

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN POST
COVID WORLD

GLOBAL PROJECT OF SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION COUNCIL

PARTNERS IN EUROPE, NORTH
AND SOUTH AMERICA, ASIA,
AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST

Scuola affiliata a:

Scuola universitaria professionale
della Svizzera italiana

SUPSI



SSCC
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2021

PROPOSAL

cultural diplomacy

PATRONS



Hedva Ser
UNESCO
Goodwill
Ambassador for
Cultural Diplomacy



Cecil Alvarez
Director
Earthsavers,
UNESCO
Artist for Peace





SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION COUNCIL

Cultural Diplomacy project has been designed in conjunction with the guiding principles of UNESCO and therefore the patron of the project is Mme. Hedva Ser, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Cultural Diplomacy. In the world today, we face a plethora of civil conflicts and regional wars which are hemorrhaging many developing countries across the globe, coupled with global risk of pandemics which did not simply cost so many lives, but also crippled economic development. It is for this reason that the Director General of UNESCO, Mme. Audrey Azoulay, launched Resiliart, a programme which demonstrates that the rich gamut of cultural manifestations can strengthen peace and also contribute to achieving the remainder of 17 sustainable development goals.

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PARTICIPANTS AND GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

This programme has been designed to many geographical regions , namely:

1. Latin Americas and the Caribbean
2. North America
3. Africa
4. Middle East
5. Europe
6. Asia/Pacific.

The senior partners in the exercise are South-South Cooperation Council (a global non-governmental body (www.sccc.com.co) and SUPSI(University of Southern Switzerland). However, the following Universities have been additionally included as partners:

1. University of Salento, Italy
2. University UNIRIO in Rio de Janeiro
3. Catholic Pontifical University of Buenos Aires
4. Universidad de Valle , Colombia
5. Universidad Javeriana (Bogota, Colombia)
6. Beaux Arts University (UNIBAC) in Cartagena de Indias
7. University St Salle, Bacolod, Philippines
8. Directorate General for Public Relations, Punjab, Pakistan
9. University of Alberta, Canada
10. University of Regina, Canada
11. University Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
12. Wits School of Arts, University of Johannesburg
13. University of Western Cape, South Africa
14. Makerere University Uganda
15. African University of Communications, Accra, Ghana
16. University of Pune, India
17. The National Centre for Culture and Arts of King Hussein Foundation, Jordan
18. Pan African World Heritage Museum, Ghana
19. Theatre Emissary International, Lagos
20. Georgetown University, Washington DC

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N.B. COMPONENTS (1) AND (2) WILL BE EXECUTED WITH CLOSE COOPERATION OF “AFRICA PRIORITY” SEGMENT OF UNESCO:

1. AFRICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE BEFORE COLONIZATION BY THE BRITISH, FRENCH, PORTUGUESE, GERMANS, BELGIANS AND ITALIANS

1.1. This example of cultural diplomacy has for its purpose to showcase that there have been splendid examples of cultural heritage in Africa since the beginning of the new era, i.e. 2000 years ago. One is referring particularly to architectural monuments such as Egyptian pyramids, Pyramids of Sudan, obelisks in Axum, Coptic churches in Lalibela and other areas in Ethiopia, Gondar castles (bombarded by the British), palaces of kings of Dahomey (in Benin), palaces in northern Nigeria, and above all university and libraries from 13th century in Timbuktu. It also refers to rich oral scenic arts tradition, for example, “cousinage a plesanterie” which emerged in 13th century at the time of the establishment of Mali Empire, declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind by UNESCO and ditto by the Government of Burkina Faso.

