing about societal transformation and in being instrumentalised for socially good ends and
- c. have economic value, generating wealth, contributing to direct and indirect economic growth, creating sustainable jobs, etc.

Each would be distinct practices, with their own funding mechanisms.

#### *Art, culture and heritage for human development*

This is about art for its own sake, rather than in the service of anything, with its primary orientation being human development. It is about providing emotional, psychological and spiritual catharsis and sheer enjoyment for those who experience it; it is about building confidence, developing transversal problem-solving skills and indulging in creativity and innovation for those who participate actively in it. It is about exercising the fundamental human right to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts, and to exercise the fundamental constitutional right to freedom of creative expression. This is not about the size of the audience or the market, it is for its own sake, because individual human beings matter, because we are more than physical entities in need of food and shelter; we also have psychological, emotional and intellectual dimensions to be stimulated, to be

challenged, to be satisfied. This is also about documenting and archiving heritage for its own sake and for the benefit of future generations.

These artistic and heritage practices are also about affirming identities, celebrating values and worldviews of local communities, helping them to make sense of their world, offering local alternatives to the values, beliefs and worldviews embedded in the creative products consumed daily because of globalized markets.

### Funding:

The funding of these activities requires structures like a National Arts Council, a body that allocates public funding to projects based on their intrinsic merits, and their value for human development and civilization. In funding such activities, the state recognizes the value of the arts and heritage for human development, and it supports the right to freedom of creative expression by making available resources for this right to be practiced.

The nature of these activities is generally not-for-profit, and seldom do these activities make a profit at the box office. At best, they may survive through a “mixed economy” model of public sector funding, private sector sponsorship and box office income, but generally, they will always be dependent on substantial public funding.

Artistic, cultural or heritage merit would be an over-riding criterion in the allocation of public funding, but funding to make such work accessible to as wide an audience as possible, particularly those who cannot afford it, would be an important consideration too.

### *Art, culture and heritage for social development*

Given the nature of many African societies and the life experiences of the majority of people in these as highlighted by the Human Development Index, it is in this area that the greatest need – and potential – for artistic and cultural interventions exists. It is also the area that requires the most resources.

This would – unashamedly – see the arts instrumentalised for socially good ends, and to change behaviour towards a socially good end e.g. a theatre company doing a play that educates a community about HIV/AIDS; an art exhibition that affirms women; a dance piece that celebrates people living with disabilities and a music concert to promote anti-xenophobic attitudes. In other words, to change a culture that impedes human progress and well-being, the arts are employed to educate and challenge, in order to offer different values, ideas and beliefs that result in cultural changes that support human and societal well-being.

It is within this paradigm that art, culture and heritage projects that promote social cohesion, that proactively articulate positive moral values, that contribute to bridging divides between “population groups”, across gender, language, urban/rural and other divides are considered, and supported.

Issues to do with transformation and projects that promote the development of skills, mentoring, capacity-building among marginalized communities are supported here.

The provision of infrastructure and the support for projects and activities that utilize township homes, schools, church halls, taverns and open streets to promote the creation, distribution and enjoyment of the arts, culture and heritage are promoted through this area of activity.

Projects that monitor the impact of development on cultural practices, that interrogate culture as vehicles or obstacles to development and that investigate the cultural premises of developmental projects, would also fit into this category.

Bursaries and the funding of courses, mentorships and training programmes to address human development needs will be supported.

### Funding

The beneficiaries of projects that fall under this category are seldom “markets” i.e. people with disposable income. They tend to be “audiences”, people who are to benefit from what the works have to say to them, or from their participation within the projects. Thus, the projects’ creators and distributors require funding.

It is recommended that a Culture, Arts and Social Transformation Fund be established to fund projects in their own right, that have social transformation as their end, as well as projects that might be supported from other funds, but which to add or integrate further “social transformation” elements e.g. a theatre company that wants to mentor a new woman director as part of their programme.

This Fund would be supported by the ministry responsible for arts and culture with a major founding grant, but it will be supplemented with funding from other relevant departments (education, social welfare and the like); corporate social investment budgets, international agencies, the lottery, etc.

While artistic criteria will still be relevant (it is important that such projects contribute to the raising of aesthetic consciousness too), the primary criteria for considering projects would be their potential impact on social transformation, on providing access to the arts for all, on serving the artistic, social and other needs of mainly disadvantaged communities and individuals.

This should be the largest fund, as it goes to the heart of redressing current imbalances, of helping to transform societies through cultural initiatives, of providing access to the arts for the majority of people and supports transversal issues such as the empowerment of people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, developing human resources, etc.

