

The role of culture in EU cooperation with ACP countries - concepts, actors, and challenges in a promising field of action

Kühner, Martina

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ifa-Edition Kultur und Außenpolitik

**The Role of Culture in EU Cooperation with
ACP Countries—concepts, actors, and challenges
in a promising field of action**

Martina Kühner

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Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e. V. (ifa), Stuttgart

Verfasserin

Martina Kühner

Redaktion und Lektorat

Katharene Schmidt

Geoff Rodoreda

Dorothea Grassmann

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Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e. V.

Charlottenplatz 17

70173 Stuttgart

Postfach 10 24 63

D-70020 Stuttgart

info@ifa.de

www.ifa.de

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CONTENTS

The 2000s—moving culture up on the EU development agenda	5
Culture: traditionally a “negative priority” of EU development cooperation?	8
New Commissioner—back to the “old” patterns?	8
“Culture and Development”—a multi-dimensional concept	9
Identity-related dimension	10
Political dimension	10
Economic dimension—culture as a tool for sustainable and inclusive economic growth	10
Intercultural dimension—culture as a means of conflict prevention	12
“Mainstreaming” culture—the horizontal dimension	12
Culture and concrete action—the EU programmes for ACP countries	12
Culture in Action—the actors on the European level	14
Challenges for the future—exploiting the full potential of culture requires real commitment, including appropriate resources and instruments	17
References	21
Additional Literature	22
Recommended Links	23
Author	26



In a discussion of Europe's foreign cultural relations, one must inevitably examine EU cooperation with developing countries. The European Union as a whole¹ is the biggest official source of development aid in the world, providing more than half of the global budget for development.²

Although culture has been a “hidden component” of development policy both in the EU and internationally³ for decades, it is worth taking a closer look at the field of “culture and development,”⁴ since the EU has been increasingly active here for several years, especially in the ACP⁵ countries.

The 2000s—moving culture up on the EU development agenda

With the Cotonou Agreement, signed in 2000 between the EU and the ACP countries, greater emphasis was put on culture, leading to a gradual integration of culture into the development agreements with these countries.⁶ The “EU Strategy for Africa: Towards a Euro-African pact to accelerate Africa's development” of 2005 mentions the integration of the cultural dimension in development and the preservation of Africa's cultural and linguistic heritage as official goals in the EU's cooperation with Africa.⁷ The *European Consensus on Development*⁸ of 2005 marked the next step towards more discussion of culture in EU development cooperation, with social aspects such as culture included in this trend-setting declaration. Furthermore, the *2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, in force since March 2007, in the negotiation

1 In other words, from both the Member States and from Commission-managed funds

2 In 2010, it provided €53.8 billion. The European Commission alone is responsible for the management of €11 billion in aid every year, putting it in second place among donors globally. Retrieved December 17, 2011, from http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news/agenda_for_change_en.htm

3 According to Luis Riera Figueras, former director of development policy at the European Commission. Quoted in Jenkinson, A. (2010). Development's hidden component, *European Voice*, 16 September 2010. Retrieved December 16, 2011, from <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/imported/development-s-hidden-component/68909.aspx>

4 The EU understands culture in its broad sense and orients its understanding of culture toward the UNESCO definition. Throughout this paper, the term culture will be used according to this definition. For a detailed overview of how the EU defines culture and uses the terms related to “culture and development” consult pp. 5-6.

5 African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states

6 “Article 27 of the Cotonou Agreement governing EU actions in ACP (African, Caribbean & Pacific) nations provides a mandate for support of ‘national heritage conservation and development’ projects, including the organisation of festivals and other cultural events.” Quoted in Fischer, R. (2007): A Cultural Dimension to the EU's External Policies from Policy Statements to Practice and Potential. Amsterdam: Boekmanstudies, p. 26. / In more detail, according to this Article, “Cooperation in the area of culture shall aim at: (a) integrating the cultural dimension at all levels of development cooperation; (b) recognizing, preserving and promoting cultural values and identities to enable inter-cultural dialogue; (c) recognizing, preserving and promoting the value of cultural heritage; supporting the development of capacity in this sector; and (d) developing cultural industries and enhancing market access opportunities for cultural goods and services.” The Cotonou Agreement is available online: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/overview/cotonou-agreement/index_en.htm

7 Fischer, R. (2007): A Cultural Dimension to the EU's External Policies from Policy Statements to Practice and Potential. Amsterdam: Boekmanstudies, p. 26.

8 In order to facilitate the search for further information, all important documents in this context will be provided with a link, which will be *highlighted*.

of which the EU took a leading role, is a key document in this context. The principles for promotion and protection of cultural expression set out in the Convention are, according to Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth Androulla Vassiliou, “a cornerstone of the relationships between the European Commission and the third countries on cultural matters.”⁹ It “stresses that cultural diversity is one of the main drivers of sustainable development for communities, emphasizing its importance for an integral realization of the human rights and fundamental liberties proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”¹⁰ Furthermore, it “highlights the dual nature of culture as a value in its own right and as a tool for economic progress”¹¹ and constitutes an international commitment to foster the development of cultural and creative expressions and activities.