1.2. Sahel Region, francophone West Africa: A team of Youth Ambassadors for south-south cooperation of SSCC from Sahel Region (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Senegal) has proposed in 2022 a Festival on this topic which will subsequently rotate amongst participating countries. Astragali Theatre and SUPSI will be invited to take part at the Festival. The convener of the Festival will be Professor Hamadou Mande, Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo in Burkina Faso, who is also Executive Coordinator of the Network of Cultural Institutions in Africa and its Diaspora RICADIA); Head of Research of Cultural Policies in Africa (OCPA, -Maputo/Mozambique); Vice-président of Executive Council of the International Theatre Institute (ITI-UNESCO) and President of the International Festival of Theatre and Marionnettes in Ouagadougou (FITMO)

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The advantage of this segment of the programme is that it will have (a) research component (b) a concrete festival (c) a symbiosis of European, African, Middle East, Asian academic institutions and (d) allow for exchange of students.

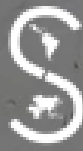
1.3. Programme in East and Southern Africa: This component is being considered at a webinar to be organized mid-April, but here is a short narrative of the programme to examine the role of scenic arts to deal with destinies of children and women, victims of displacement as a result of conflict:

AIMS:

1. To bring attention to and facilitate cross generational, public dialogue about the lived experiences of children in violence and/or displacement situations, and bring into focus the political and legal responsibilities of governments and individuals in ensuring the safety of children.
2. To highlight civil rights of undocumented refugees
3. To highlight the rights of women and girl children in conflict/displacement
4. To tour the play in different spaces across the globe to bring attention to how upheaval has resulted in the trauma of children .
5. To compile, archive and publish a body of work comprising all of the research material gathered over the years.

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The concept was recently published in the UK:

https://books.google.co.bw/books/about/The_Routledge_Companion_to_Applied_Perfo.htmlid=yal1zQEACAAJ&source=kp_book_description&redir_esc=y

It is envisaged that academic component will involve, as this is a global story, the possibility of involvement of other academic partners and exchange of scholars.

1.4. Creation of the \$ 30 million Pan African Heritage World Museum: The partners are linked with this programme in Ghana which is intended to showcase the glory of African cultural heritage prior to colonization, through the appointment of SSCC Chairman, Dr. Viktor Sebek as Special Adviser to the Museum, and participation of the Museum Founder and Chairman on the board of SSCC. The major programme, which will be completed in a donor conference. The construction of museum will also enjoy permanent exhibitions, conferences for academic gatherings and festivals. The programme is currently being devised with the governing body of the Museum and its academic programme and international academic committee.

2. African Cultural Heritage in the Americas:

It is well known that African cultural heritage has been better preserved in such South American and Caribbean countries as Brazil and Cuba than in any African country. In fact, many myths and legends such as Goddess of the Sea, Imanja, are virtually unknown in Africa whilst one million citizens of Rio get dressed in white on 31st December and go to the ocean dressed in white to bring gifts to goddess Imanja!.

Therefore in combination with academic partners in African and South American countries, and the Mayor of Rio de Janeiro, a major festival and forum on this topic will be held sometime in 2022. Preparations are already in progress and details will be available shortly.

The contents will be both academic and didactic, and the event will consist of both a forum and festival.

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3. Theatre in Conflict Zone

This is the area where Accademia Dimitri, Scuola Universitaria della Svizzera Italiana, SUPSI in Switzerland, and Salento University in Italy have the greatest expertise. What this project will do in this particular area is to link its 15 members (so far) in the project and strengthen the academic component of theatre in conflict zones.

Culture is not a static state, but a process that is closely linked to power relations, their changes, and various social influences. A collective creative and artistic theater work in local and international conflict and crisis areas requires the awareness of one's own objectives, motivations, and positions.

A power-critical attitude is crucial to recognizing inequality and discrimination. We deal with the historical and political frameworks that have created and still maintain the imbalance of power, and critically examine colonialism and today's concepts of "development", "development policy", "development aid", and volunteer engagements. This also includes the question of how to deal with gender inequality. How does this shape relationships in the ensemble, in the group, in the private sphere, and in a foreign context?

