

9 & 10 June 2021



Webinar

Towards a sustainable cultural and creative industry in ACP countries

www.acp-ue-culture.eu



Event report #3

culture Solutions

EU action for culture in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific

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January 2022

In June 2021, culture Solutions supported the organisation of the international webinar ACP-EU Culture Webinar: Towards a sustainable cultural and creative industry in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. ¹

This report aims first to inform professionals and operators of the culture and creative sectors, in Europe and beyond, about current trends and opportunities in the ACP-EU Culture programme. And second, it summarises the main take-aways and lessons learned from the seminar, clustered around 5 themes (digital acceleration, CCI economics, access to culture, decent employment and sustainability), from which EU actors can identify opportunities for external cultural action.

culture Solutions supported the webinars' conceptualisation and execution, providing methodological and content-related support to speakers involved, mainly from ACP countries.

1. culture Solutions, Towards a sustainable cultural and creative industry in ACP countries, <https://www.culturesolutions.eu/events/acp-countries/>
ACP-EU culture, Towards a sustainable cultural and creative industry in ACP countries, <https://www.acp-ue-culture.eu/en/webinar2021/> and <https://acp-eu-culture.b2match.io>



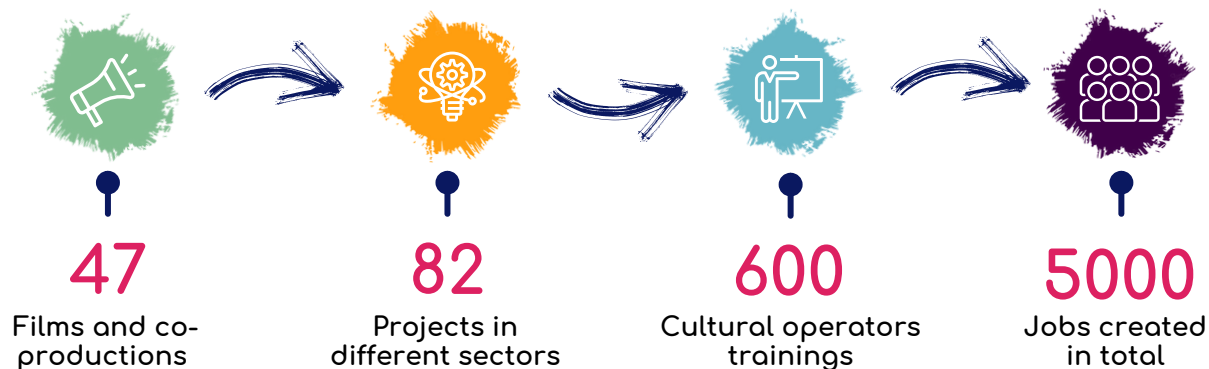
The ACP-EU Culture Programme: facts, figures, opportunities

The ACP-EU Culture Programme² is implemented by the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (OACPS – an emanation of europeanised relations between certain European states and their former colonies) and financed by the European Union. It aims to nurture and support cultural and creative industries in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. After 13 years of activity, it is unfolding its fourth edition.³ The programme reflects a joint commitment to recognise the importance

and value of culture in economic and social development and to enhance its contribution to social cohesion, peace and stability.

With its 40 million budget and projects implemented in 79 ACP Member States, engaging more than 200 ACP and EU cultural operators, ACP-EU Culture remains today one of the biggest EU-funded culture programme in international cooperation and development, aiming to encourage youth entrepreneurship, create quality jobs and raise the quality of cultural production, improve access to markets and facilitate access for international innovative funding, amongst others.

Under the motto ‘No future without culture’, the **ACP-EU Culture programme** has granted **32,3 million €** to



The Last Shelter, a documentary by Malian filmmaker Ousmane Samassékou produced through the Clap-ACP fund of the International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF), has been recently nominated for an Academy Awards.



80%, or around 6.700, of the 8.600 cultural operators that received trainings were young people.

2. ACP-EU Culture Programme, <https://www.acp-ue-culture.eu/en/>

3. The predecessors of the ACP-EU Culture Programme are: ACP CULTURES (2008-2011), ACP FILMS (2008-2011) and ACP CULTURES + (2012-2017).



The development of mechanisms for intersectional discussion, together with the deployment of innovative collaborative initiatives would mean institutional strengthening on the ground.



Marielle Barrow Maignan,
Caribbean Development Bank

In 2021, the EU and the OACPS have launched a regional scheme to support the cultural and creative sectors,⁴ managed by six different regional hubs and a support mechanism for audiovisual co-production.⁵ This decentralised regional approach of the programme is new. It aims at a more equal distribution of financial resources. As Henriette Geiger,⁶ Director at the European Commission, highlighted during her opening remarks, this decentralised approach is also meant to ensure longer support to cultural actors over time (48 months), bringing ACP-EU Culture closer to the local context and with the aim of encouraging co-creation.