Building upon this Convention, and demonstrating a strong commitment to its implementation, in 2007 the EU drew up a *European Agenda for Culture*. This Agenda sets forth the first common cultural strategy for the EU.¹² It maps out the EU’s way forward in promoting cultural diversity and taking advantage of the potential of culture in social and sustainable development, both within the EU and in cooperation with third countries. Culture is defined as one of the central elements of

international relations.¹³

Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Luis Michel, in office from 2004 to 2009, set the EU on this course by moving culture higher up on its development agenda. With his personal commitment to the topic, he contributed substantially to creating a momentum for culture and development. On the initiative of Commissioner Michel, an international colloquium entitled “Culture and Creativity: vectors for development” was held in April, 2009. The event was attended by over 800 people from the EU and from 65 ACP countries, among them artists and professionals, high-level policy makers and representatives of European civil society. As a result of the conference, the artists and cultural operators present adopted the *Brussels Declaration*, which “reinforces the role and the potential of culture as a driver for development. This declaration calls for increased commitment from civil society, governments and the international community”¹⁴ and provides recommendations for ACP governments, development partners and professionals working in the cultural field. At the same time, in the spirit of the conference, the former Directorate General for Development (now DG DEVCO)¹⁵, in coordination with the Belgian Presidency and the British Council, put out the publication “Culture and Development. Action and Impact,”¹⁶ detailing best practices in the field of culture and development. The Commission also set up a follow-up mechanism for the Colloquium in order to maintain momentum and to implement

9 Culture and Development. Action and Impact (2011): New edition: Mediterranean Focus, Brussels, p. 12.

10 Pelzer, C. (2010): Spanish EU Presidency: Seminario Cultura Y Desarrollo. Retrieved December 16, 2011, from <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/culture-and-development-international-cooperation/blog/spanish-eu-presidency-seminario-cultura-y-desarollo>

11 Culture and Development. Action and Impact (2011): New edition: Mediterranean Focus, Brussels, p. 12.

12 Anger, S. (2009): Kulturelle Entwicklungszusammenarbeit. Kulturkooperationen mit Entwicklungsländern: Rahmenbedingungen, Förderungsmöglichkeiten, Beispiele. Master Thesis. Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst: Wien, p. 41.

13 Ibid.

14 Culture and Development. Action and Impact (2011): New edition: Mediterranean Focus, Brussels, p. 12.

15 The Directorate General for Development and Cooperation—EuropeAid (DG DEVCO) incorporates the former Development and EuropeAid DGs.

16 Recently, a second version of this publication has been published, focusing on the Mediterranean neighbourhood: Culture and Development. Action and Impact (2011): New edition: Mediterranean Focus, Brussels.

the commitments announced by the Commissioner in his closing speech.¹⁷ For instance, the Spanish Presidency, together with the Follow-up Committee of the Colloquium and the European Commission, organised an *International Seminar on Culture and Development in May 2010 in Girona*, aiming to further expand the EU's cultural development cooperation and thus "to contribute to one of the strategic targets established by the European Agenda: the enhancement of culture in the Union's external relations, and, in particular, in the common European development cooperation."¹⁸

The momentum behind culture that had been building in Europe continued to grow at the 65th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2010, where a High-Level Round-Table on Culture and Development was held. A resulting resolution noted that "the U.N. [...] decided to revise its existing strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals¹⁹ and to finally listen to representatives from the cultural sector, who have been preaching for decades about the importance of culture for development."²⁰ The final document²¹ reaffirmed "the importance of culture and

its contribution to the development process and to the efforts made in order to achieve the MDGs."²² The EU played a key role in negotiating this new focus on culture,²³ after the development dimension of culture had been neglected in the MDG Declaration of 2000. The UN resolution on the Role of Culture for Development of December 2010, an outcome of the MDG Summit in September 2010, can be seen as "a major breakthrough at international level indicating a sign of change"²⁴ in the context of an international consensus recognising the role of culture in development, which has been slowly but steadily emerging since the year 2000.

All of these developments, events and declarations at the European and international levels show that "integrating culture into development policy has moved up the EU's agenda,"²⁵ especially if one considers how culture has been seen and dealt with so far.

17 In order to find out more about the first series of actions resulting from this follow-up instrument, please consult http://www.culture-dev.eu/pages/en/en_suivi_suiviColloque.html

18 Pelzer, C. (2010): Spanish EU Presidency: Seminario Cultura Y Desarrollo. Retrieved December 16, 2011, from <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/culture-and-development-international-cooperation/blog/spanish-eu-presidency-seminario-cultura-y-desarollo>

19 MDGs

20 The Millennium Development Goals and Culture (2011): United Nations General Assembly finally adopts a resolution acknowledging and emphasising the role of culture in development. Sounds in Europe, 6, p. 19.

21 United Nations General Assembly (2010): Draft resolution referred to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly by the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, New York, 17 September 2010. Retrieved December 21, 2011, from <http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/pdf/mdg%20outcome%20document.pdf>

22 Culture and Development. Action and Impact (2011): New edition: Mediterranean Focus, Brussels, p. 12.

23 This is expressed mainly in the following two paragraphs: "Para. 16: We acknowledge the diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations contribute to the enrichment of humankind. We emphasize the importance of culture for development and its contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development goals." / "Para. 66: We consider that the cultural dimension is important for development. We encourage international cooperation in the cultural field, aiming at achieving development objectives."

24 The Millennium Development Goals and Culture (2011): United Nations General Assembly finally adopts a resolution acknowledging and emphasising the role of culture for development. Sounds in Europe, 6, p. 19.

25 Jenkinson, A. (2010): Development's hidden component, European Voice, 16 September 2010. Retrieved December 16, 2011, from <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/imported-development-s-hidden-component/68909.aspx>

Culture: traditionally a “negative priority” of EU development cooperation?

Until the beginning of this century, culture was never a priority of European development policy, which traditionally focused mainly on economic development.

