DANISH CULTURAL INSTITUTE response to

## Call for inputs to a report on cultural rights and sustainable development

ISSUED BY

**Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights**

DISCLAIMER: Danish Cultural Institute (DCI) responses are to be considered as comments developed by the secretariat working with the field in DCI, and is not to be considered a policy statement by DCI. Answers are shown in red color.

**I. The cultures of development**

This first part aims at gathering information about the vision, values and aims of development, and about those who are involved in defining the strategies and evaluating progress in their achievement.

1. What is your understanding of what “development” should aspire to?

DCI’s understanding:

DCI applies the term “development” as related to the field of interaction between Culture, Arts and Society.

DCI understand culture as a transversal dimension of development, not only as a sector. DCI thus sees cultural resources including the arts, the creative economy and cultural practices, habits and values, as all being essential for both cultural, social, economic and environmental development.

DCI specifically works on the international and transnational dimension of development, which include building cultural relations based on principles of promoting cultural diversity, bottom up, mutual, inclusive, sustainable development and fair cooperation[[1]](#footnote-1).

Beginning in 2009, and formalized by our board since 2017, DCI have specifically focused on the relation between between Culture and SDGs.

DCI additionally terms our goals in a more open-ended way as “culture on the edge” i.e. using arts and culture to explore new areas and challenges of common interest across diverse cultures, societies and countries.

In the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNICs) external assessment of members degree of engagement in SDGs in 2021, DCI scored in the very top. This is for several reasons, but the most important was possibly that DCI’s board since 2017 has agreed on Culture and SDGs as a strategic objective.

See part II, 1-5 for further elaboration of DCIs understanding and practice.

1. How is development defined in your country?
   * If it exists, please provide the definition of development used in your Government’s / organizations’ strategies or policies towards (sustainable) development.

Government definition of “development” abroad:

Development is mainly defined in the law on “international development cooperation” (ODA), which is largely concerning cooperation taking place abroad. This law highlights as a main objective to support the SDGs, and also lists a number of other core objectives such as poverty reduction, which was the main of the Danish ODA from the outset, and which is now also part of the SDGs.

The Danish government and parliament every 4 years renews the strategy for international development cooperation, i.e. the strategic approach for implementing the above mentioned law. Here is the link to the most recent strategy 2021-2025. <file:///C:/Users/ogh/Downloads/Denmarks-Strategy-for-Development-Cooperation_2021.pdf>

Often the law on the Danish ODA is also slightly revised to be fully in line with 4 year strategy. E.g. after the SDGs were agreed, the next 4 year plan from 2017-2021 in its first line refered to the SDGs as the main goal to contribute towards.

Culture has a §8 in the law for international development cooperation, but is not elaborated in other documents currently, so its ad hoc if Danish ODA supports a cultural project via MFA (DCI manages two such grants currently).

Development in Denmark

As for development in Denmark, the Danish government in 2021 agreed with Parliament on a plan for how Denmark implements the SDGs. See next chapter for link.

The 2021 plan is significant, since initially in 2015 the Danish government tended to treat SDGs to be something taking place “abroad”. From the outset in 2015 however many single parts of the public sector, private sector and CSOs promoted that SDGs is indeed a national Danish agenda for the government. And now there is an explicit plan on how the state supports the SDGs in Denmark.

Broader participatory understanding of “development”

If you ask Danish decision makers and common Danes, on Denmarks development definition, most would probably in their answers include talk about the Danish tradition for dialogue, the “folk high school movement” and the “living word”, which since mid-1800’s has helped liberate peasants, workers, women, support environmental movement, LGBT+, etc and include them fully in societal development. In the labour market this has lead to the social dialogue between employers and trade unions since early 1930ties has been a cornerstone in shaping the Danish welfare system. This has recently been integrated into the model for negotiating “just” solutions for the Danish climate goal of 70% reduction of emissions by 2030, which is now under development.

This participatory tradition of the last 150-170 years is seen as common “cultural” and “societal”, and all Danish political parties from the right to the left, more or less, support it. They see themselves as having contributed to it, and having used it for their version of participatory bottom-up “development”. It was initially rooted in the Danish poet and priest N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872), who was also a member of the first Danish parliament from 1848. His name was by the EU a couple of decades ago used as the official name for the EU Adult Education Program “Grundtvig”. Very many other persons have as times changed, also shaped this tradition, so it has indeed been and is still a “living” tradition. Over the last five decades it has not least been related to themes of inclusion/gender and environment/climate. Danish Cultural Institute has its office in Copenhagen in one of the physical venues in Denmark associated with the tradition “Vartov”.