Connecting EU and ACP cultural actors: the 2021 international webinar

Celebrating the launch of the support

mechanism and the regional scheme, the international webinar gathered 30 moderators and panelists and attracted over 450 participants from 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, the European Union and the rest of the world, providing an opportunity to discuss and exchange views on key issues that influence the competitiveness and sustainability of the creative sectors, stressing the potential of the programme's actions for technological and financial innovation, economic growth, improvement of cultural education and gender equality.



Support to ICC resilience could be the backbone of EU action for post-Covid sustainability and inclusion in the creative sector of ACP regions.



Damien Helly, culture Solutions

Among the different topics, the impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic was addressed as a core, cross-cutting issue. The global health crisis is indeed having harsh, long-term consequences on the culture sector, exacerbating and resonating already existing flaws⁷ of creative industries. A recent study⁷ by UNESCO on the impact of COVID-19 on creative and cultural industries showed that “the estimated US\$750bn fall in global CCIs’ GVA corresponds to upwards of 10 million job losses in the sector across the world in

4. ACP-EU Culture Programme, Support to ACP cultural and creative industries, <https://www.acp-ue-culture.eu/en/support-for-the-cultural-creative-sectors-in-acp-countries/>

5. ACP-EU Culture Programme, Support mechanisms for audiovisual co-production, <https://www.acp-ue-culture.eu/en/support-mechanisms-for-audiovisual-coproduction/>

6. ACP-EU Culture Programme, Presentation of the ACP-EU Culture Programme, <https://www.facebook.com/acpueculture/videos/323016919202999>

7. UNESCO, Cultural and creative industries in the face of COVID-19: an economic impact outlook, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377863>



2020”, threatening the livelihoods of creative workers, especially freelancers, suggesting income loss and unemployment as a consequence.

As the pandemic’s negative drawbacks are not likely to fade in a short-term period, the programme is building its response and coming actions on fostering the resilience and long-term sustainability of the sector. In this framework, the webinar participants discussed the importance of diversifying funding through innovative instruments, and the need for concrete actions to support and protect the rights of artists and cultural professionals to counter their precariousness.

Investing in the resilience and sustainability of the culture sector

The crisis has also stimulated our capacity to re-think and re-invent the sector and actions to support it, starting from financial support and important investments for job creation, as Ibrahim Norbert Richard Assistant Secretary-General at the Organisation of ACP States pointed out during the webinar. In order to allow so, stronger collaborations between existing institutions, synergies among programmes and multilevel support mechanisms should be encouraged and supported, thus strengthening the whole cultural value chain.

This event marked once again the willingness and commitment of the EU and the OACPS in supporting the cultural and creative sectors in the ACP and promoting exchange and new collaboration opportunities among culture sector representatives from the EU and the ACP

countries.

5 Opportunities for European international cultural relations towards ACP countries, beyond the ACP-EU Culture Programme

Culture is a cornerstone element of ACP countries contributing to peace building and development processes in a regional context where, according to UNESCO data, creative economies experience one of the quickest growth contributing with a 3% to the world’s GDP. The webinar “Towards a sustainable cultural and creative industry in ACP countries” set the stage to discuss ACP Culture and Creative Industries (CCIs) evolution and new trends, as well as how national governments and international partners may best support them. Five key elements where EU external cultural action can provide support, expertise and funds were regularly mentioned in the forum discussions.



L’Agenda 2063 pour l’Afrique⁸ identifie la culture comme vecteur essentiel qui permet d’améliorer les conditions de vie de la population du continent dans une région “dotée d’une forte identité culturelle”, ainsi que pour l’ensemble des pays ACP.



Mohamed Hamid, Minister of Culture, Tourism and Crafts, Republic of Niger

8. African Union, Goals & Priority Areas of Agenda 2063, <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/goals>

1. Digital acceleration⁹ has modified the way cultural actors exchange and create, as well as how their various publics discover and consume artistic products. Although the scope for increasing ACP creators visibility has grown exponentially in the online world, not all ACP citizens have access to online cultural goods. COVID-19 proved the extent to which digital infrastructures were crucial for participatory creative practices and exchanges, weakening cultural operators who weren't able to adapt and survive to the effects of the crisis. The digital divide was not only reinforced between richer and poorer communities, but also between countries whose cultural contents and providers can more easily access the predominant platforms. These effects hinder the capacity of users from less developed countries to be exposed to local contents they would feel more identified with, also threatening the diversity of cultural expressions in the online scenario.



The digital divide has created an uneven playing field – unequal access to the Internet. The glaring imbalance between developed and developing countries means that not everyone can access the benefits of digital technology.