Although the Lomé Conventions of the 1980s between the former European Economic Community and the ACP countries did make reference to the relevance of culture for development, EU development policy remained almost exclusively focused on economic goals.²⁶

Not only was a strategic approach towards culture missing in EU development cooperation, but culture can be said to have been a “negative priority” in the development strategies with ACP countries, having been declared to be simply NOT a priority.²⁷ There are two main reasons for this lack of attention to culture. First, it is a consequence of the nature of the EU treaty. Culture has traditionally been a cornerstone of national sovereignty and falls within the competence areas of the member states, which is the reason why the EU has never developed a body of expertise in cultural (foreign) policy. Second, as indicated above, culture has been neglected because of the nature of EU development policy, which has mostly focused on economic results.²⁸

26 Ibid.

27 Information retrieved from an interview with an EU official working in the development section of the Commission, who formerly worked in the unit responsible for culture and development.

28 This is mostly due to the fact that it has been difficult to prove that cultural development cooperation leads to economic results. This point will be picked up on and further explored later in this paper, in the discussion of the challenges of EU cultural development cooperation.

New Commissioner—back to the “old” patterns?

By the middle of the first decade of this century, it seemed that the traditional neglect of culture—due in part to a lack of awareness of the potential of culture for development among EU policy-makers—had been overcome. Following changes within the development department of the European Commission in 2009, however, there has been a shift in priorities. The priorities in the policy framework of the current Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs, are outlined in the document “Agenda for Change.” The Agenda continues to define poverty eradication and the achievement of the MDGs as the primary objective of EU development policy.²⁹ However, according to some European Commission³⁰ officials,³¹ under Commissioner Piebalgs, culture is no longer a priority per se, as he pursues a pragmatic approach and is more focused on economic development and results-oriented policy. The main focus of the Agenda is on inclusive and sustainable growth for human development, with no mention at all of a cultural dimension in the document.³²

This current development agenda appears to be a backlash against the positive developments of the

29 European Commission (2011): Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change, Brussels, 13 October 2011, COM (2011) 637 final. Retrieved December 17, 2011, from http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news/agenda_for_change_en.htm

30 EC

31 Information retrieved from interviews with officials of the EC.

32 Another indication that culture is not (high) on the agenda of Commissioner Piebalgs is that, according to an EU official, he has never met with the committee on “culture and development” which was founded under Commissioner Michel following the 2009 Colloquium.

preceding years mentioned above. Yet culture can be used as a means to achieve other development goals. Civil society, human rights, democracy and good governance are also priorities of the DG Development and Cooperation—Europe-Aid³³—aims, which can be achieved with the help of cultural tools. The ability to indirectly incorporate culture into development policy depends in large part on the political will and creative thinking of the Commission and its partners when it comes to the formulation of specific proposals. At the same time, the stated goals can be interpreted in a “cultural way,” that is, by outlining the economic and democratic value of culture as a tool for achieving development goals such as sustainable development and human rights.

In fact, the current Commission itself recognises the significant role culture can have in promoting human rights, democracy and conflict resolution—as has been shown recently with the Arab Spring. A Commission official suggests that these issues will be most probably at the centre of cultural cooperation strategy in the next several years.³⁴ Also, Commissioner Piebalgs signed a consultant facility document on culture before the round table discussion on culture and development in the context of the UN summit 2010 with UNESCO.³⁵ This document supported governments in the development of the cultural sector—a move that shows at least some continuity with the work of Piebalgs’s predecessor Michel.

One may argue, on the one hand, that within quite a short period of time, culture has risen to a higher position on the EU development agenda

than ever before. On the other hand, it seems that the crucial value of culture for development has not been sufficiently recognised, nor permeated the perception of EU policy makers to the point where they would consider culture to be an integral component of the EU’s development strategy. This makes the current situation, in which the field of “culture and development” is subject both to changes in political priority setting and the current financial cuts, especially challenging with respect to culture. There is a risk that the recent momentum in the EU for including culture in development policy will be lost.

But what is actually at stake? What does European cultural development policy mean in practice? What does the EU in fact mean by the different terms used in relation to “culture and development?” What cultural programmes exist and how successful are they? And who are the main actors involved in this policy field? These essential questions will be answered in the following paragraphs.

“Culture and Development”— a multi-dimensional concept

The EU understands culture in its broad sense,³⁶ as it orients its understanding of culture towards the UNESCO definition, which sees culture as “the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, basic human rights, value systems, traditions and beliefs.”³⁷ According to current European Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs, “a society’s culture and heritage form an essential

33 DG DEVCO

34 According to official information received by an EU official working in the unit responsible for culture at DG DEVCO.

35 See United Nations Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organization. (2005). Strengthening the System of Governance for Culture in Developing Countries. Retrieved December 14, 2011, from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/2005-convention/technical-assistance/>

36 This means that it goes beyond the classical understanding of culture as “high culture” and “the arts,” restricted to a specific group of people.

37 Culture and Development. Action and Impact (2011): New edition: Mediterranean Focus, Brussels, p. 14.

part of its lasting social, human and economic development.³⁸ Culture is mainly seen as a tool or instrument for development.³⁹ In this approach, the EU distinguishes between four dimensions of culture, which are reflected in its policies and instruments in a more or less equal distribution,⁴⁰ with several dimensions sometimes integrated into one project.⁴¹

Identity-related dimension

For Commissioner Piebalgs, “culture is at the heart of human development”⁴² and essential in identity-building and can, when promoted at the individual and community level, contribute to self-esteem and personal satisfaction and to finding one’s place in society. Thus it plays an important role in the building of society and promoting social inclusion, among other goals.

38 Ibid., p. 7.

39 Nevertheless, the EU also values the anthropological dimension of culture, seeing “culture as a value unto itself” and thus supports the development of the film industry in the ACP countries not only for its economic benefits, but also for the sake of good films and their intrinsic value for the cultural life and identity of people in those countries. Compare ACPFilms on page 7. However, the concept of viewing culture as “art,” which deserves support in its own right, cannot be regarded as a priority of the EU.

