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# Towards a sustainable cultural and creative industry in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries

In June 2021, the international webinar “Towards a sustainable cultural and creative industry in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries”, organised in the framework of the ACP-EU Culture Programme, brought together some 500 participants from 75 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, the European Union and the world.

This event, whose interest and attendance fully met expectations, marked the will of the OEACP and the European Union to reiterate the importance of the cultural and creative sector for the human and economic development of the ACP countries, to underline its dynamism, its potential for growth but also its resilience, which has been challenged by the global health crisis we have just experienced.

Thanks to the mobilisation of high-level professionals from the world of culture and creation, the webinar addressed a series of current issues that influence the competitiveness and sustainability of the sector.

**The following are the main avenues for reflection and action outlined during the webinar:**

## Digital acceleration

Digital acceleration. The concentration of online and digital services has increased sharply throughout the pandemic and the entire value chain is affected by the introduction of technology. This acceleration has led to major imbalances in global trade that could lead to the exclusion of certain targets. In this respect, any cultural project should include a capacity building dimension for staff in charge of digital technologies, but also for the public, especially the less privileged.

## Gender and culture

Thinking about gender mainstreaming through advocacy, research, training and education or allocation of funds, among others, is a matter of mindset and determination. It is necessary to include gender systematically in all actions, to fight relentlessly against stereotypes and prejudice, to allocate the necessary funds to allow better access to cultural infrastructures for disadvantaged or vulnerable people.

## Sustainability of actions

In terms of unlocking the potential of the cultural and creative industries, the issue of sustainability of actions was strongly emphasised. The strengthening of the cultural ecosystem must not overshadow the informal sector, which is a source of creativity and wealth. But it must be able to help talents to flourish in their own country, by allowing the creation of a fabric of eco-responsible SMEs, promoting local products and know-how and open to the national and international markets. Public-private diversification of financing is necessary, and international cooperation must position itself as a partner without substituting for local investments.



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## Culture and inclusion

Approaching culture in an inclusive way is essential. The concept of inclusion is complex, and needs to be analysed with critical thinking and caution. Culture is a common, public good, and must now be taken into account in other aspects of human activity, including its links with the environment, health and education. It is strongly linked to the more anthropological notions of community and identity and cannot be reduced to the needs of growth and employability.

## Image and cultural education

Education in image and culture, especially for young people, is an unavoidable necessity in order to fight against stereotypes and cultural norms, and to foster the development of citizens capable of analysing the world around them in a critical and independent way. Thus, any strategy based on culture should include youth, and provide for investments in adapted infrastructures, in training and in a better knowledge of needs through the collection of updated data and information.

## Post-Covid Recovery

The global pandemic crisis and the negative impact it has had on various sectors of the economy must now be seen as an incentive to do more and better, and to strengthen the cultural and creative ecosystem as a whole. The notions of critical thinking, transversality of culture in its relations with all sectors of activity, inclusion and sustainability, including the consideration of the interactions between culture and the environment, ran through the exciting debates of these three days, and must form the basis for any future progress in this field, as well as a roadmap for the implementation of the ACP-EU Culture Programme.



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