1. Has your country developed and adopted a (sustainable) development strategy?
   * If so, please indicate what the main development model is, the aims that are communicated and monitored.

Denmarks own sustainable development strategy – state level:

Denmark has national state plan for implementing the SDGs as indicated in the former chapter 2. Here is is the link to the national plan from 2021: <https://www.ft.dk/samling/20201/almdel/SDG/bilag/36/2414008/index.htm>

A key element in Denmark for the sustainable development strategy is focused on CO2 emissions(climate) of 70% reduction in 2030, partly linked with Environment, and the approach has been developed 2019-2021: It was a new model, where the major stakeholders were involved (see below).

Synergy between State, Employers and Trade Unions and Civil Society/Experts

The government divided the challenge in approximately 12 sector specific areas, and stakeholders developed solutions for a strategy jointly. The stakeholders included government, employers, trade Unions and experts in science/innovation/CSOs, with expert knowledge.

In international context this is an interesting model for a “just green transition” since a major hindrance for successful strategies is that is not “just”, i.e. that Employers and Trade Unions are not considered as equal and key stakeholders. If government do not ensure support from trade unions (or these unions are extremely weak) a just solution is not ensured. Just means specifically to replace jobs lost by workers in the brown sector (based on coal, oil, gas..), by new jobs based on green energy. And likewise - if employers cannot see how this solution can work, they will neither implement it, so they must be on board and supported to make the just transition. So a just transition is key for success, seen from a Danish point of view, and requires a broad and active participation.

If should however be added that the Danish government has been criticized by e.g. former EU Climate Commissioner Connie Hedegaard, for not having yet used this to produce a full overview of a 2030 plan, that is to have a “strategic overview” to make the right decisions. However in fact the plan is so far implemented “piece by piece”, through major cross political agreements (e.g. last year an agreement was made 2030 plan for agriculture to start now, and currently a CO2-tax-system is being proposed to Parliament for negotiation). But in any case all these “pieces” are possible due to the dialogue and efforts initially made to understand possible solutions in the approximate 12 different committees, who reflect key parts of stakeholders and population.

1. Who are the main stakeholders defining, driving and monitoring the (sustainable) development process?
   * Please provide information on the various levels or sectors of stakeholders involved.

Will not elaborate this question. Refer also to input in question 3.

1. Are there participatory processes influencing and informing the definition and evaluation of (sustainable) development policies? If so, how?

Participatory processes influencing/informing definition/evolution of sustainable development policies:

Please refer to answer under question 1 on “Broader participatory understanding of development”.

Key element in the participatory process on climate/partly environment, from 2020 has been mentioned under point 3.

There has been process at many other levels organized by sector specific actors on their own, and then feeding into government, some times meaningful other times not so much:

\* E.g. in Education a network by key education universities and other educational stakeholders originally coming out of UNESCO World Decade of Education, led to influencing education specific approaches locally raising the educational agenda for sustainable development.

\* E.g. in Culture the former governments “International Cultural Panel” did facilitate a conference for stakeholders on Culture and Sustainable Development and tried to follow it up in 2015, but a change of government stopped it. However there are a very broad range of cultural and design approaches used in Denmark to nurture participatory involvement of citizens and stakeholders in development. This is still under development in Denmark in relation to the development of the public sector and its interaction with citizens and private sector. See next points for DCI examples.

DCI selected experiences on use of art/culture and cultural approaches to participatory and sustainable development (operational, strategic and in policies)

DCI has build on such participatory approaches in our international partnerships. E.g. DCI worked as lead of a number of EU Baltic Sea Region transnational innovation seed- and main projects. An key one related to citizen driven sustainable cultural development (transnational project of 2,5 mio. euro: “UrbCulturalPlanning” 2019-2021) is building on adapting the **method “Cultural Planning”** (initially developed by Colin Mercer in 1990ties with UNESCO support) **and building capacity for its use** via operational, strategic and policy tools in the BSR in 9 countries (DK, DE, PL, RU, LT, LV, FI, SE, NO).