40 According to the observations of some EU officials, the economic dimension is, after all, somehow privileged. One reason for this, besides the traditional focus on economic development mentioned earlier on, can be the fact that it might be easier to achieve and prove tangible results through this approach.

41 The former Director General of the former EuropeAid Cooperation office, Koos Richelle, referred to these dimensions during his intervention at the European Development Days in Stockholm in October 2009. Compare also Culture and Development. Action and Impact. (2011). New edition: Mediterranean Focus, Brussels, 2011, p. 14.

42 Culture and Development. Action and Impact (2011): New edition: Mediterranean Focus, Brussels, p. 7.

Political dimension

Closely linked to this dimension is the role the EU sees for culture in the areas of citizenship and good governance. The EU considers culture to be a tool for promoting good governance and democratisation, as “the manifestation of deep-rooted features and projections of society through artistic creation and cultural expressions raise the awareness of this society to its own shortcomings, consolidate citizenship and pave the way for change.”⁴³ Culture can play a key role in the political participation and emancipation of young people and women, as seen recently with the Arab Spring.⁴⁴

Economic dimension—culture as a tool for sustainable and inclusive economic growth

Culture can also be a “major driver for economic and social dynamism”⁴⁵ through activities such as the creation, reproduction and distribution of cultural goods, and the promotion of cultural heritage. Studies in both developed and developing countries provide evidence that activities related to culture can produce a considerable amount of economic value. Culture in this sense is seen by the EU as a sector or industry that creates capital and a variety of occupational activities, in both rural

43 Culture and Development. Action and Impact (2011): New edition: Mediterranean Focus, Brussels, p. 14.

44 According to official information received by an EU official working in the unit responsible for culture at DG DEVCO.

45 Culture and Development. Action and Impact (2011): New edition: Mediterranean Focus, Brussels, p. 14.

and urban areas.⁴⁶ In this context, concepts such as “cultural industries” or “creative economies” are often used.⁴⁷ For instance, UNCTAD, the UN’s trade and development body, states in its 2008 Creative Economy Report that the creative economy “accounts for a significant and growing slice of the world’s economy,”⁴⁸ and the Report “quotes some impressive figures for the size of the creative industries.”⁴⁹ According to this Report, creative industries accounted for 3.4% of world trade and \$424 billion of exports in 2005. Between 2000 and 2005 these figures grew at an average annual rate of 8.7%, another indicator of the considerable potential of the creative industries.⁵⁰ The most recent Creative Economy Report, from 2010, confirms this trend. It states that the growth rate of world exports for all creative industries between 2003 and 2008 is even higher (14.4%), with exports reaching \$592 billion in 2008.⁵¹ Furthermore, both

Creative Economy Reports dedicate a whole chapter to the development dimension of the creative economy and outline its potential in helping to attain the MDGs.⁵² According to the most recent report, “developing countries have increased their share in world markets for creative products year after year and their exports have risen faster than those from developed countries.”⁵³ For instance, exports of creative goods from developing countries reached 43% of world exports of creative goods in 2008, although exports of creative services account for only 11%.⁵⁴ These facts show that there is still a lot of potential for developing countries in this area.

The EU recognises the potential the creative industries hold for developing countries and places special emphasis on this dimension of culture in its development strategies.⁵⁵ Thus, when it states that culture is an important tool for attaining the MDGs (as laid out in language that the EU negotiated to have included in the outcome document of the 2010 UN summit), the EU is mainly referring to this economic dimension—which through its functions of adding value, promoting growth and creating jobs can contribute to the alleviation of poverty.

46 Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften (2007): Mitteilung der Kommission an das Europäische Parlament, den Rat, den Europäischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialausschuss und den Ausschuss der Regionen über eine europäische Kulturlagenda im Zeichen der Globalisierung, Brüssel, (KOM (2007) 242 endgültig), p. 11.

47 UNESCO, for instance, defines cultural industries as those industries that “combine the creation, production and commercialization of contents which are intangible and cultural in nature. These contents are typically protected by copyright and they can take the form of goods and services.” For further definitions of these and related terms, consult United Nations (UNCTAD) (2010): Creative Economy Report 2010. Creative Economy: A feasible development option. pp. 6-7. Retrieved December 21, 2011, from http://unctad.org/en/docs/ditctab20103_en.pdf

48 British Council (2010): Mapping the Creative Industries: a Toolkit, p. 21. Retrieved December 21, 2011, from http://www.acpcultures.eu/_upload/ocr_document/BRITISH%20COUNCIL_MappingCreativeIndustriesToolkit_2-2.pdf

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 United Nations (UNCTAD) (2010): Creative Economy Report 2010. Creative Economy: A feasible development option. p. 126. Retrieved December 21, 2011, from http://unctad.org/en/docs/ditctab20103_en.pdf

52 Ibid., p. 33ff.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 According to information received in interviews with EU officials of DG DEVCO.

Intercultural dimension—culture as a means of conflict prevention

Culture is crucial for intercultural dialogue and understanding. In the Brussels Declaration, cultural professionals from both the EU and ACP countries confirm that “dialogue between civilizations and intercultural dialogue [...] are the guarantee of peace and security.”⁵⁶ Culture can, for instance, help societies stick together in (post-) conflict situations and overcome trauma on the individual and the collective levels. At the same time, culture has the potential to contribute to overcoming, transforming and preventing conflicts. According to the EU Commissioner for Development, a society’s culture and heritage can “allow diversity and reconciliation to flourish in difficult circumstances.”⁵⁷ Thus, the EC recognises that culture can and also should play an important role in conflict transformation.

