

"ALL TALENTS COUNT"

**A PILOT INVENTORY OF NATIONAL CULTURAL
POLICIES
AND MEASURES SUPPORTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PRESENTED TO
THE INCP WORKING GROUP ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND GLOBALISATION
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ERICARTS

Dahlmannstr. 26, D - 53113 Bonn
Tel. (+49-228) 2420996/7 * Fax 241318
e-mail: info@ericarts.org

Executive Summary
A PILOT INVENTORY OF NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICIES AND MEASURES
SUPPORTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY¹

Working Group on Cultural Diversity and Globalization

The goal of the pilot project was to build an international comparative analysis of what the member countries of the Working Group consider to be key domestic policy tools that foster cultural diversity by first taking stock of those national measures already in place. The pilot project helps to better understand domestic challenges on integrating cultural diversity and global challenges. Analysis of this data can help inform recommendations and future work or study done by other countries. Five countries participated in this pilot phase including Canada, Hungary, Senegal, South Africa and Sweden. A limited number of countries were selected for this test phase to give time to assess the feasibility of and refine the study's approach for Phase Two.²

Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity: Pros and Cons

An interesting and clear policy rhetoric on cultural diversity emerged from the study as a common point among the different countries:

1. Pre-defined national identity and values are to be preserved and promoted as a priority of the governments.
2. Additional and deeper efforts are needed by the governments to secure social cohesion within national boundaries.
3. Cultural diversity in cultural policy making is a tool to balance local culture against the influences of globalization and commercialization.

These common viewpoints do not necessarily mean that there is a uniform approach to implementing or interpreting cultural diversity principles in cultural policy frameworks and structures. From the material provided in the country reports, one could hardly come to the conclusion that cultural diversity principles are full put into practice. Resources allocated to the various initiatives are meager in comparison to those allocated to mainstream activities and countries agreed that there needs to be a method of leveling the playing field.

1 Summary of Working Group on Cultural Diversity and Globalization's Pilot Project on National Cultural Policy Frameworks: "*All Talents Count*". August 2001. A copy of the full document can be obtained in English and French only from the Liaison Bureau.

2 The responses to the Pilot Project Questionnaire that formed the basis of this report were written by experts in each of the five countries and do not necessarily reflect the official position of Member States. The analysis and synthesis of each country's answer was done by ERICarts, a cultural policy research institute on contract by the Working Group on Cultural Diversity and Globalization.

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The pilot project indicates that cultural diversity as a component of cultural policy and practices has manifested itself in various ways. First, there has been an increase in:

- Use by policy-making bodies of cultural diversity as an instrument in the context of "social cohesion"
- The number of programmes and activities to safeguard national cultural identity and values via media programmes as well as more general civic or citizenship education
- Efforts by policy makers to define differentiated groups (blacks, women, disabled etc) coupled with targeted measures of direct support to individuals from such groups
- Activities to protect and promote both tangible and intangible cultural heritage including measures to increase the use of official languages that may be losing ground on the world linguistic map.
- The use of festivals as an alternative means to distribute indigenous and contemporary cultural production not recognized under mainstream funding systems
- Reliance on staff to uphold cultural diversity principles rather than clear strategic or policy direction

While, the debate continues, the reports have indicated that minimal progress has been made and that there are few:

- Plans for major institutional reforms that would take up culture diversity as its fundamental basis
- Support measures or funding opportunities for small and medium sized enterprises working in the fields of arts and media.
- NGO "watchdogs" of the application of diversity concepts in culture and media policies and programmes
- Publicly funded culture and media programmes, which reflect ethno-cultural communities needs
- Quotas to increase the number of different groups in decision making positions - more laissez-faire approach is being taken as the government relies more and more on their staff to ensure diversity in decision-making.
- Public and private resources to invest in community-based projects and businesses generated as a reaction to market barriers experienced by different groups
- Programmes specifically designed to redistribute resources equally among all groups in society
- Activities or programmes (including exchanges) that would provide young people with the knowledge about the variety of cultures within their own national borders or with other cultures around the world.