DCI has also since 2020 prepared “BalticCircularPlace” with countries in the region, which supports the kick-start of a **longer systemic transition of Culture and Creative Sector and Industries (CCSI) to move from linear to circular economy**. It is expected to run from 2023-2025 if supported in new round of EU regional programs. This project has systemic changes as a goal, in policies, for economy and for citizen participation.

DCI is currently lead of the consortium behind the MFA supported “New Democracy Fund” (NDF). It also support the sustainable development goals, as do all Danish MFA supported activities in principle. The funds supports CSOs in Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaidjan in the fields of Culture, Media, Youth, Labor Market. There is in addition a focus on CSOs working on Gender mainstreaming and Climate/Environment. **DCI has in 2020-2021 produced a “Cultural Rights manual” with 10 Cultural CSO partners in the region** (see below II, point 5).

1. Have the development priorities or the assistance provided by international organisations impacted negatively on some aspects of your country’s (sustainable) development policies?

Development priorities have recently been scaled towards sustainable development in Denmark, however in hindsight e.g. some energy priorities and investments such as related to use of gas up to recently in 2020, may be said to have impacted negatively.

**II. The cultural rights dimension of the sustainable development goals**

This part of the questionnaire aims to gather experiences on how cultural resources and cultural rights have been considered in the strategies and programs aiming to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) generally as well as for specific goals.

1. In designing the strategy to achieve the SDGs, what consideration has been given to their cultural dimensions and to cultural rights? Which aspects have been considered?

In general in Denmark

The Development Cooperation Strategy of Denmark (2021-2025) which have the SDGs as the key objective, has not specifically given any consideration to the cultural dimensions and nor to cultural rights. But it has neither precluded this dimension, as the law behind the strategy (Law on Development Cooperation) still has a cultural paragraph in it.

As the human rights based approach to development is a core focus in the new strategy 2021-2025, cultural rights – which is a formal part of the universal human rights – is and can be included in this approach.

Defining Danish Cultural Institutes International contribution to SDGs, their cultural dimension and to cultural rights

DCI is under the Ministry of Culture and when renewing our agreements with the Ministry of Culture every 4 years we make an analysis of our context, as a basis for our strategies and core support being received. This analysis is currently at the global/international level related to general trends, including how culture and arts relate to the SDGs, and relevance of UNESCO conventions and strategies, EU strategies etc. The final agreement is focused on the cultural dimensions.

DCI are also expected to instrumental to supporting the implementation of the cooperation existing between the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Danish international cultural cooperation.

DCI also collaborates with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Culture in the context of sustainable development and international development cooperation. Currently we are the lead of a multiannual large program called “New Democracy Fund”, where DCI lead a CSO consortium of 5 partners supported by the Danish MFA for Eastern Partnership Countries (ENCs). In total there is over 100 ENC partners. In this context there is also:

1. A general focus on CSO’s including, cultural, media, youth and labour market CSOs managed by the
2. A specific multiyear cultural program with ENC partners managed by DCI
3. A specific human rights based approach, including a cultural rights based output managed by DCI.

DCI’s designing of the strategy towards SDGs

Historically: DCI already at the Climate Summit in 2009 launched a global network of cultural stakeholders with participation of over 100 persons from 26 countries and 5 continents. It was called “Culture/Futures – the transition to an Ecological Age”. It was supported by UNESCO, EUNIC (incl. Goethe Institute, British Council et al), IFACCA, Council of Europe, ASEF, Association of Performing Art Professionals (APAP) and very many other.

DCI coordinated Culture/Futures from 2008-2013 and pro-bono organized conference in cities on how cities and larger cultural institutions could transition to the ecological age. Host cities included among other London, Copenhagen, Poznan, New York City, Hong Kong, Sao Paulo (twice), Durban. Other complementary events Culture/Futures also organized with the City of Rio de Janeiro in 2012 a confence in 2012 to put culture on the agenda on what was agreed to become the founding event for the SDGs – the Rio 2012 Summit.

DCI from 2014-2017 on behalf the Nordic Council and the Policy Area Culture in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, led a program involving creative industries, cities and social innovators called “Culture and Sustainable Development in Baltic Sea Region”. This initiative strategically developed a number of smaller and main projects as part of the regional cooperation over the coming 5-6 years up to now.

Recent approach: Danish Cultural Institute (DCI) board has in 2017 decided that culture and SDGs is a strategic focus to guide DCIs work internationally.