“Mainstreaming” culture—the horizontal dimension

Apart from using culture as a tool in the dimensions described above, the EU also aims to “mainstream” culture, that is, ensure that all aspects of development projects are planned with local cultures in mind. In this cross-cutting, “culture-sensitive” approach, the specific values, traditions and behavioural patterns of each culture “need to be considered in all sectors of development when

working with partner countries.”⁵⁸ This means that every development project should incorporate a cultural dimension so that it will be compatible with the local context. This is necessary to ensure that development programmes will be effective and sustainable.

The current Commission supports this view and will most likely mainstream culture through instruments like “Investing in People” and European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) in the next several years.⁵⁹

Culture and concrete action—the EU programmes for ACP countries

The EU has translated its multi-dimensional approach on culture into several programmes dedicated to different aspects of cultural cooperation. This paper is not the place to elaborate on them and their implementation in detail, or to give an in-depth evaluation on their success. Nevertheless, the main programmes will be outlined, in order to give an overview and illustration of what the EU is doing in this area.

Cultural cooperation with ACP countries has been funded to date through the European Development Fund (EDF).⁶⁰ This cooperation takes place in three geographical dimensions: on the bilateral

56 European Commission (2009): Culture and creativity. Vectors for development, P.33. Brussels. Retrieved December 22, 2011, from http://www.culture-dev.eu/www/accueil/Culture-Dev_BROCHURE_OK_7_7.pdf

57 Andris Piebalgs in his forward in Culture and Development. Action and Impact (2011): New edition: Mediterranean Focus, Brussels, p. 7.

58 European Commission (2011): Culture and Development in International Cooperation. Retrieved December 15, 2011, from <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/culture-and-development-international-cooperation/info/culture-and-development-international-cooperation>

59 According to official information received by an EU official working in the unit responsible for culture at DG DEVCO.

60 This financial instrument is not part of the general budget of the Commission, but is financed by the member states. Compare http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/development/overseas_countries_territories/r12102_en.htm (retrieved December 10, 2011).

level with the 79 ACP countries,⁶¹ with the six ACP regions,⁶² and at an intra-ACP level. The latter dimension receives special attention through the following programmes: ACP Films and ACP Cultures.

The audiovisual sector, in particular the film industry, has been the core field of intervention for cultural industries in the context of EU-ACP cooperation. The current **ACP Films Programme** was established in 2008. With a budget of 6.5 Million €, it supports the production, distribution and promotion of films created in ACP countries, as well as at the training of professionals in this sector. An important feature of this programme is its focus on “South-South” co-operation: multi-country partnerships are a key characteristic and an essential element of the eligibility criteria for participation in the programme. In all of these efforts, the EU-ACP programme applies a holistic approach, aiming beyond short-term successes as it seeks to achieve sustainable improvements in the film industries in ACP countries. To find out more about this successful programme and read a description of current best practices, please consult a separate

article that discusses only this programme: *EU Co-finances African Cinema*.

ACP Cultures is the first programme of support for ACP cultural industries that is identified in the framework of the ACP-EU cooperation. With a budget of 6.3 million € for the period 2007-2012, it aims to reinforce the capacities of policy- and decision-makers, cultural operators and all domains of culture and cultural industries, except the audiovisual sector, in the ACP States. Through a grant scheme, the programme supports projects with the aim of reinforcing the technical, financial and managerial capacities of cultural industries and cultural operators. While the programme is open to all ACP countries, particular emphasis is put on five countries as part of a pilot project with a view towards maximising the sector’s potential for wealth and job creation.⁶³ Similarly to the ACP Films Programme, this programme supports the development of synergies within the different ACP countries and regions and also beyond the ACP realm, including the EU and its Member States. This goal is considered important in ensuring that the benefits of the programme reach citizens of all the ACP countries. Another component of the programme is the ACP Cultural Observatory, which aims to collect, analyse and disseminate data and information on the cultural sector in ACP countries, in order to provide evidence-based research and allow for better insight into and understanding of the cultural sector in the ACP region. This will help provide structure to the sector on a professional and political level.⁶⁴

Under the 10th EDF, a new programme has been launched, which constitutes the follow-up of

61 The bilateral co-operation is executed by the EU delegations in the correspondent country and is determined by the Country Strategy Paper for that country. There are several ACP countries that have a cultural component in their bilateral co-operation agreements (cultural initiatives support programmes), e.g. Mali, Burkina Faso and Senegal. See European Commission (2009): Colloquium Preparatory Study “Culture and creation as vectors for development,” p. 8.

62 Projects funded by regional programmes contain, for instance, networking activities which involve artists and professionals from several countries of the sub-region, for example, in West Africa. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

At the same time, the economic partnership agreements (EPAs) with the six sub-regions provide a cultural component. The first EPA signed with CARIFORUM contains such a cultural protocol, which grants the region a special status and easier access to European markets for cultural goods and services. See European Commission (2010): Commission Working Document. The European Agenda for Culture—progress towards shared goals, (SEC (2010) 904), Brussels, p. 55-56.

63 European Commission (2010): Commission Working Document. The European Agenda for Culture—progress towards shared goals, (SEC(2010) 904), Brussels, p. 55.

64 *Ibid.*

the ACP Films and ACP Cultures Programmes: the *ACP-EU Support Programme to Cultural sectors (ACP-Cultures+eu)*. The funding level for this program is twice the amount that was previously provided to cover the total cost of ACP Films and ACP Cultures.