Projects in this field share tools for initiating sustainable projects that strengthen solidarity and emancipatory processes within a society. It enables participants to reflect on themselves as committed cultural workers and to develop an awareness for the diversity in an artistic project, which is built on exchange and collaboration with people and artists from different backgrounds.

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In a globalized world in which the consequences of violence, war, and discrimination have become an integral part of our lives, politics is created with fear, demarcation, and isolation determining everyday life. The educational program "CAS Performing Arts Practice in Conflict Zones" offers an opportunity to open new spaces of reflection and action.

Accademia Dimitri, SUPSI, created a program in North Iraq which took place in 2020 and 2021, next one will take place in September 2021 in Afghanistan and in March 2022 in Cartagena, Colombia.

4. Extension of Art Camp for Plastic Arts to all Scenic Arts

Art camp is one of the early examples of Cultural Diplomacy which was initiated by the UNESCO National Commission for Andorra in 2008. It brought together plastic artists from countries in conflict in Andorra to create together works symbolizing the use of art in service of peace. This was such a great success that Art Camp was repeated in Andorra every two years (last time in 2018). Moreover, it was extended at the level of the Mediterranean, with cooperation of the Government of Malta. SSCC is taking in in October 2021 to ten ASEAN countries (Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and the Philippines) at the Festival and Conference in Manila between 3 and 10 October 2021.

Academic work is in progress in order to extend this programme from plastic arts to scenic arts as well, and this will be topic of research of this component.

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5. Cultural diplomacy in Western Asia

This programme is currently being developed by the office of SSCC for Western Asia in the Directorate General of Public Relations of Punjab in Pakistan. It includes Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kirgizstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Azerbaijan, but dealing with cultural diplomacy only, with emphasis on cultural diplomacy on the silk route. It will involve academic exchanges amongst institutions in Western Asia and Europe, including Salento and SUPSI in Switzerland.

6. Cultural diplomacy, strengthening of community theatre in Conflict Zone involving Indigenous Peoples in South and Central America

In addition to professional theatre, the community theatre is particularly important and a social change factor in countries with insufficient infrastructure of scenic arts. For example, in Colombia, despite the formal end to the longest even civil conflict in western world, the peace has not been reached; certain guerilla groups which have not been demobilized are still in operation. In other countries, such as Sri Lanka, the peace has been achieved, but there is no reconciliation in sight as yet between Sinhalese and Tamils. In Colombia, indigenous tribes and population of African origin have been particularly affected. As a result of this, SSCC is supporting artists who have joined forces to use scenic arts, but especially music, as a tool to enhance national pride in their indigenous cultures. The work is in progress in various indigenous reservations, especially in the Cauca province of Colombia, and will subsequent extend to eight countries of Central American Integration System (SICA) through SSCC members of the Board: Panama, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, Belize, Nicaragua and Dominican Republic.

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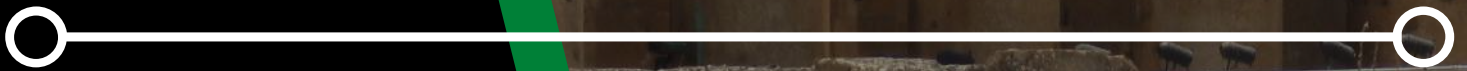
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Joint programme was also conducted with the Office of the Deputy President of Uganda, whose secretariat on peace and reconciliation worked with radicalized former member of terrorist Al Shabaab Group, drug peddlers and addicts and other anti-social elements to use folklore as the bonding agent and facilitate their integration into society.

Another extension is the training programmed CAS (Certificate in Advanced Studies) which the Swiss partner SUPSI is developing with SSCC and ITI Colombian Centre to train artists, both professional and community, in theatre in conflict zones. The targets are not only those affected by civil conflict but also those people where there is significant social exclusion and poverty. A comparable programme is also contemplated for the "favelas" of Rio de Janeiro with Brazilian partners.



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