DCI in formulating its 4 year strategies in 2016 and 2020 made an analysis on our experiences and strengths/weakness in working with culture and SDGs. This was used to develop projects relevant to SDGs as the strategic focus of DCIs activities.

The first phase based initially in 2016-19 was based on a 3 year study on all DCI projects, to find if and how they contributed to SDGs in some form. DCI scored most high vis a vis SDG 4 and 11, but also contributed to 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16. Projects have since been further focused on SDGs, with a light but meaningful monitoring of all projects, and more focused results-based monitoring on the medium and larger projects, also as per agreements with donors.

DCI currently work here:

Baltic Sea Region: Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Germany, Nordic countries

Eastern Neighbourhood Countries: Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaidjan

Turkey,

China,

India,

Brazil,

DCI’s presence in EUNIC clusters worldwide are also done via other Danish CSO’s and Danish embassies present abroad, such as in Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, Japan, South Korea, Iran, Palestine, Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Serbia, Greece, France, UK, USA et al.

1. How was the planning, implementation and monitoring of the strategy adapted to the cultural values, world views, practices and identities of the concerned persons? How was respect for diversity integrated in the process?

The actual planning, implementation and monitoring has generally been seen as context specific, i.e. been done in respect of cultural values, world views, identities and diversity relevant to concerned places and persons.

This has been reinforced in particular the recent 3-4 years. The management of DCI has improved and supported this.

Our cooperation in the EUNIC Global has supported this process with specific approaches and tools, which have been very relevant to moving ahead. This not least include the recent “fair collaboration” (which is not “just another toolkit”).

DCI has also in recent years focused on qualifying and scaling projects, which address cultural values, world views, identities and diversity relevant to concerned places and persons. This both improves DCI own staff knowledge, attitudes and skills, our partners and our joint audiences/beneficiaries.

1. How were the persons concerned involved? Their diverse cultural resources, knowledge and capacities in various contexts capitalized? Has the strategy to achieve the SDGs been designed in a way that is culturally adequate and inclusive?

We are a relatively small culturally inclusive organization with less than 100 staff in total. DCI is 82 years old, but is very contemporary focused and address diversity/inclusion in various ways in our programs including age, genders, handicapped persons in our activities, including their knowledge and capacities, and connecting it with thematic programming.

There is a constant balance between (1) complex “result based management” systems, (2) anchoring work adequately through cultural knowledge and goals of sustainability, and (3) “making things work”. We solve this with relative multicultural, multi-age, multi-gender teams, relevant to what is needed in our respective offices and projects around the world.

The same solution goes for SDGs, there is a balance between what is seen as a complex SDG system of goals, indicators, implications etc, (and linking it to culture, when its often only done indirectly) and “making projects work”.

But in conclusion: It is important to constantly monitor needs for training, feedback, support etc, as our systems require a increasing degree of cultural sensitivity and also of skills of using results based management, monitoring etc.

1. Have international development and financial agencies taken into account cultural rights in sustainable development initiatives?

There is – in our experience – an amazing little knowledge of cultural rights internationally, whether as part of sustainable development initiatives or not explicitly. It seems limited to certain sections of people.

This also goes for cultural professionals working internationally. This is why cultural rights are often not considered. Yes, a big statement.

Most know about the “human rights based approach”, and think a cultural rights based approach is the very same. But though both a build on the universal human rights, there is an essential difference.

1. Where cultural resources and creative capacities were leveraged in achieving the SDGs, what were in your experience the results, successes, weaknesses, or lessons learned?

We have 2 good examples from projects led by DCI with many other partners, where cultural resources and creative capacities were and are leveraged in achieving the SDG’s. A very small in South Africa and a Cultural Rights Manual manual produced in the context of a very large project in the European Eastern Neighborhood Countries.

1: A very small pilot project in South Africa was led by DCI in 2017 in cooperation with and arts education partner in South Africa and universities of Copenhagen and Cape Town. It was followed up until 2021. The target group was young students in a Cape Town township school and a very poor and violent community. A planned arts education program over a week using embodied approaches with a group of these students, and led according to their own teachers to two results: a) to a reduction in violence, and b) to a significant increase in students ability to memorize what they learned in the program. Normally these students very rarely remember learnings.