Furthermore, the programme *Investing in People*, which covers all developing countries including ACP states, has a pillar for funding cultural programmes, with the overarching aim of achieving the MDGs. The rather small budget for culture is, along with the whole programme, funded by the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). Through its “Access to Local Culture, Protection and Promotion of Cultural Diversity” strand, provided with 1 million £ by Commissioner Piebalgs, the EU works closely with UNESCO in order to strengthen the system of governance for culture in developing countries.⁶⁵

Finally, *Auction Floor Culture* should be mentioned in this context. This tool was launched in February, 2011 in an attempt to attract investors and donors for “Culture” projects that were described in calls for proposals for the 2008- and 2009-year programmes “Investing in People,” “ACP Films” and “ACP Cultures,” but failed to receive EU funding. The programme was, however, not very successful, as it attracted hardly any investors.⁶⁶ Thus, until now, the EU has failed in the attempt to increase the scale of the mostly positive and successful programmes described above by seeking more financial resources from private donors.

Culture in Action—the actors on the European level

There is no doubt that there is still a lot of work to be done in this field, but who are actually the main actors and decision-makers when it comes to EU cultural development cooperation?

The **European Commission**, as the policy initiator and coordinator, as well as an occasional implementer of the EU programmes, is the main institutional actor in the policy area of culture. Three main DGs of the European Commission have a mandate: **DG Education and Culture (DG EAC)**, **DG Enlargement (DG ELARG)**, and **DG Development and Cooperation—Europe-Aid (DG DEVCO)**. The latter DG is the one that is mainly responsible for the drafting of policies and policy implementation in the ACP countries, the focal region of this study.⁶⁷ Although the DG EAC is directly responsible for cultural cooperation, its competences are mostly confined to the EU itself.⁶⁸ Until the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS), it was the DG External Relations (DG RELEX) that had “specific budgetary envelopes for cultural relations beyond the EU.” The new EEAS has taken over the DG RELEX’s competences in the field of culture. However, its institutional and financial structures have not yet been finalised, and it is not yet clear what its approach to culture will be.⁶⁹ The DG EAC’s role is to work closely with the EEAS and DEVCO and advise them

67 Fischer, R. (2007): A Cultural Dimension to the EU’s External Policies from Policy Statements to Practice and Potential. Amsterdam: Boekmanstudies, p. 27.

68 Ibid.

69 There is a strong demand from civil society actors in the cultural field for the establishment of clear institutional and financial structures and competencies, as well as concrete policies for culture in EU external relations at the EEAS. For example, the recently established civil initiative “More Europe” aims to achieve this through a year-long European campaign.

65 See United Nations Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organization. (2005). Strengthening the System of Governance for Culture in Developing Countries. Retrieved December 14, 2011, from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/2005-convention/technical-assistance/>

66 According to EU officials (DG DEVCO) working in the field of culture.

in their cultural co-operation with third countries, including the ACP countries. Thus, the general policy formulation in the field of “culture and development” is usually done in close coordination with the DG EAC (consider, for example, the international seminar on “Culture and Creation, Factors of Development” in April 2009 where the Commissioners of both the DG DEV [now DG DEVCO] and the DG EAC were present).⁷⁰ At the same time, the DG EAC can cooperate with third countries through its *EU culture programme 2007-2013*. However, ACP countries have not been beneficiaries of these multi-annual co-operation projects.⁷¹ Finally, the DG ELARG is responsible for the Commission’s cultural cooperation with the countries of the EU neighbourhood.⁷² That co-operation is not relevant to this discussion, since this paper focuses on the ACP countries. Accordingly, the work of the DG ELARG will not be further explored.

Regarding cooperation with ACP countries in particular, the **ACP Secretariat** is a relevant actor, since it is responsible for the administration of the ACP Group and assists the Group’s decision-making and advisory organs in carrying out their work in the framework of the EU-ACP Partnership agreement and the European Development Fund (EDF).⁷³

Following the Lisbon Treaty, culture is still not a main competence of the EU, but a complementary policy alongside the actions of the Member

States in this policy area.⁷⁴ Thus, the **Council of the European Union**—that is to say, the Member States—have a strong say in cultural policies. Therefore, the *Education, Youth and Culture Council (EYC)*, which brings together culture Ministers about three or four times a year to adopt decisions on cultural affairs (with unanimity required!), should also be mentioned as an actor in this context, although its decisions mainly concern EU countries. In terms of development policy with ACP countries, the *Foreign Affairs Council* also plays a role. It makes policy decisions, including those in the area of “culture and development,” with a qualified majority.

At the same time, the **European Parliament** plays an important role in moving culture higher up on the EU development agenda. The *Committee on Culture and Education (CULT)*, under rapporteur Marietje Schaake, released a *Report on the cultural dimension of the EU’s external actions* last year, which has been considered and discussed widely both in official European institutions and in the civil society organisations working in this field. In addition, the *Development Committee (DEVE)* deals with culture in its development aspect as well. However, the Committee has not been very active in this area in recent years. The EP has the right of co-decision for both culture and development.

Besides the official European institutions, the **European National Cultural Institutes** play an important role, since at least some of them have developed a separate portfolio on “culture and development.” Among others, the *British Council*, the *Goethe Institute*, and the *Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations* should be mentioned in this context. The various actors on the European level have

70 Fischer, R. (2007): A Cultural Dimension to the EU’s External Policies from Policy Statements to Practice and Potential. Amsterdam: Boekmanstudies, p. 27.

71 Among the beneficiaries have been China, India, and Brazil, as well as countries of the European Neighbourhood. South Africa will be the partner country for 2012.