Braden Chin, Director, CHM Group, Papua New Guinea

2. Differences in access to culture are linked to personal, academic and career development opportunities for all. Culture

can be described as a two-fold tool towards tolerance, inclusion, and respect for human dignity: on the one hand, because inclusive cultural governance¹⁰ integrating anthropological approaches boosts access to culture for all; on the other hand, because social inclusion policies increase local cultural participation and reshape a more gender, varied and socially balanced CCIs. Gender equality in ACP CCIs remains, however, one of the key contemporary challenges, compromised by the terrible effects of COVID-19 on women's access to education, employment opportunities and labour conditions.



While the collection of valuable data at local, regional and national levels regarding gender representation in CCIs or in certain sectors of CCIs has increased exponentially, this information is not always well defined. We need to take the lead in collecting optimised, open, comparative and comprehensive data to promote gender diversity and leadership in CCIs.



Bridget Conor, Researcher and Teacher at King's College London

3. Innovative strategies from the private sector and public administrations are needed to attract, train and support young talents and entrepreneurs in the creative ecosystem.¹² The years to come are key to boost decent employment in ACP CCIs,

9. ACP-UE Culture, Webinar June 9, <https://www.facebook.com/acpueculture/videos/500150904571687>

10. ACP-UE Culture, Webinar June 10, <https://www.facebook.com/acpueculture/videos/319789589711828>

11. ACP-UE Culture, Webinar June 9, <https://www.facebook.com/acpueculture/videos/536126124428123>

12. ACP-UE Culture, Webinar June 10, <https://www.facebook.com/acpueculture/videos/508870720315765>

including fair remuneration, access to financing and access to international cultural markets. New trends in cultural value chains in a more interconnected and digitalised world have raised the necessity of reinforcing investment in human capital, developing further their skills and competencies through formal and non-formal education. In this regard, changing the perception of CCIs in educational programmes and mapping existing training are key to fueling the discussion on the importance of the creative economy for sustainable societies and creating a comprehensive action plan.



Youth represent between 25% and 60% of the workforce in the Caribbean: they are all producers and consumers of culture before entering the market.

Deborah Hickling Gordon, Lecturer at University of West Indies, Expert Member, UNESCO Transcultural Advisory Committee

4. On average, CCIs in the ACP countries contribute from 3 to 11% of their national GDP. However, the sector professionals remain largely in the informal economy, leaning on regulatory and financial environments that are extremely fragile. This vulnerability has been exacerbated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, putting at risk cultural SMEs sustainable growth and creative jobs,¹³ whose lack of legal recognition made them invisible towards the economic measures

compensating for the effects of lockdowns. In this regard, the importance of sustainability of cultural programmes was much emphasised during the webinar discussions: on the one hand, capacity building and strengthening of cultural ecosystems should not neglect the intrinsic informality of these sectors in ACP countries; on the other hand, ensuring appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks for the sector would allow to diversify incomes, open markets, and avoid increasing precariousness and inequalities.



The digitisation of culture and cultural heritage provide an unprecedented opportunity for the further development of educational programmes.



Ayeta Wangusa, Executive Director, Culture and Development East Africa, Tanzania

5. The strengthening of the cultural and creative eco-systems can help local talents to thrive in their home countries, fostering a building process of citizenship that engages in social and environmental questions through culture. These being challenges to be faced globally, horizontal equal-to-equal cultural relations are needed, including fair artists' mobility schemes strengthening skills transfers, improving access to financing and thus ensuring further opportunities for international co-creation and co-production.

13. ACP-UE Culture, Webinar June 9, <https://www.facebook.com/acpueculture/videos/4409519545747784>



Culture is Jamaica's greatest asset and much of the country's cultural production is exported.

Therefore, appropriate mechanisms need to be developed to ensure that creative communities are not marginalised.



Andrea Dempster Chung, Co-founder and Director of Kingston Creative, Jamaica

Conclusions

To conclude, international cultural cooperation in all its potential should act beyond the artistic domain, mainstreaming

culture and its benefits in other sectors. Culture should be seen as a social and political innovative tool contributing to employment creation, conflict resolution, promotion of intercultural understanding, gender equality, the fight against climate change and even a global response to the pandemics that may follow.

The sustainability of cultural relations is therefore linked and can contribute as a cross-cutting factor to environmental sustainability (culture as a tool to highlight issues raised by climate change), social sustainability (culture as an instrument to foster interaction, ensure cohesion in society and promote diversity) and economic sustainability (culture as a strategic sector generating revenues through sustainable cultural tourism, cultural infrastructure and CCIs).

Audiovisual resources:

- [Panel 1: Digital acceleration: New horizons for the cultural and creative industries](#)
- [Panel 3: Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries](#)
- [Panel 4: Youth and cultural literacy: Investing in the future](#)
- [Panel 5: Towards a more inclusive cultural and creative industry. From principles to reality](#)
- [Panel 6: Building the resilience of cultural and creative sectors in times of pandemic](#)



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