### *Art, culture and heritage for economic development*

The third primary area of activity is art, culture and heritage for economic development – the commercialization of arts, culture and heritage, art for profit and to generate wealth; in short, the creative and cultural industries.

These products, services and experiences would be aimed at local markets with disposable income, tourist markets and international markets, and could include

cultural tourism services, literary fiction, music (live and in downloadable forms), films, craft works, visual art exhibitions and auctions, literary and other festivals, etc.

Here, cultural and creative entrepreneurs, cultural SMMEs and co-operatives will be supported with funding, with mentorships, with skills development.

### Funding

Entrepreneurial activities require start-up capital to produce, or to produce at scale and to take products and services to the market. Such start-up capital may take the form of grants, or low interest loans, or a combination of these.

This fund would be a type of “Creative and Cultural Industries Fund (CCIF)”, a fund that would support training courses for creative entrepreneurs, the creation and production of goods, research and interventions to produce skilled human resources at all levels of the value chain for each sector.

Funding would be gleaned from the public sector responsible for small businesses, from corporates as well as from entrepreneurs supported by the Fund, who make some contribution to it, so that it becomes a self-sustaining Fund.

CCIF would not support not-for-profit activities (these would be funded by the other funds); CCIF’s primary role is to support artistic, heritage and cultural activities that will find sustenance in the market.

Criteria that would be used to allocate funding would include innovation, originality, profitability based on a business plan, capacity-building for entrepreneurs, expansion of markets, etc.

In such an approach, culture for human development, for social development and for economic development, “value” or what is considered “valuable” would not only, or primarily have an economic or financial dimension: value would also have dimensions of individual human fulfilment and happiness, and social dimensions i.e. a society at peace with itself with social equity and people living in peace with each other, the hallmarks of such a society.

Fourthly, development studies programmes should be evaluated, and where there are deficiencies in this regard, the study of culture and its relationship to development must be integrated as part of the core programme. Much of the literature and writing about culture and development has been done by individuals outside of Africa. There is an urgent need for centres for the Study of Culture and Development at African tertiary institutions that would be tasked with studying the dialectical relationship between culture and development on the continent to inform local development practices and feed into international discourses about this theme. Such centres would help to provide the literature, case studies and research opportunities to develop knowledgeable fieldworkers in the development sector and officials in the departments responsible for development and culture.

Fifth, and related to the above point, is the need for in-depth studies about the cultural impact of poverty, the effects that poverty has on the psyche of individuals

and of communities, what those who live in poverty come to believe about themselves, how the psychological and emotional scars of poverty impact on social mobility, social integration and social cohesion. For human and social development strategies that particularly address poverty to be effective and sustainable in the long term, undertaking these studies would provide the insights necessary for such strategies.

Sixth, numerous forms of inequality and of exclusion prevail within African societies based on gender (the consequences of patriarchy), nationality (hence the xenophobia/Afrophobia prevalent in some countries) and class (including education, language, etc).

Values and beliefs are acquired over time and through a variety of means, the educational system being one of these. To build a socially cohesive society, serious attention needs to be paid to cultural education within schools and universities, not as an option or a “soft” subject, but rather as part of the core curriculum.

## **Conclusion**

Politicians and other decision-makers are reluctant to embrace culture in their goals and strategies for a number of reasons:

First, culture is such a nebulous, contested and vague concept for many, that it is difficult to define metrics in relation to whether progress has been made in “cultural terms”.

Secondly, because culture – understood as values, belief systems, worldviews, etc - is acquired over a lengthy period of time, it takes a lengthy period of time to undo or change culture, so that as opposed to measuring how many people have been lifted out of poverty, or who are no longer hungry, or how many girls are attending school, it is less possible to determine how culture has shifted. It is certainly not neatly packaged into 5-year electoral cycles that may make it more attractive to politicians, at least those dependent on regular elections to be returned to power.

Thirdly, because culture is often used to defend or justify what progressives would consider to be backward or reactionary practices, culture is dismissed as something to be taken seriously, when in fact, precisely because culture can and does play a role in perpetuating practices inconsistent with modern human rights regimes, it should be taken more seriously in order to plan and implement educational and other strategies that change such cultural beliefs.

On the other hand, within the arts, culture and heritage sector, we are constantly on the backfoot in having to defend or justify public expenditure in our field so that we resort to the dominant metrics of the contemporary decision-makers e.g. the economic contribution of the sector. We are at pains to show – through the creative and cultural industries – how much we contribute to the Gross Domestic Product, how many jobs we create, how much foreign currency we generate.

The real challenge though, given the adverse human and social conditions in which most Africans live, is to proactively research and provide the evidence and

arguments that radically shift the thinking in how we understand, plan and implement sustainable development, and that in doing so, will shift the way it is done in other parts of the continent and globally too.



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