72 Regional programmes such as EuromedAudiovisual and Euromed Heritage are administered by this DG.

73 Retrieved December 13, 2011, from <http://www.acp.int/content/secretariat-acp>

74 See Singer, O. (2010): Kulturpolitik. In W. Weidenfeld (Hrsg.): Jahrbuch der Europäischen Integration. Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft: Baden-Baden, p. 179.

also made attempts to cooperate and join forces. One example of these efforts is the European Network of *European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC)* which has clusters in many developing countries and which coordinates the actions of the individual cultural institutes in the field of culture and development. According to its current president, Ana Paula Laborinho, “through its close ties and relations of trust with cultural institutions, civil society and local artists, EUNIC aims to make an important contribution to expanding the role of culture in development objectives throughout the world.”⁷⁵ Recently, a **Culture in Development Network** was set up in Brussels, with the sharing of knowledge and resources as its main goal. The members of this network, consisting of representatives of both institutional actors (such as the ACP Secretariat, DG DEVCO, UNESCO, EUNIC and some of its member institutes), and Brussels-based civil society actors (such as Africalia, Hivos and others) meet for regular round-table discussions and networking meetings.⁷⁶

Generally speaking, all actors in the field of “culture and development” share two features. Compared with other (development) policy areas, there is a clear scarcity of human resources. For example, in the DG DEVCO only one official works full-time on cultural policies. There are only seven staff members whose portfolio includes culture, including two people exclusively responsible for the coordination of the ACP Films and ACP

Cultures Programmes (now ACP Cultures+). The lack of sufficient numbers of staff members at the EC headquarters assigned to the cultural cooperation files⁷⁷ means that the potential of culture cannot be fully exploited. There is also a lack of staff in the cultural field in the EU delegations in the ACP countries, with the consequence that “there is too little capacity of dialogue with the cultural world.”⁷⁸

Furthermore, there is a high rate of turnover in this policy field. For instance, no EC policy-makers have spent more than a couple of years working on a cultural portfolio. This means that in order to move culture higher up on the political agenda, or even to manage daily tasks, it takes a lot of initiative and personal commitment to the topic. According to an EU official who has worked in this area, the rate of achievement of objectives in the field of “culture and development” has varied widely, depending on whether those in positions of responsibility have treated culture as their “pet topic.”

75 Culture and Development. Action and Impact (2011): New edition: Mediterranean Focus, Brussels, p. 9.

76 The network recently set up an online tool in form of an open group, “Culture and Development in International Cooperation,” on the development platform capacity4dev.eu. This instrument was established in October 2009 by the European Commission to make it possible for all actors in this field, such as EC staff, private sector, NGOs and public organizations to share information. With the new group, cooperation and information-sharing in the area of culture and development will be a lot easier. Currently the group has 115 members.

77 See European Commission (2009): Colloquium Preparatory Study “Culture and creation as vectors for development,” p. 10.

78 Ibid.

Challenges for the future— exploiting the full potential of culture requires real commitment, including appropriate resources and instruments

This overview shows that despite generally positive developments, there are still several challenges that must be tackled in the near future in order to improve the effectiveness of the cultural policies and programmes already in place, as well as to further exploit the potential that culture has for development.

First, it is essential to produce more evidence of the positive effects of culture for development, in order to increase awareness and acceptance among policy-makers and ordinary citizens of the value and contribution of culture in development processes. Therefore, it is important to support the continuation and reinforcement of the “series of awareness raising and communication initiatives, including commissioning studies on the economic value of different strands of the cultural sector and impact studies of projects conducted”⁷⁹ that have already been completed successfully. Although recent studies on culture in development have already shown that culture and cultural heritage can generate a considerable part of GDP in many developing countries, leading to growth and job creation,⁸⁰ more research is needed, to provide reproducible facts and figures. Beyond the economic dimension, evidence is needed for the other

functions of culture in development—for instance, its facilitating role in conflict transformation or democratisation, for which it is even more difficult to prove a direct impact. In order to design viable and reproducible studies and evaluations, common cultural indicators must be developed. The ACP Cultural Observatory could be an important tool for collecting evidence, or for coordinating and distributing the results of such research. At the same time, independent ex-post impact assessments of EU programmes should be systematically conducted to ensure and increase the effectiveness of EU’s actions.

Second, a more strategic approach to culture in development is necessary. Although some progress has been made, moving from isolated projects towards programmes that aim to create structure in technical areas and develop international exchanges,⁸¹ culture remains a secondary concern, to the point where it is not explicitly addressed in policy-making, and can be brought in only indirectly (as with the priority-setting of Commissioner Piebalgs). Cultural cooperation must be set upon a much more systematic, comprehensive and consistent foundation, with clear commitments for concrete cultural initiatives that contribute to realising the ambitious objectives set out in the Cotonou Agreement. There are signs that awareness of this issue is being raised, and first steps in this direction are being taken. For example, the development of a strategic approach to culture in external relations has been formulated as a priority objective in the current Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014.⁸² Also, a first informal meeting in Pécs was organised by the former Hungarian Presidency of the European Council for senior officials from

79 Culture and Development. Action and Impact (2011): New edition: Mediterranean Focus, Brussels, p. 12.

80 Compare KEA report, Caricom report, Mali report etc. European Commission (2009): Colloquium Preparatory Study “Culture and creation as vectors for development,” p. 3. See also the outline on the economic dimension of culture on pp. 6-7 of this study.

81 See European Commission (2009): Colloquium Preparatory Study “Culture and creation as vectors for development,” p. 9.

82 Culture and Development. Action and Impact (2011): New edition: Mediterranean Focus, Brussels, p. 118.

the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Culture of the European Member States in the presence of the EC and the EEAS. This meeting can be seen as another important step towards the formulation and implementation of an integrated European strategy for culture in foreign relations and development.⁸³ Close cooperation between actors on the European and national levels is necessary, not only because the latter have the main competence in this policy area, but also in order to improve coherence of the EU's external actions in the field of culture. A first joint meeting of the Working Party on Development Cooperation (CODEV) and the Cultural Affairs Committee (CAD) of the European Council illustrates their determination to “formalise the association between culture and development in discussions between Member States and the Commission.”⁸⁴ The European Parliament's resolution of May 2011 on unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries confirms its approval of this path of close and strategic cooperation.