In an effort to level the playing field and find solutions to ongoing challenges a debate has emerged regarding the application of culture diversity in policy making. The key question has been whether to:

- 1) Create specialized institutions, programs, events or funding mechanisms to support those groups which are currently excluded from the mainstream - while recognizing the institutional change is slow.
- 2) Employ "mainstreaming" as a relatively recent policy concept to systematically integrate currently marginalised groups into the heart of policy making and practices.

General Trends

There are several societal trends, which do not necessarily find common ground or points of convergence under the rubric of culture diversity as a domain or component of policy making. Below is a preliminary list of observations or trends reported on in the country reports for this pilot study. They should not be considered as the only ones upon which common indicators at the international level could be built upon.

Language policies are entrenched in historical political developments and are today confronted by challenges. The daily or home use of languages, which are not recognised as official or national minority languages, is growing in accordance with immigration patterns. Linguistically defined cultural communities with shared values (which could be within a metropolis or on a border region) are emerging and which pose questions to the traditional ways of defining territories (e.g. political boundaries). There have been recent efforts by government to develop programmes to revive or address the diminishing use of indigenous languages.

The deficit of diverse expression in competitive markets for **cultural goods and services** has provoked two basic policy options against the concentration of ownership and effective control of cultural production and markets in few hands: direct and indirect support measures. While the first of these measures calls for an active culture and media policy, the second requires co-operation and links to other areas of policy including economic or regional development programmes. In globalizing markets, support measures for domestic content producers and their productions are sometimes seen as protectionist by multinational competitors. Governments in some countries have tried to intervene to make up for such imbalances. The goals of their measures have mostly been to safeguard national identity and cultural (including linguistic) diversity within their own markets in the face of globalization. Efforts have been concentrated in the audio-visual/media sector.

There has been a marked increase in **immigration** among different types of immigrants, ranging from refugees (transitory immigrants) to asylum seekers and immigrants who are granted citizenship status. While the immigration traditions of the countries surveyed differ greatly, all of them have specific policies, with detailed goals and restrictions which regulate immigration patterns and influence the development of ethnically defined communities; the basis of which are linked to economic rather than cultural development. There are few programmes to help immigrants adjust to life in their new country from settlement policies to media programming in mother-tongue languages of the largest immigrant groups. It was also reported that intolerance of "citizens" towards "foreigners" or "immigrant others" is growing. Government policies in these fields set the tone in individual countries on attitudes and behaviours towards others, foreigners, minorities, national unity or pride. Governmental concepts and approaches to immigrants have an impact on the development of policy measures and programmes in the broader understanding of the cultural field which could include education, language, media programming, etc.

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There has been a marked increase in the **concentration of media** ownership by few multinational corporations who control the process of cultural production in countries around the world. There has also been a rise in the amount of foreign content on the domestic audio-visual landscape (mostly in the fields of film, television and sound recording). Together these trends have had a direct impact not only on cultural policy frameworks and measures but also on the more general trade debates taking place on regional and global levels.

In the context of the broader **human rights** framework, there are few indicators to assess the implementation of such rights in general and their application the programmes and activities of national cultural and media institutions more specifically. In fact, public discussions or debates on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are relegated more to specialised groups of lawyers, political scientists, researchers from different disciplines and have not extended -- in a comprehensive way -- to bring together cultural policy and human rights under one framework.

Next Steps: Phase 2

This pilot project concluded that fuller analysis through a continuation of the work done in the comparative study would be necessary in order to have a clear understanding of the general trends and patterns. It could be carried out with a slightly enhanced questionnaire and the addition of 5 more countries from different continents. The addition of countries from Asia or Latin America, for example, would provide other perspectives, from which future exercises would greatly benefit and lead to a better understanding of the general trends, patterns and instruments of cultural diversity in cultural policy making. As well, an evaluation of results from other similar regional and international comparative exercises, for example the Council of Europe project on cultural diversity, could be beneficial.