This could be seen to be indicative of exploring the use of such programs of arts education for implementing SDG target 4.7. The experience is documented in an academic article:

**A Microtopia of Arts Education: International Sustainable Development Policy Brought to Life in an Educational Project Involving Institutions in South Africa and Denmark**

**Charlotte Svendler Nielsen, Gerard M. Samuel, Peter Vadim, Liesl Hartman, Fabian Hartzenberg, and Olaf Gerlach-Hansen**

**Abstract** Red Apples–Green Apples is a dance/visual arts project,which was started

by an intercultural group of artists, teachers and researcherswith10 –11-year-old children

living in Cape Town and Copenhagen in 2017. The project has since focused on

the school class in Cape Town with biannual project weeks ending in 2020. The activities

of the project have contributed to illuminating how arts education can promote

the culture–nature dimension of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and from

a more philosophical viewpoint what children can learn through artistic–educational

collaborations about themselves, others and their surroundings. In this article, examples

drawn from videographic material and children’s experiences expressed in multimodal

formats are discussed in relation to SDG no. 4 focusing on quality education

and the implementation of the new EU strategic approach to international cultural relations.

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E. Wagner et al. (eds.), *Arts, Sustainability and Education*, Yearbook of the European

Network of Observatories in the Field of Arts and Cultural Education (ENO),

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-3452-9\_9

Results: See above.

Successes: The main success was the link between the experience of the one week arts education learning module in 2017, and the indication of improvement of memory of students, and reduction of violence.

Weaknesses/Lessons learned: The challenge for the approach will be how to design a sustainable scaling of the use of this approach.

2: Cultural Rights Manual produced in project New Democracy Fund (NDF).

Context

DCI is the lead partner of a consortium of 5 large Danish CSOs collaborating with approx. 100 CSOs in the European Eastern Neighborhood. It is supported by Danish MFA. The project started 2020-2022, and will be continued 2023-2025.

NDF contributes to the follow SDGs: Target 5.1 ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, 5.5 ensuring women’s full participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making, target 8.8 protecting labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all, target 10.2 empower and promote social inclusion of all, target 11.7 access to green and public spaces, target 13.3 knowledge about climate change, target 16.6 develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions.

Cultural rights manual

DCI are in the cultural sector working with 10 ENC partners from the 6 countries (UA, BY, MD, GY, AR, AZ). A main focus of NDF is a regional CSO dialogue of experiences in ENC and with Denmark/Baltic States, along with a human rights based approached. In the cultural field, which DCI itself works on as part of NDF, this implies a “Cultural Rights Based Approach”.

The last half year DCI have worked with partners and experts on a “Cultural Rights Manual”, developed specifically in cooperation with the ENC partners. The main authors are each internationally recognized experts in the field:

Helle Porsdam, Professor of Law and Humanities, University of Copenhagen & UNESCO Chair in Cultural Rights, who has written the introduction.

Ole Reitov, Member of the EU/UNESCO Expert Facility on the Governance of Culture for the implementation of the 2005 Convention, who has written the main text and facilitated dialogues with partners.

A 3 workshop on Cultural Rights was accordingly also organized in Moldova with partners in the beginning of the year.

Summary “Cultural Rights Manual” sub-project within NDF project:

Results: The actual product is expected finished by June 2022. The process was also a result (see successes).

Successes: A very positive evaluation from partners from the 6 countries on the value of CR Manual and the Workshop, as well as the process. The process did include partners in providing input into the process.

Weaknesses/Lessons learned: A lesson learned was how little CSOs – who de facto work with cultural rights – know about the cultural rights as part of the human rights. Several had an understanding they were working with human rights, but after the project, some stated they would now say they worked with with cultural rights.

The specificity of cultural rights and cases to refer to, appeared very helpful for them. This goes in particular for the areas of Artistic Freedom of Expressions and Gender mainstreaming. Along with not least the cultural rights based approach to advocacy this opens, not least.

A weakness may be that the cultural rights are not sufficiently anchored in relation to the climate/environment theme, or e.g. to the use of public space (SDG 11.7.) which matters increasingly to cultural CSO actors, and is also highlighted clearly in SDGs and in the New Urban Agenda.

1. This is also inspired by the EU Strategy for External Cultural Relations adopted by the Council in 2019. DCI is part of EUNIC, who strategically works with the EU on developing and implementing this strategy, and have now also started a process to formulate and implement fair collaboration. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)