Third, cooperation is needed not only on the European level, but among ALL actors and partners, in order to formulate a coherent cultural strategy and to successfully implement cultural programmes “on the ground.” For instance, ACP partners and beneficiaries need to be closely involved at both the strategic and operational level.⁸⁵ It should be the local operators in the beneficiaries' countries that “ensure the participation of local communities and potential beneficiaries during all stages of the project.”⁸⁶ This form of ownership and “appropriation” is needed in order to expand outreach and make a real difference with the projects. In the short run, this requires

appropriate support, for which culturally trained EU officials are needed, especially in the EU delegations in the partner countries. However, in the long run, it should be ideally the ACP countries themselves that take the lead in supporting culture in their countries. Furthermore, lower turnover among the staff working in this policy field would be beneficial for building up a more stable and effective network of the different cultural actors. These actors themselves call for more networking and closer cooperation, as it is considered a necessity to join forces in order to promote common interests.⁸⁷ Last, but not least, the European National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC), as well as civil initiatives such as “More Europe” are demonstrating great interest in cooperating with and getting closely involved in this process of developing a more strategic approach to culture in EU foreign relations. With great expertise both on the ground in the ACP countries and in policy coordination in Brussels, they could be very competent and valuable partners for moving forward on this agenda and making progress in achieving better synergies between culture and development.

Although some positive developments can be observed already, the outlined challenges can hardly be tackled in full with the resources available at the moment. For instance, the collection and communication of research-based evidence requires a sufficient amount of human resources. Thus, in order to make the most out of the current policy framework for culture, and to improve the quality of the Commission's work, more staff members with a cultural portfolio and cultural expertise are needed, both at headquarters as well as “on the ground” in the EU delegations. But not only human resources are lacking—in order to achieve the impact for culture that the EU has described

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid., p. 116.

86 Ibid.

87 See outcome of the Culture in Development Network Meeting in Brussels on 19th October 2011.

in its various declarations and policies, appropriate financial commitments have to be made. If the EU's action is confined to political pronouncements without providing for a corresponding budget, there is a risk that the momentum behind culture in development will be lost. Although on the whole, budgets have been growing, which demonstrates an increasing recognition of the value of culture by policy-makers (consider, for instance, the 100% rise in the budget of the ACP Cultures+ Programme), the financial means dedicated to promoting culture are comparatively very small. With around 200 million Euros for the period from 2007-2013, even though the funding has increased steadily and the amount for this period represents a more than 100% increase compared with the previous six-year allocation,⁸⁸ it is still less than 0.5% of the funds invested by the EDF. The EU must increase its resources if it really wants to meet its political commitments and continue to develop its capacities in this policy field.

However, in times of crisis and financial austerity, it is not realistic to expect that the problem of a lack of financial and human resources will be resolved in the near future. Therefore, all actors committed to “culture and development” must work closely together in order to increase the impact of their actions through greater coordination and coherence. At the same time, creative thinking will be needed in the search for supplementary or alternative funding for their projects. Finally, all actors must join forces in order to determine how to best advocate with policy-makers and the public for an appropriate position for culture in EU development policy. Although the EU itself has claimed there is “No Future Without Culture,” it remains to be seen if EU policy-makers will take these words seriously and support institutional

and civil-society actors in the field of “culture and development” with the appropriate political leadership, resources and commitment. Only then can the potential of culture to shape the future of the world's poor through its valuable contribution to social and sustainable development be fully exploited.

⁸⁸ According to official information received by an EU official working in the unit responsible for culture at DG DEVCO.

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Recommended Links

ACP Cultural Observatory

http://www.acpcultures.eu/?page=centre_de_ressources&lang=uk

(The Resource Centre of the ACP Cultural Observatory offers a range of studies and reference documents on cultural industries in ACP countries grouped by themes and by regions.)

European Commission, Information page: Culture and creativity. Vectors for development.

http://www.culture-dev.eu/pages/en/en_accueil.php
(This site gathers and presents all the available information, opinions and documents on the efforts of the Commission and the European Union, as well as the efforts of professionals of member states and partner states.)

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VIDEO: The African World Heritage Fund

<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/culture-and-development-international-cooperation/minisite/video-african-world-heritage-fund>

(Christoph Pelzer (DG DEV, now DEVCO) interviews Webber Ndoro, Director of the African World Heritage Fund about the organisation's objectives.)

VIDEO: Culture in Development: Views from Abomey, Benin

<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/culture-and-development-international-cooperation/minisite/video-culture-development-views-abomey-benin>

(Interview with William Codjo, a culture consultant, speaking about the importance of culture in development while in Abomey, Benin. Abomey is the historical capital of the ancient Dahomey kingdom formed in the 1600s. Today the palaces at Abomey are a UNESCO World Heritage Site.)

AUTHOR

Martina Kühner was a scholar at ifa's research programme "Culture and Foreign Policy" from July to December 2011. She holds a BA degree in German-Spanish Studies from the University of Regensburg and the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and a Master's in European Studies from Maastricht University. She has gained work experience at the GIZ in Eschborn, the European Parliament and the European Commission in Brussels.

Contact: martina_kuehner@yahoo.de

ifa



Institut für
Auslandsbeziehungen e. V.

Charlottenplatz 17 Postfach 10 24 63
D-70173 Stuttgart D-70020 Stuttgart
Tel. +49/711 2225-0 Fax +49/711 2 26 43 46
www.ifa.de info@ifa.de

